



**My Introduction to a New Feminism**  
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## **Foreword of the Publisher**

### **Feminism today? – YES, but with new ideas.**

WINGS & DREAMS – women need both to lead a successful life. There are millions of female DREAMS, different each one of them. For me as a publisher they all start with the ideas of an ideal life which girls all over the world develop in their teenage years and which they pursue over their lifetime until they become real. Whether they come true or not depends on a lot of factors, not only on their personal education but mainly on the society they live in. WINGS might be the means which enable a woman to put her dreams into reality, i.e. by reading books, watching movies, joining a youth and later a women's club, but also support by personal friends. For others WINGS might be their faith, their belief system or their philosophy.

In the course of this book the situation of women in various countries will be described, explained, and commented on, females living in Germany, Italy, France, Spain, the United States and Korea. Some essays refer to the lives of women still living, some to women of the past, and some to characters in novels. Aspects of female experiences are in the focus of the texts, like the writing process of a woman living in a male-oriented society, others reflect the situation of women in the Asian world where women having heard about the feminist movement in Europe (but never saw it happen in their society) start on their own road with the help of modern technology.

A summary of the history of feminism and its problematic might help (female) readers who so far have not looked into the topic of feminism, By publishing online and introducing blogging at the same time, I plan to ensure that a discussion will be started about the situation of women in different countries and continents across borders. Women are asked to share their feelings and ideas globally, thereby supporting each other morally, but also financially (look at the sponsoring program explained at the end of the book). With the help of these wings I hope to encourage women who so far have not thought about writing to hand in their ideas and have them published through my online/publishing entity.

How did I get this idea? Having been raised in Germany I had a few experiences both as a student and then later as a married woman that were contrary to the supposedly existing equal rights of women. Traveling all over the world, I met all kinds of women in very different societies and lifestyles, whether better or worse, in Japan, Australia, China or South Africa to mention only a few. Essential was the experience that by exchanging your feelings, expectations, experiences, dis-appointments,

failures or successes I found out a lot about myself and the society I live in, but helped also my soul mate to start reflecting about her/their situation and learn from it, as well as dare to take new steps towards improvement. By keeping in touch we motivated each other to continue to change our lives Therefore it shouldn't surprise any reader that the first book to be published focuses on feminism. Women in other parts of the world can start reflecting their legal rights while reading about the situation in other countries. Married women in Germany, in 2009, are free to decide whether

they want to have a career while raising children, they can choose to keep their maiden name instead of taking the husband's family name, their opinion on their children's education must be taken into consideration, after a violent attack by their husband they are asked whether they allow him to use the shared apartment or house any longer or whether they want to file for separation – today all those choices are seemingly taken for granted. Really?

The leading feminist in Germany and publisher of the feminist magazine EMMA, Alice Schwarzer has recently given a lecture about the achievements of feminism – and yet, there are still many women who know only little or nothing about their rights, and even less about how these rights were acquired over years of fighting for them.

Even women who are in dire straits don't know their rights or they don't pursue them out of fear of being hassled. How many women don't dare to separate from their violent husband because they face the daunting task of learning to run their own lives without him. These women need help and information urgently: Practical guidelines, step by step how to proceed in order to achieve their rights, but even more they need support as to their thinking, either to get over their bad experiences or to help them make the right decisions regarding their future. Can they expect this help from men (alone)? Most likely not, at least there is no guarantee that they can trust any male advisors – therefore women are called to step in: women who have suffered themselves and overcome their miserable state, women who are empathetic, women who are thinking ahead. Today we need competent and innovative solutions, no more fights.

Why do we speak of a NEW FEMINISM?

Even the feminist leaders of the first waves of feminism agree that the time of fighting is at an end and thus needs to be replaced by a common workshop of both genders working on solutions for a peaceful life together where chances and chores are equally distributed and managed in

a joint venture – which means men have to be included in the concept, both as to their tasks as well as their ideas for improvement on how to share duties and privileges. Men have been hit hard by the first rather aggressive waves of feminism, and those who understood it were able to see not only the effects but also inherent chances for themselves. Whoever contributes to a solution carries part of the responsibility as well as reaps the rewards for doing so - having the chance to participate as well as profit from the new wave of feminism.

What can such a joint venture look like? The invitation to work together on constructive solutions has to come from us, the WOMEN – so men don't feel left out. Then both genders can contribute their ideas without hurting their partner. Flexible suggestions should enable both parties to live a fulfilling life. All kinds of dreams and ideas can be integrated into a flexible concept that should be suitable for any man's or woman's needs, talents or qualifications where the gender of a person doesn't matter. Thus a man who likes to stay home and raise the children can find his lifestyle by making an agreement with his wife on who should be the breadwinner and who the homemaker is/ and some women will be happy to take over that role. Men WILL acknowledge that they stand to profit from the NEW FEMINISM THAT INCLUDES MEN AND THEIR DREAMS.

However, making all these ideas work it takes time – and for some women who are in dire straits now, this development might come too late. Help and information has to be supplied NOW. How can this be done as soon as possible? Women need all kinds of help on different levels, and therefore I - as the publisher – have started on setting up help in two ways. First I would like to give women the chance to publish their ideas and projects with the help of my online-publishing company. This offer is available for journalists, writers, poets and other artists like photographers and painters. They are welcome to distribute their works of art all over the world online so that they can reach an unlimited audience.

At the same time I ask all these artists, male or female, to contribute a third of their net income to women projects they can propose or select themselves, like myself. Those projects should further the independence of women and equal rights, and thus enable those women in need to start a life of their own.

Another important element of my work as a publisher is the aspect of multilingual publishing (vernacular). From now on any writer has the choice of two languages in which his or her works will be published in

ONE bilingual edition, not only to attract a bigger audience but also to show today's entanglement and integration of people of various cultures. As much as patriarchal society, nationalism of the 19th and 20th century is outdated. States and counties, cities and communities have to work together for a peaceful future just like men and women on a personal level. More and more people grow up bilingual, speak or have to learn a second (or third) language as teenagers or adults, living and /or working in a globalized world is no longer possible without being at least bilingual.

Especially when it comes to the linguistic part, in the translation of a text it becomes obvious that the content of a text doesn't translate 100% into the different language editions. Each language, each word carries not only the meaning but also a certain flavor or another level of meaning, different in each language, so it is helpful for those who master those languages to compare the two published versions. Sometimes this process might be disturbing, yet at other times it may enrich the understanding.

NEW FEMINISM digs into the achievements of the first waves of feminism and looks for improvements in order to make it effective in our modern world. This can be done only in a new form of partnership WITH men who have captured the advantages of giving equal rights to women and see feminism as a way of profiting for the male part of our society, an emancipation for men who have been stuck in very limited male role models. Only self-assured, independent women will be willing to take that road and my publishing effort will promote and support that new female role model.

*I dedicate this first project  
by Sophia Sirius Publishing  
to my daughter Daniela  
who supported me morally -  
without her this project  
would never have been conceived  
nor realized.*

**SOPHIA SIRIUS**  
*August 2009*

## **Introduction by the editor**

### **A New Feminist Philosophy – Dreams and Wings**

It is high time for a redefinition of the word 'feminism'. Or maybe even better: it is high time to come back to the roots of feminism - to refer to an old notion and to rethink it clearly. What do you have in mind when you hear the word 'feminists'? Don't you see angry women even today? I do not want to deny that there were and are times, when it was and still is absolutely adequate to get very angry. Anger is an emotion similar to the roll of thunder and sometimes it has the effects of a purifying tempest. But in the long run anger is not good for your skin and it has a bad influence on the wellbeing of your soul. Sacred rage brings the energy which we need to strive for the good cause. Women got angry because the men of enlightenment forgot their female company. To most of those men the idea never occurred that human rights should include women. What could women do to speak up for themselves and to start fighting for equal rights? They wrote essays and vindications: Olympe de Gouges *The Declaration of the Women and Female Citizen*, Mary Wollstonecraft *A Vindication for the Rights of Women*. In Leipzig/Germany, Louise Otto Peters founded the women's journal *Dem Reich der Freiheit werb' ich Bürgerinnen* (Recruiting Female Citizens for the Land of Freedom). Later, when these dreams started to come true, Emmeline Pankhurst was the leader of the suffragettes in England. They finally succeeded in gaining suffrage for women. Even some progressive men had the insight that this was an important issue.

The writer George Bernard Shaw for instance joined the marches of these women. Can you not hear the *March of the Women* while you are reading these lines? The music was written by the English composer Ethel Smyth, who was highly regarded by her colleagues as a doted artist. She was called a woman of exception whose talents, like with so many other women, could no longer be denied by men: "March, march ..."

Is there anything to be said against these aims? Women were fighting for their own freedom. They wanted to decide over themselves, as Mary Wollstonecraft pointed out. She did not wish women to have power over men, but over themselves. The chains of civil marriage which held women immature and dependent on men had to be eased. All those aims are positive: If to be a feminist means to fight something or somebody, then it is first for her own independence and only in a second step against all those who reject the liberty of women. *Honnit soit qui mal y pense*. If you are thinking maliciously about this subject, look for the reason within yourself. Emancipated women are women with knives in their hands who want to cut off the manhood of men? Maybe that is what they might be, but only if those males intend to suppress women.

The essays which you can find in this volume were all written as lectures for conferences of the International Association of Women Philosophers (IAPh). Three of them were held at the conference *Multiculturalism and Feminism* in Seoul/Korea, the first IAPh symposium in an Asian country. The paper by Elisabeth Schäfer had been held two years before, in 2006, at the IAPh symposium in Rome. All authors stand for a contemporary feminist way of thinking which is inspired by an interdisciplinary exchange. Moreover it is important for them to combine philosophy, the arts and the art of healing mind and body. They try to make the borderline between these disciplines permeable. Furthermore this new feminism no longer wants to exclude men who now can be active themselves within this feminist movement. We know that the aims we are striving for can only be completed with the help of both, men and women, because both will benefit from these changes. All of us are convinced that not only the social aspects of the freedom of women are crucial but that these changes are embedded in a global world. Both men and women have to work together on improving the living conditions of all people. The multicultural background of most of the authors is a perfect example. Four authors, four elements of a new feminism – may the balance of these elements bless us with fortune.

**Bettina Schmitz** classifies the feminist movement into different phases. With the help of her essay we have a logical framework which helps us to understand better the aims and problems, the discussions and open questions of feminism. She differentiates between the fight for equal rights (first feminism), rethinking differences (second phase) and a new third feminism, with the possibility of a fourth wave for which religion and spirituality will be of greater importance than they had been before. This framework also helps to better classify the three other

essays. In another lecture – *Transpositions of the Female* – Schmitz was dealing with the mythological subject of matricide and its social meaning. She looked back at the beginning of male predominance with the perspective of a new and re-evaluated female role supporting the upcoming of a fourth wave. More explicitly than before in this fourth wave the idea of a female divine helps to re-evaluate women as well.

**Hyung-Kyoung Shin's** perspective is that of a linguist. The way in which she is questioning words clarifies the terms we are using. Her aim is to transfer the idea of a German/European feminism – which is not one single movement but a multitude of different movements – into the Korean language and to compare it with the ideas of the women's movement in Korea. This takes her into the core of the problems of an intercultural exchange. She starts with a vision beyond our world of human differences. Her essay, speaking about the smell of a cowshed for example, is a vision very much rooted in a material world. She compares the feminisms in Germany and Korea. The western movement for her has a more political and social orientation. The inferiority of women within the hierarchical structure of a patriarchal world can even be seen as a chance to overcome differences and differentiations. Men and women suffer from the cultural loss which is the downside of this divided world.

**Elisabeth Schäfer's** text about the art of writing as women's writing exemplifies how beyond fighting and separation artistic work always depends on an inspiration. The artist must be prepared for it, but she cannot master it all by herself. Finally inspiration always comes as a surprise and as unexpectedly as the cat in the title of this essay. Schäfer presents fundamental principles of aesthetics; she does not write about feminism but she is writing from a feminist perspective. This attitude reminds us that feminist thinking is no end in itself; instead it wants to remove those obstacles which for a long time have made it hard for women to be an intellectual or an artist. With the help of these four authors I do hope that this volume of essays may balance some elements of a new feminism within our societies so that many unexpected cats will arrive.

For a long time intellectual women and their place in society have been an important subject for **María Isabel Peña Aguado**. Referring to Sylvia Plath she shows us the problems of a traditional female role model for a woman who wants to combine motherhood and artistic and intellectual ambitions. With Plath these problems were situated within the 50's of the past century. Peña Aguado takes the metaphor of the fig tree from Plath's novel *The Bell Jar*. With the fig tree she is meditating at the threshold from a feminism of equality to a feminism of difference. The

fig tree is a metaphor for the different capacities of a woman and the choices she can make. Unfortunately in *The Bell Jar* she does not reach the point where she can enjoy the fruit, instead in the end both dry up: woman and fruit. This look at the dark sides of being a woman demands courage from Peña Aguado. The precision of her description of the dilemma of intellectual women is painful.

*Dream with Wings* was the topic of an exhibition at EWHA Women's University, Seoul/Korea, which the participants of the 13<sup>th</sup> Symposium of the International Association of Women Philosophers (IAPh) have visited. *Dreams and Wings* is the title of this volume of essays. I do hope that the reflections and visions, the author's flights of thoughts may contribute to realize some of their dreams and to realize feminist aims for the welfare of all.

Anna Zrenner December 2008

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## From the same author on Feedbacks

Meine Einführung in einen neuen Feminismus (2011)

Dieses Buch ist über eine neue Idee für den Feminismus, und wir hoffen, dass Sie diese bei Ihren Gemeinden zu teilen. 28% der Brutto-Gewinne gehen an die Rechte der Frau weltweit zu unterstützen. 13 pps.

Minha introdução de um novo feminismo (2011)

Agora é a hora de um novo nome para o feminismo. Este livreto E vai proporcionar uma compreensão de como você e sua comunidade podem compartilhar neste novo feminismo onde mulheres e homens trabalham em harmonia. 28% dos lucros brutos vão apoiar Direitos da Mulher no mundo. 12 pps.

My Introduction to a New Feminism 100th Anniversary Int'l Womens Day Edition English (2011)

We welcome all women and men from around our world, as we celebrate this 100th Anniversary Edition. We honor the women and men who have gone before us, to establish and honor International Women's Day from 1911 and before, and invite you all to help us make the next 100 years be more honoring for all.

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