Gender theory for the 21st Century: non-linear, undone, queered, relational.

Concepció Garriga: discussant.

This panel will focus on culture in the mind (Dimen, 2011)\(^1\), because now we wish to include other sources of knowledge: the theories of the social and political construction of subjectivity into relational psychoanalysis; and because we know from Foucault (1978)\(^2\) that discursive formation creates power structures which in turn allow for the modification of the mind, and of the body, as we’ll see.

Very briefly, to organise this panel I followed several criteria:

1. Including the Norwegian sociologist professor Nielsen, as someone who, drawing specifically from the contributions of relational psychoanalysis, can account for the social shifts that are occurring in her country.

2. Informing the audience of Dr. Harris’ work which is not, as far as I know, well-known in the Spanish scene; whereas I do know of translations and reviews of Dr. Golner’s and Dr. Corbett’s works.

3. That the panel is a showcase for the excellent journal Studies in Gender and Sexuality in which all those on the panel regularly write. There are very many other authors of the journal whose contributions are equally valuable as Jessica Benjamin, Judith Butler, Susan Coates, Nancy Chodorow, Muriel Dimen, Emilce Dio Bleichmar, Lynne Layton, Susie Orbach and so many others, many of whom are present in the Congress and we are lucky to have them contribute with their papers on other panels and who may be in this room now.

The first presentation will be Dr. Adrienne Harris’. I want to thank her invaluable and generous help in the organisation of this panel. Dr. Harris is practicing psychoanalyst and Faculty and Supervisor at New York University

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Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. She is on the faculty and is a supervisor at the Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California. She is an Editor at Psychoanalytic Dialogues, and Studies in Gender and Sexuality. She is also on the Editorial Board of the Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association. She has written on topics in gender and development, analytic subjectivity and self-care, primitive states, and the analytic community in the shadow of the First World War. Her book, Gender as Soft Assembly was published in 2005. Now she has a new book with Dr. Steve Botticelli, entitled “First Do No Harm: the Paradoxical encounters of Psychoanalysis, Warmaking and Resistance. Dr. Harris has written on topics like gender, development, analytic subjectivity and self-care, primitive states, and the analytic community in the shadow of the First World War.

My first reading of Dr. Harris was in the 2000: It was entitled “Tomboy’s Stories”\(^3\), with which she reflected upon the presence of “masculinity” in the gender identity of some girls. This chapter was particularly moving for me because it had many aspects of my own biography and particularly because it offered a defendable reading of an identity that earlier on had been considered pathological (in “About feminine sexuality”\(^4\), Freud, 1931), in the new theoretical and social framework we are building, that accepts many possibilities in each one’s gender options.

With this article, that is now a chapter of “Gender as soft assembly”, and that was her seminal paper for the book, Harris observed that gender and desire, with all their variations and structural organisations, can provide for very varied and flexible narratives, and that they were very useful since there are many factors of the personal life that constrict, forbid, or devastate the development possibilities or they permit or push them. She added that it’s essential that development theories, together with chaos theory and the relational, feminist and queer contribute to this openness.

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\(^3\) Harris, A. (2000), Gender as soft assembly: Tomboys’ Stories. Studies in Gender and Sexuality, 1: 223-250.

My interest in including Dr. Harris is for her to explain this book, in which writing she made an enormous juggler effort with these theories. Dr. Corbett will read her presentation.

I also wished to have Dr. Ken Corbett among us, as a member of IARPP and a person who knows about queer theory. He is Clinical Assistant Professor at New York University Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. He is editor of *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* and of *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*. He is author of *Boyhoods: Rethinking Masculinities*, published in 2009. I met him in New York in a colloquium organised by the Postdoctoral Program of NYU with the title “[En]countering Gender” a play on words between meeting and counteracting, in which he and Judith Butler were the main presenters. Since then I have followed his work and informed about some of it.

I first read an excellent piece of work, in 1996, in the seminar that Dr. Dio Bleichmar runs in Madrid. In it Corbett wrote about the “femininity” in the homosexual boyhood of some boys, those he called the girly boys. This work was reviewed as “Elements for the analytic approach of contemporary gender and sexuality variations” in 2007 in Aperturas Psicoanalíticas. This review also contained elements of another paper, of 2001, called “Fagot=Looser” in which he held that the aggression that is allowed to boys, in the form of bravado and domination, may entail homophobia.

In 2007 I reviewed another paper of his in the Official Psychologists Journal in which he shows his way of working with boys diagnosed as GIID (Gender Identity Disorder). The paper questions the poverty of normative masculinity that turns men into melancholic and invites to embrace the possibilities of life. His presentation today will go along these lines.

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7 Corbett, K. (2007), “What is to be done?”, from his presentation in one of the colloquia organized by the Postdoctoral Programme in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis of the NYU. This work was kindly allowed to be used by the author on the 3rd February 2007. It was reviewed as: Garriga, C. (2007) “Troba/ensopegada amb el gènere”, *Revista del COPC* 199, may.
Finally another very interesting paper of his, of 2009\(^8\), with which he showed in the centenary of the publication of Little Hans, of Freud (1909)\(^9\) how he was more interested in proving his theories that in whether they were true, and that, actually he foretold masculinity to Little Hans: heterosexual, homophobic, independent, propelled by power, that takes, that doesn't need, and that has no space for mutual recognition\(^{10}\). Dr. Corbett, go ahead.

I also included Dr. Virginia Goldner on this panel. Let me first tell you about her. I also met her in the colloquium where she let me know her interest in teaching here. Welcome Virginia! Virginia Goldner is the Founding Editor of *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, she’s also Associate Editor of *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, and she has been a member of the Board of Directors of the International Association for Relational Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. Dr. Goldner is on the faculty of the NYU Post-Doctoral Program in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy, the Stephen A Mitchell Center for Relational Psychoanalysis, and the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology at City University of New York. She is the co-editor of two books, *Gender in Psychoanalytic Space* (Other Press, 2002), and *Predatory Priests, Silenced Victims* (Routledge, 2007). Dr. Goldner has received awards for her distinguished contributions to psychoanalysis by Division 39 of the APA, and to family therapy by the American Family Therapy Academy. Dr. Goldner practices in New York City, and teaches and supervises nationally and internationally.

My view is that her contributions to the construction of the theoretical intertwining between gender and psychoanalysis, between individual and group have been very valuable. Her excellent paper of 2004\(^{11}\) “When love hurts” also translated for internal use in Dr. Dio Bleichmar’s seminar, is a must. In this paper she shows her way of treating clinically the couples with abuse and she

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enlightens the understanding of the traumatic past of abusers. I also informed about her “Ironic Gender/Authentic Sex)\textsuperscript{12} with a review in Aperturas Psicoanalíticas and another one in the Official Journal of Psychologists Catalonia\textsuperscript{13}. I also offered the translation of this paper to the on-line Clínica e Investigación Relacional\textsuperscript{14}. Today she will continue to offer us her clinical know how with respect to the creations “trans”. Go ahead Dr. Goldner.

I also chose professor Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen, who has been the director of the Centre for Feminist Research at the University of Oslo, Norway, for 11 years. Since 1993 she has been Professor of Women's Research and Gender Studies at this University. Nielsen's research focuses on the construction of gender norms and gender practices among children and young people in longitudinal studies, one of which began in 1991 and is still going on and focuses on the transition to adulthood from a gender perspective. Her line of research includes the study of three generations of women as their personal life-experiences intermingle with contemporary discourses of gender in each generation (Nielsen, 2008)\textsuperscript{15}, which she has extended to three generations of men. Today we’ll have a sample of her results in her presentation.

She has published a major book (with Monica Rudberg) “Psychological gender and modernity”, Scandinavian University Press, 1994, and many papers, some of them in English. Some of her articles have been very widely disseminated like “One of the boys? Doing gender in European Scouting” with more than 20,000 downloads. Her major fields of interest are gender identity/subjectivity and social change, children and youth, girls and boys, equality and education, feminist theory and qualitative analysis. Professor Nielsen, go ahead.

Discussion

The conference subject is “Changing psychoanalysis for a changing society”. The present panel has perfectly picked up this spirit: It has shown in detail the

precise social changes which Inglehart and Welzel (2006) had sketched in broad outlines in their World Value Surveys. They documented the evolution of societies with respect to two axes: from collective survival values to values of self-expression/self-realisation opportunities; and from religious-traditional values to secular-rational ones. They showed how these changes imbricate with the gender structure in direct proportion with the democratic deepening of the societies, and with the study level of their pioneer members, Scandinavia being the most advanced one.

The discourse on gender in psychotherapies emerged as a way of giving visibility to the specific experiences of women, given the fact that till the fifties, the health standards were men’s. This was the way that the uneasiness masculine domination perpetrated to women inside the sex-gender system could come up [particularly thanks to the works of Dorothy Dinnerstein (1987), Susie Orbach (1983), Emilice Dio Bleichmar (1997), Jessica Benjamin (1988), Pierre Bourdieu(1998)]. This system only considered one sexuality: heterosexuality. It had to be questioned to include homosexuality and to speak of sexualities (Chodorow ,1994). Then (in 1991) it became clear that I was the normative sex-gender system what constitutes a “Universal pathogenic situation” that entails a deep self-alienation of a false-self, which produces in itself a multitude of psychological symptoms and innumerable ways of suffering not recognised as such (thanks Dr. Goldner) like melancholy and homophobia (Corbett, 2002), the narcissistic trauma of women when considered second class citizens (Layton, 2004), defensive aggressiveness and hypersexuality of

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16 Inglehart, R. & Welzel, Ch. (2006), Modernización, cambio cultural y democracia, Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.
17 Thanks Ramon Riera for letting me know about them.
normative masculinity as well as depressive relationality and inhibition of desire and of agency in normative femininity (Person, 1999)\(^\text{27}\).

All the presentations dealt with the current characteristics that personal gender self-expression displays in the present social context of freedom that we strived for and that we continue to expand. The “new paternity” men that professor Nielsen mentioned, Dr. Goldner’s trans people, Dr. Corbett’s patient Mitchell, Dr. Harris’ tomboys’ stories of which he hasn’t talked but that are in her book; they all refer to the contemporary wide scope of possibilities of gender variations and the multiple ways of living sexuality. Not free of suffering in some cases.

With respect to the changes in some men, sociologist Esping-Andersen (2011)\(^\text{28}\) states that, suddenly, many high educated men are incorporating the idea of gender egalitarian relationships, Nielsen’s “hand on” men. Esping-Andersen observed a tendency among high educated Spanish couples to make stable marriages and to raise children.

With respect to the Spanish women, this sociologists states that there’s also a shift: Higher educated women were those who married less and who divorced more, and had fewer children, now the tendency reverts and takes place among the less educated whereas those with higher education get involved in more stable marriages and have children, as an effect, according to Esping-Andersen of more egalitarian gender relations.

I would like to mention some facts that in my view illustrate the changes that have taken place in this crossing between the social and the subjective through the discourses we are producing and that create reality.

Last year I came back from the state feminist conference pleasantly struck by the emergence of gender proliferation that I saw; what struck me particularly was the way they were sustained by theories with which they get social recognition. It is in this crossroads between the social and the subjective where the power of discourses creates reality, in as much in a particular mind as in the


\(^{28}\) http://dcpis.upf.edu/~gosta-esping-andersen/materials/couple_specialization.pdf
western culture in general. Without such sheltering support, variant subjects can
find themselves marooned in the way Butler (2004)\(^{29}\) distilled in a single
sentence: “A life for which no categories of recognition is not a livable life, but a
life for which those categories constitute unlivavle constraint is not an
acceptable option”\(^{30}\).

Dr. Goldner and Dr. Corbett showed with their presentations the way they are
contributing to create theories in this sense.

The unprecedented success of the Millenium trilogy by Stieg Larson shows both
the imbrication and eagerness, in western contemporary culture, of the most
progressive values in the thinking about gender and power. Lisbeth Salander
characteristics: very crossed gender and not much stable; a life style that
included aspects till recently considered masculine: biker, hacker, an
autonomous and separate life, in a shared flat or on her own, with very open
and fluid sex options, in a not much stable bisexuality, and making use of all
sorts of technologies the self included. Salander and the journalist are
committed in the denunciation of all kinds of abuse (sexual, psychiatric. Mafias,
slavery).

In this sense while I was writing the excellent colloquium after Muriel Dimen’s
paper (2011)\(^{31}\): “Lapsus Linguae, or a Slip of the Tongue? A Sexual Violation in
an Analytic Tratment and its Personal and Theoretical Aftermath” about
boundary violations took place, which also shows the way democratic culture is
slowly impregnating all the spheres of social life, the therapeutic space
included, and it has not only showed the permanence of this kind of abuse in
our community, but also the enormity of this damage and the possibility of
facing and repairing it.

DSK’s arrest (Dominique Strauss Kahn) illustrates the way discourses create
power structures that impregnate the laws in the north American society: a) the
psychological discourse, with the post-traumatic stress disorder category; b) the

\(^{29}\) Butler, J. (2004), Deshaciendo el género, Barcelona: Paidós.
feminist discourse, that insisted on the dignity of women’s lives, and in rights and equal opportunities; and c) the democratic discourse, -that laws are to protect all the people, in equality with respect to sex, race, or social class.

Before I give way to the general interventions, I’d like to finish my discussion stating that the gender panel is also responding to the first part of the conference subject. The psychoanalysis we are practicing is turning into an affectionate and creative accompanying of the new forms that the exercise of freedom is taking in the diverse and multiple contemporary subjectivities. In this sense, Suchet’s (2011)\textsuperscript{32} paper in the latest issue of Psychoanalytic Dialogues shows the treatment and its vicissitudes (as much for the therapist as for the patient) of the pass of Rebecca to Raphael, the subject matter of Dr. Goldner’s presentation. Dr. Corbett has shown also his therapeutic intervention style in the same direction: to accompany, to favor, to explain the singular personal processes of their patients being aware that there’s “latitude”, as he says.

Psychoanalysts need to change in order to be useful to the changing needs of our patients since our task consist of identifying the myriad ways through which they have come to become the persons they are, with their resources and limitations, in order to, leaning on their capacities progressively reduce their limitations with the goal of becoming subjects who are responsible of themselves to be able to meet their multiple needs: of attachment, of self-preservation and of preservation of their members in charge, of narcissisation, and of sensual/sexual satisfaction (Bleichmar, 1997)\textsuperscript{33}.