
Movement in the Rank and File: Transfeminism, Queer Feminism, Depathologisation, Non-binary Discourses

Date: 4, 5 and 6 November 2010

Venue: Rectorado de la UNIA (c/ Américo Vespucio 2, Isla de la Cartuja, Sevilla) | Closing ceremony: Sala El Cachorro (c/ Procurador 19, Triana, Sevilla)

Co-ordinated by: Aitzol/Alira Araneta, María José Belbel, Miguel Benlloch, Josebe Iturrioz, Juana Ramos, Miriam Solá

PRESENTATION

The feminist movement has been and still is one of the most important places for considering the oppression of women and a series of issues related to gender and sexuality that have situated the identity crisis that led to queer deconstruction at the centre of the philosophical-political debate. However, there is a widespread tendency to believe that up until the emergence of queer theory and activism in the nineties (which is described as a recent and novel phenomenon eluding its connections with lesbian feminism, the trans movement or activism in the field of sexual work, for instance) feminism had only explored a highly naturalised vision of gender, sex and desire, determining the articulation of an identity movement based on the category of woman and a hetero-normative vision of domination.

Some sectors tend to favour a historiography of feminism as a movement that has somehow contributed to promoting an essentialist vision of the sexes that avoids race, class, sexual and ethnic differences in its eagerness to explain the domination suffered by women and to articulate their struggle, thereby invisibilising the oppression of lesbians or excluding other groups, such as trans individuals, from their forms of organisation. Such an essentialist vision is also connected to the need to bring cohesion to a unitary political subject strong enough to counter the oppression that has prevailed for centuries.

While this is what we may infer from certain narratives in English-speaking countries, in other places this has not been the case and we must bear in mind that feminism has been and still is a very heterogeneous movement. In point of fact, two of the most significant and early feminist contributions to appear in the American context in the seventies were black and lesbian women's criticism of white, female, middle-class and heterosexual embodied by certain forms of feminism.

In Spain, feminism emerged in the mid-seventies, the time of anti-Franco campaigns and struggles for democratic

liberties, when we had barely left the dictatorship behind and sexual freedom was still very limited. Almost from the very beginning lesbians played an active part in the movement, and in the late eighties a transvestite movement was born. Trans activism, despite its discrepancies, was bound to the homosexual movement but also to defending the rights of sex workers and in the mid-nineties it struck up intensive dialogue with the feminist movement on subjects such as gender naturalisation, prostitution and trans rights.

The influence of queer thought and activism has contributed to the questioning of gender binary and the homo/hetero dichotomy, bringing to light the violence of all identity formation both in feminism and in gender and sexual liberation movements. But above all, over the last decade it has enabled the articulation of minority discourses, political, artistic and cultural practices surfacing in feminist, squatter, lesbian, anti-capitalist, queer and transgender communities. In this way, queer criticism has established itself in our context and, by interacting with feminism, lesbianism, the queer movement and the trans struggle, has favoured the connection of all these forms of organisation and the creation of an alliance that crystallises in places such as the International Network for the Depathologization of Trans Identities, the State Feminist Conference of Granada in 2009 or the Transfeminist Conference recently held in Barcelona.

The term 'transfeminist', verging on queer postulates, is being championed by certain trans-dyke-queer-feminist groups that have emerged in recent years. A number of micro-groups have laid claim to this word, that despite sounding like an oath is better than the term queer in Spanish—it is more tangible and easier to adopt, powerful and fresh and seems to contain a significant mobilising force.

This 'new' term materialises the political need to assume the multiplicity of the feminist subject. But it is also a term that aspires to situate feminism as a set of practices and theories in movement that account for variety of oppressions and circumstances. It is a pledge that transcends the transsexuality + feminism = transfeminism equation, thus revealing the complexity of the new challenges feminism is facing, the sexual and gender struggles and the need for joint resistance regarding gender and sexuality.

Now we are struggling for trans depathologisation and face the challenge of constructing discourses around issues such as precariousness and economic crisis, sexuality, gender, transsexuality, migration, anti-racism, depathologisation, prostitution, the right to one's own body, abortion, anti-militarism or the elimination of victim mentality, UNIA artandthinking is holding this conference-seminar starting from the need to consolidate and broaden the powers, processes and impulses of feminist movements, bearing in mind their needs and serving their theoretical and operational development.

PROGRAMME*

Thursday_4th November 2010

1st session - Feminism, Transfeminism, Queer Feminism … A Movement in Construction

Co-ordinated by María José Belbel and Miriam Solá

Queer criticism has prompted the emergence of different forms of sexual and gender visibility, enabling the articulation of a whole range of micro-discourses and alternative political and cultural forms that defend the concepts of queer feminism and transfeminism, emphasising the validity of their politics from post-identity parameters that are critical of sexual binaries.

But what is the connection between these new forms of political subjectivity and the empowering and social transformation of the movements? How can we produce points of resistance starting from identities in transit, from the proliferation of non-binary identities, from the creation of spaces of identification? How can we display self-critical practices from within queer non-binary policies to avoid them concealing old and new forms of gender, class, race and sexual oppression? How can we form a joint front against the specificity of the different forms of violence and hierarchy generated by patriarchy, heteronormativism and capitalism? How can we set up practices that will help us to overcome the fragmentation derived from facing up to difference and conflict in our own contexts?

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Presentation of the conference by Miguel Benlloch

Internal discussion between participants

Chair: María José Belbel

5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Public discussion with Mayte Amaya, Cristina Garaizabal, Itziar Ziga

Chair: Miriam Solá

Friday_5th November 2010

2nd session - Depathologisation and Non-binary Discourses

Co-ordinated by Aitzol/Alira Araneta and Juana Ramos

The struggle for medical and legal depathologisation and the visibility of new identity experiences were important initiatives to overcome in the rigid conception of the male/female categories. In recent years the mobilisation against the impending publication of catalogues of diseases by the Association of American Psychiatrists (DSM-5) and by the World Health Organization (CIE-11) has granted greater prominence to these initiatives. However, the struggle for depathologisation moves beyond this mobilisation, revealing a complex system made up of the capitalist heteropatriarchy, medical science as a life-controlling instrument and the union of science and legality in a process of appropriation of the condition of people's sex. In order to deal with this, subjects are continuously devising survival strategies that reveal the fragile (yet precise) economic and sex/gender bases on which the pillars of our

societies stand.

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Internal discussion between participants

Chair: Juana Ramos

5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Public discussion with Sandra Fernández, Beatriz Preciado, Jorge Santana

Chair: Aitzol/ Alira Araneta

Saturday_6th november 2010

3rd session - Economy: Bodies in Business

Co-ordinated by Juana Ramos and Josebe Iturrioz

The twentieth century was riddled with change and revolution, and one of the most outstanding trends was undoubtedly the feminist movement. Long before the suffragettes, a number of dissident voices –most of them female– had called for alternative relationships between bodies. The articulation of gender, sex and desire is not arbitrary. The inheritance, ownership and organisation of bodies depend especially, although not exclusively, on the relationship between these three cores. Capital, business and knowledge form a part of this elaborate fabric regulating and normativising bodies. Reading this intricate network is one of the tasks of feminist thought. The debate around prostitution lies at the heart of one of the fiercest clashes within the feminist movement. We hope to tackle this and other issues related to the right to make free use of our bodies and our lives, insofar as corporeal existences in an extremely precarious context, aggravated by the huge world crisis generated by the neo-liberal system itself.

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Internal discussion between participants

Chair: Juana Ramos

5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Public discussion with Sayak Valencia, Isabel Holgado, Bea Espejo

Chair: Josebe Iturrioz

10:00 p.m.

Closing ceremony

Sala El Cachorro (c/ Procurador 19, Triana, Sevilla)

* Afternoon sessions are open to the general public. Participation in the morning internal discussions prior registration. Please write to the seminar co-ordination office: bnv@arrakis.es

PARTICIPANTS

Interventions

Maite Amaya

Maite Amaya joined the anti-capitalist feminist group *Las histeriqas, las mufas y las otras*, articulated in the Argentinean network *Feministas Inconvenientes*, and *Colectivo Caracol*, that runs a social centre under the same name. She has also supported initiatives such as the National Campaign for the Right to Abortion, the Anti-repressive Co-ordinating Committee for Human Rights, Justice for Natalia Gaitán and the anti-prison movement. A contributor to *El teje*, the first Latin American transvestite newspaper, she is also an independent promoter of health and human rights and works with transvestites linked to prostitution, prisons (as in St Martin prison in Cordova, Argentina) and addiction problems. She is currently working on audiovisual productions dedicated to trans themes and is setting up the Trans Militant Front against normalisation, pathologisation and trans criminalisation.

Aitzol/Alira Araneta

Aitzol/Alira Araneta is a researcher on feminism and sexuality, a sexologist, economist, performer and activist pro-sexual diversity and the rights of trans and intersex individuals in *La Acera del Frente* and *Bloque Orgullo Crítico* in Madrid. She is the spokesperson and an organising member of the international campaign *Stop Trans Pathologization 2012* within the *Trans Depathologization Network*, and was involved in organising demonstrations against *Disorders of Gender Identity* in Madrid. A member of the Organising Committee of the *First International Congress for Human Rights and Gender Identity* (Barcelona, 2010), she also acted as secretary of the health group at the congress. She has delivered lectures at the *State Feminist Conference of Granada* (2009), the *World Social Forum in Madrid* (2008-2010), the *Feminist Assembly of Madrid*, *San Sebastian Town Hall* and the *Transgender Europe summit* in Sweden, among others, and has published a number of articles in the media. At present she is preparing a dissertation on the biomedical model of the sexes and depathologisation, and her contribution to the project on gender violence in invisibilised/marginalised groups entitled *Basura y tensión 2*, in collaboration with *Matadero Madrid* and *MNCARS*.

María José Belbel

María José Belbel, an anti-Franco activist and queer feminist, took part in the exhibition entitled 100x100: diez artistas andaluzas (MAC, Seville, 1993). A specialist on the oeuvre of Eve K. Sedgwick, she has centred her research on transgenerational translation, particularly in the cultural sphere. Belbel co-directed the seminars The Re-politicisation of Sexual Space in Contemporary Artistic Practices (Arteleku, 2004), Mutations of Feminism (Arteleku, MACBA and UNIA artandthinking, 2005) and the DVD Digeout: Discursos on Popular Music, Gender and Ethnicity (Arteleku, 2009), and delivered lectures at the State Feminist Conference of Granada (2009) and the Transfeminist Conference of Barcelona (2010).

Miguel Benlloch

An anti-Franco and anti-NATO activist, Miguel Benlloch was involved in setting up the gay liberation movements in Spain in the eighties. Co-founder of BNV production company, and member of the UNIA artandthinking contents team, Benlloch is also a performer-action artist whose actions are developed in the specific contexts in which he is invited to take part. His work focuses on the cultural making of identities and the mechanisms of disintegration and construction on which they are based.

Beatriz Espejo

A writer, trans activist and fighter for the rights of sex workers, Beatriz Espejo founded the Catalan Transexual Collective in 1992. From 2005 to 2009 she was a representative for the Barcelona Municipal Council of Gays, Lesbians and Transexual Men and Women, and in 2007 she stood for election as number two on the list of the Civil Liberties party. A lecturer, occasional polemicist on several television channels and a contributor to magazines like Zero and BSTc, she is also a painter and a comic book artist. In 2005 she lectured for the Catalan Government's Democratic Memorial programme. Espejo is co-author of the books Prostituciones, diálogos sobre sexo de pago (with Isabel Holgado, Icaria, 2008) and Dels drets a les llibertats (with Eugeni Rodríguez, Virus, 2008), and author of the essay Manifiesto Puta.

Sandra Fernández

Having obtained her degree in Biological Sciences, Sandra Fernández took up post-graduate gender studies and went on to specialise in participatory research. Her career as an LGTB activist began when she became a member of the rqr association, and continued when she joined the Alternative Bloc for Sexual Liberation (known as BALS for its acronym in Spanish), from where she helped organise the first edition of trans October in Madrid (2007). Her fight for the depathologisation of trans identities and the defence of health rights was followed up by her work in the group known as La Acera del Frente and the International Network for the Depathologization of Trans Identities. Her publications include 'Homofobia en la universidad pública española' (in Educar en la diversidad, Laertes, 2005), 'Despatologizar las identidades trans' (in SeXualitats transgressores, Xarxa Feminista, 2009) and 'Derechos sanitarios desde el reconocimiento de la diversidad. Alternativas a la violencia de la psiquiatrización de las identidades trans' (in El género desordenado, Egales, 2010).

Cristina Garaizabal

A clinical psychologist and a specialist in gender therapy, Cristina Garaizabal is a well-known feminist who was involved in setting up the movement in Barcelona, especially the Committee for pro-Abortion Rights. In Madrid she co-founded the Anti-Aggression Committee and Hetaira, a group defending the rights of prostitutes. Garaizabal has collaborated with the transexual movement, working for the depathologisation of transexuality by offering professional advice and support to transexuals since 1990. From 1989 to 2000 she worked with the Madrid-based group Transexualia. In 2007 she presented her research paper Los pasos (in)visibles de la prostitución (Virus). Garaizabal is a member of the editorial staff of the review Página Abierta and of the editorial board of Talasa, which published her writings El dolor invisible (1994, in collaboration with Norma Vázquez) and Por los derechos de las prostitutas. La prostitución a debate (2008, in collaboration with Mamen Briz). Articles of hers have been published in Transexualidad, transgenerismo y cultura

(Talasa, 1998), Crónicas carcelarias. Líneas prostituidas (Quórum Editores, 2006), Transexualidad: la búsqueda de una identidad (Díaz de Santos, 2008), Prostituciones. Diálogos sobre el sexo de pago (Icaria, 2008) and El género desordenado (Egales, 2010).

Isabel Holgado

An anthropologist, member of Line of Investigation and Cooperation with Migrant and Sexual Workers (known as LICIT for its Spanish acronym) and President of the Al hanan Intercultural Collective, Isabel Holgado is the author and editor of the book Prostituciones: diálogos sobre el sexo de pago (Icaria, 2008). Her subjects of research include the construction of stigmas, prejudices and policies of exclusion, migration and female labour, paid sex and power relations between sexes.

Itu (Josebe) Iturrioz

Member of Medeak collective, Itu defines herself as a dyke, drag and travestite. She has been politically active since she joined Plazandreok 10 years ago. She has a degree in Philosophy from the Basque Country University. She worked as a technical secretary in the Cátedra Miguel Sánchez-Mazas EHU-UPV and was also responsible for the literature and thinking collection Limes Bilduma EHU-UPV. Although she got her Advanced Studies Diploma (DEA) with a work about "self and gender", she is more interested in organic epistemology and feminist criticism of science. She got a Master on Gender and Equality from EHU-UPV and nowadays works as a specialist in Equality in the Tolosa Town Hall. She participates in other collective projects with young feminist groups. She is an activist of the Feminist movement and is dedicated to the transfeminist revolution.

Beatriz Preciado

Philosopher, queer activist and Fulbright Scholar, Beatriz Preciado read Philosophy and Gender Theory at the New School for Social Research in New York, where she studied under Jacques Derrida and Agnes Heller. She went on to obtain a PhD at the Princeton School of Architecture. She contributed to the emergence of queer theory in France, where she was a member of the group of Rayon Gay writers led by Guillaume Dustan, which marked a political and literary turn in Europe. Her first book, Manifeste contre-sexuel (Balland, 2000), was acclaimed by French critics as the red book of queer theory and subsequently translated into five languages. Preciado is also the author of Testo yonqui (Espasa Calpe, 2008) and Terror anal (epilogue to El deseo homosexual, the Spanish version of Guy Hocquenghem's Homosexual Desire, published by Melusina, 2009) and of numerous essays for magazines such as Multitudes or Parallax. In 2010 her book Pornotopía. Arquitectura y sexualidad en Playboy durante la Guerra Fría (translated into English as Pornotopia: Playboy Architecture and the Cool War) was finalist to the Anagrama Essay Prize. Preciado is currently teaching Political History of the Body and Queer Theory at Paris VIII University and in the framework of the MACBA's Programme of Independent Studies.

Juana Ramos

A trans activist and feminist, Juana Ramos has been fighting for sexual liberation since the late eighties. A member of organisations such as AET-Transexualia, the Federation of Associations of Transexuals in Spain (FAT) and the Spanish Federation of Lesbians, Gays, Transexuals and Bisexuals (known as FELGTB for its Spanish acronym), her involvement in others such as CSOA de mujeres Eskalera Karakola, the 8 March Committee in Madrid, the Group of Lesbian Feminists in Madrid and CLYP has enabled her to build bridges between the feminist, squatter and LGBTQ movements. Ramos has played an active role in the Alternative Bloc for Sexual Liberation, the fight for the depathologisation of trans identities, the meetings of the Network against Homophobia and is currently working with La Acera del Frente. She has also co-organised the First State Conference on Transexuality (Gijón, 1998) and the fifteenth edition of the State Conference of LGBT Associations (Rascafría, 2003), and has lectured at a range of events, including the State Feminist Conference of Granada (2009). Her articles have been published in a number of books, magazines and websites.

Jorge Santana

An intersex activist working in the Transgender Project, Jorge Santana is known as El Chulla on account of being the only militant intersexual in Ecuador. Starting from three basic principles – transfeminism, interculturality and subversion from within – Santana works in collaboration with his colleagues at La Casa Trans, situating his discourse in everyday environments and presenting his reality in different spaces in order to raise public awareness of sex/gender diversity.

Miriam Solá

A feminist and philosopher, Miriam Solá is an active member of Les Tisores, an independent women's and lesbians' group for feminist action and reflection, and of Transblock, a group that has promoted Catalan expressions against Gender Identity Disorder (GID). An active participant in the Barcelona squatter movement, Solá is a member of the assembly organising the Transfeminist Conference (in construction) and of the International Network for the Depathologization of Trans Identities. She took part in the State Feminist Conference of Granada (2009) and the First International Congress for Human Rights and Gender Identity (Barcelona, 2010), and has published a number of works in the field of gender studies. Her PhD thesis focused on the consequences of post-structuralism in contemporary feminist theories and movements at the Woman and Literature Centre at the University of Barcelona.

Sayak Valencia Triana

European Doctor in Philosophy, Feminist Theory and Criticism by Madrid's Complutense University, Sayak Valencia Triana is also a poet, essayist and performative exhibitionist. She has published the following books, *Jueves Fausto* (Ediciones de la Esquina - Anortecer, 2004), *El reverso exacto del texto* (Centaurea Nigra Ediciones, 2007) and *Capitalismo Gore* (Melusina, 2010), as well as several articles in Spanish, Mexican, American and Colombian magazines. As a performance artist her works are based on the occupation of public space through a queer body that questions the patterns of 'normality,' connecting with the use of the body as an artistic and political support and as a centre of multiple debates.

Itziar Ziga

Journalist and writer, specialised on feminisms, Itziar Ziga worked on the feminist newspaper *Andra* (no longer extant). In her own words, her womanhood is the result of 'a medical diagnosis and a political strategy.' One of the co-founders of the group *ExDones* and author of the books *Devenir perra* (Melusina, 2009) and *Un zulo propio* (Melusina, 2009), Ziga also writes articles for books, the review *Parole de queer*, and her blog <http://hastalalimusinasiempre.blogspot.com> ("http://hastalalimusinasiempre.blogspot.com").

Interlocutions

Laura Bugalho

Trade unionist, feminist and trans activist.

Ana / Diego Marchante

Artist and transfeminist activist.

<http://genderhacker.net>

Moisés Martínez

Transfeminist activist.

Raquel / Lucas Platero

Activist, teacher and researcher.

Asamblea de Mujeres de Granada

<http://www.asambleamujeresgranada.com>

Banda IASLaS

<http://colectivoslaslas.wordpress.com>

Ciclobollos

<http://ciclobollos.blogspot.com/>

DG8+

<http://lasdel8.blogia.com/>

Feministas nómadas

<http://feministasnomadas.blogspot.com>

Garaipen

<http://asociaciongaraipen.blogspot.com>

Hetaira

<http://ayp.local>

www.colectivohetaira.org

Kasa Pública de Mujeres Eskalera Karakola

www.sindominio.net/karakola

La Acera del Frente

www.aceradelfrente.blogspot.com

La C.U.L.O

<http://www.laculo.net>

Les atakás

<http://lesatakas.blogspot.com>

Maribolheiras Precarias

www.maribolheras.com

Medeak

<http://medeak.blogspot.com>

Migrantes Transgresorxs

<http://migrantestransgresorxs.blogspot.com/>

Panteras Rosa (Portugal)

<http://www.panterasrosa.blogspot.com>

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