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Aims and scope

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN SECTION REVIEW has been established to provide a forum for discussion of issues and debates around all aspects of the psychology of women in research, teaching and professional practice. It aims to promote and support academic research and debate on issues related to the psychology of women and encourage the development of theory and practice concerning gender and other social inequalities. In particular, it also seeks to encourage contributions from individuals at all stages of their careers – including undergraduate and postgraduate students – as an appropriate forum to provide feedback on new ideas and first publications. It promotes a reviewing process where positive and constructive feedback is provided to authors.

The *Psychology of Women Section Review* aims to publish:

- theoretical and empirical papers;
- reviews of relevant research and books;
- special issues and features;
- observations, commentaries, interviews, short papers and original or non-traditional submissions in the 'Agora' section;
- correspondence.

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Editorial

Sally Johnson & Nancy Kelly

WELCOME to the Spring 2011 edition of the *Psychology of Women Section Review*. In this edition we present ‘Truth, gender and the female psyche: Confessions from female sexual offenders’, by Sherianne Kramer. In this paper Sherianne raises the interesting question around the denial of the extent of female sex crimes, and she engages in a thought-provoking discussion about the ways in which beliefs about female sexuality influence self-knowledge of female sex offenders.

We are very pleased to be able to publish three commentaries in the Agora section of this issue. First, Jemma Tosh comments on the invitation of Prof. Ken Zucker to deliver a keynote address at the Division of Clinical Psychology Conference in December 2010 in ‘Zuck Off! A commentary on the protest against Ken Zucker and his ‘treatment’ of Childhood Gender Identity Disorder’. She highlights concerns surrounding Zucker’s approach to ‘treating’ children with GID before telling the story of the protest that ensued following Zucker’s invitation to speak and the ongoing campaigning against his perspective and methods. Second, Noelle McAra and Lynn Wright discuss the challenges of recruiting participants to menstrual cycle research in ‘I don’t want to talk about it: Why are young women reluctant to participate in menstrual cycle research?’ They consider not only the demands of being involved in such research but the potential impact of the negative portrayal of menstruation on participation. In the final piece, Pauline Whelan and Kristin Aune review the Women’s Liberation Movement@40 conference, held in March 2010. They focus on intersectionality, reflexivity and future directions for contemporary feminism, deeming these to be of particular relevance to *POWSR* readers.

In the Research Review section we present two reviews. First, Krista Carson considers the article *Passionate men, emotional women: Psychology constructs gender difference in the late 19th century* by Stephanie Shields. Carson’s review alerts us to how useful analyses like Shields’ are in highlighting how historical inequalities in constructions of gender still shape and inform ‘scientific’ research in psychology today. In the second piece, ‘A feminist critique of outdated constructions of gender: A response to Zucker et al. (1999)’, Ashley Brown and Em Temple-Malt review the article *Gender constancy judgements in Children with Gender Identity Disorder: Evidence for a developmental lag* by Ken Zucker et al. Picking up on themes identified in Jemma Tosh’s commentary on Zucker’s approach to the treatment of Childhood GID in Agora, Brown and Temple-Malt identify the problematic nature of the methods used in this study and therefore question the validity of the findings for clinical practice.

In the Book Reviews section Nollaig Frost provides a review of Roisin Ryan-Flood, R. & Gill, R. (2010) *Secrecy and silence in the research process: Feminist reflections*. And in Books revisited: Feminist Inspirations, Jane Ussher revisits Parlee, M. (1973) *The Premenstrual Syndrome, Psychological Bulletin, 80*; and Daly, M. (1979) *Gyn/Ecology: The metaethics of radical feminism*.

As always we welcome contributions to *POWSR*. Please contact Sally, Nancy, Lucy, Jemma and Amanda with submissions to the appropriate sections.

Sally Johnson & Nancy Kelly

Editors

Paper:

'Truth', gender and the female psyche: Confessions from female sexual offenders

Sherianne Kramer

Female sexual offenders have recently become the subject of increased medical, legal and public attention. However, these systems insist that female sex crimes are rare regardless of the fact that when sexual victimisation experiences are surveyed, the incidence of female perpetrated sex crimes is often higher than expected. Additionally, public engagement with this type of perpetration remains charged with expressions of disbelief. In light of the continued denial of female sexual perpetration, this research explored how such beliefs around female sexuality shape the self-knowledge of female sexual offenders via a discourse analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with eight incarcerated South African female sex offenders. The results demonstrated that the participants' experiences of agency and non-agency in the perpetration of sex crimes mirrored the greater cultural and structural difficulties inherent in defining, articulating and indeed 'thinking' about the figure of the female as a sex criminal. Their elaborate and often contradictory responses drew on a range of embedded medical, correctional and gendered discourses, serving ultimately to sever their femaleness from their crimes. In this way, the participants upheld their innocence as well as relayed the continued 'unfathomability' of the female sexual perpetrator. Surfacing these discourses implies a useful set of counter-co-ordinates for understanding the sexual-psychology of women both within and outside of formal disciplinary technologies.

Keywords: female sexual offenders; female sexuality; gender; power; discourse; self-knowledge; critical discourse analysis; South Africa.

FEMALE sexual offenders have recently become the subject of increased medical, legal and public attention (Giguere & Bumby, 2007) provoking conflicting reactions of both disbelief and fascination amidst the general public (Lawson, 2008). Despite this increased interest, the legal system insists that female sex crimes are rare regardless of the fact that 'when various individuals are surveyed about their sexual victimisation experiences, the incidence of female perpetrated sex crimes is often higher and much more variable' than expected (Giguere & Bumby, 2007, p.2). The question, therefore, arises as to what accounts for the continued denial of female sexual perpetration and, perhaps more significantly, how do such beliefs around female sexuality, in turn, shape the self-knowledge of female sexual offenders?

Wilbraham (2004, p.488) argues that sexual beliefs arise from historicised and institutionalised discursive practices that provide 'parameters of normality and abnormality...[which inform] questions of self, subjectivity and sexuality'. Such discursive practices are invisible as well as taken for granted as knowledge and 'truth'. Foucault's (1978) concept of disciplinary power refers to the circulation of these institutionalised discursive practices which results in modern power relaying normative discourses onto its multiple sites. As such, power/knowledge regulates and constructs individual bodies and shapes individuals' sexual self-knowledge. Subsequently, subject positions made available in prevailing discourses are understood by the individual as self-generated.

This research seeks to examine the intersections between female sexual subjectivity and sexual offending in terms of the

discourses female sexual offenders draw on to construct their identities. This investigation, therefore, aims to illuminate how disciplinary power acts to produce self-knowledge that in turn leads to the discursive coordinates by which female sexual offenders come to define themselves. In essence, this study demonstrates how discursive practices produced at the intersection of knowledge and power account for the continued denial of female sexual perpetration at the level of the offenders themselves. Accordingly, this research attempts to open up new possibilities for the production of counter-knowledge and discourse for the expression of female sexuality.

The 'truth' about femaleness and sexuality

According to Weeks (1981, p.6) 'in our society sex is seen not just as a means of biological reproduction nor a source of harmless pleasure, but, on the contrary, has come to be seen as the central part of our being, the privileged site in which the truth of ourselves is to be found.' This is significant because constructs of sexual norms invest the body with meanings and identities that are mistakenly accepted as biological truths and thus, that which is socially created is understood (both socially and subjectively) as natural (Weeks, 1995).

Gender and sexual norms arise from a restricting gendered discourse that emphasises the binary of masculine and feminine as the exclusive way to understand gender. Norms are also a mode for the operation of discipline and surveillance (Foucault, 1978). This is possible because power relations demarcate 'what will and will not count as truth, which order[s] the world in certain regular and regulatable ways, and which we come to accept as the given field of knowledge' (Butler, 2004, pp.57-58). As such, sexual and gender regulations make gendered and sexual agency difficult. As Bem (1993) and Foucault (1978) note, gender and sexuality are mapped onto the body through the internalisation of cultural

productions and thus, even self-knowledge is socially constructed. For Butler (1999), these productions are also performances because gender is merely a social expectation 'that ends up producing the very phenomenon that it anticipates' (Butler, 1999, p.7). Butler's (1999) concept of performativity cannot be understood as a singular act but should rather be regarded as a continuous ritual that serves to naturalise gender on the site of the body. Thus gender, sexuality and in fact all aspects of identity are performed, acted out and, in this way, reinforced. Accordingly, a restrictive discourse exists that aims to limit sexual and gender possibilities and to isolate those individuals who do not fit the norm by implying that these lives are invaluable (Butler, 2004). This understanding is occasioned through normative discourses of cause and cure which assume that 'something has misfired in the biology or experience of these individuals and needs to be fixed' (Bem, 1993, p.167). In this way, the production of reality is not only a means of social regulation and control but also a process of 'othering'. In summary then, 'we live, more or less implicitly, with received notions of reality, implicit accounts of ontology, which determine what kinds of bodies and sexualities will be considered real and true, and which kind will not' (Butler, 2004, p.214). Because 'discourses on masculinity and femininity...privilege gender traditionalism and pathologise gender deviance by naturalising what is essentially just conformity to the cultural requirement' (Bem, 1993, p.115), as soon as a woman opposes the constructions of femininity, she is regarded as abnormal (Klein, 1976).

Butler (2004, p.15) argues that 'norms do not exercise a final or fatalistic control' and proposes that sexuality can and often does surpass norms, regulations and naturalised discursive practices by taking on alternative forms in response to these normative rules. Butler (2004, p.29) gives the examples of 'drag, butch, femme, transgender, transsexual persons...[who] make us not only

question what is real, and what 'must' be, but they also show us how the norms that govern contemporary notions of reality can be questioned and how new modes of reality can become instituted.' Instances of transgression, such as female sexual perpetration, most clearly demonstrate that an entrenched ontology of gender exists as it is in these instances that expressions of what is said to be real and unreal arise.

The invisible perpetrator

For Freeman (1996, p.403), sexual perpetration is 'construed as an anomaly and, as an event which disturbs reality, it constitutes a threat to the social order and occasions the intervention of social control.' This said, female sexual perpetration has largely been ignored, denied or rationalised in academic, legal and psychiatric domains (Bourke, 2007) as gender constructions tend to override prevailing discourses concerning sexual offenders (Denov, 2003). That is, deeply entrenched discourses render female sexual perpetration unfathomable through gendered and sexualised social constructions. As such, even when a female sexual offender attempts to explain her actions without reliance on gendered constructions, she is often silenced by 'expert' discourses that rely on dominant understandings of men and women. Consequently, the female sexual offender is often only allowed to express herself when she does so through a conceptual framework that relies heavily 'upon the 'known truths' about women' which both removes the offender's agency and responsibility from the crime as well as closes 'the space within which new knowledge and discourse can be produced about women who sexually offend' (Denov, 2003, p.312). These 'known truths' influence criminal justice and treatment professionals' abilities to acknowledge female sexual perpetration (Giguere & Bumby, 2007). As Denov (2003, p.311) has illustrated, 'both psychiatrists and police officers...[make] efforts, either consciously or unconsciously, to transform the female sex offender and

her offence to realign them with more culturally acceptable notions of female behaviour.' This leads to the denial of the existence of female sexual perpetration and consequently the diminishment of the impact on the victim. Sexual perpetration discourses are rooted in constructions of the male perpetrator and the female victim due to the global discursive practices that locate women as nurturing, harmless, law-abiding and sexually submissive and men as sexually aggressive (Naffine, 1987). As such, sexual perpetration is constructed as a predominantly male activity and female sexual perpetration is considered rare, insignificant and harmless.

It appears that the notion of a woman being capable of sexual perpetration is unfathomable and constitutes one of the greatest taboos (Travers, 1999). Accordingly, female sexuality remains a culturally ambivalent subject (Denov, 2003) and, in turn, becomes a highly sensitive and uncomfortable issue that ensures 'deliberate avoidance' (Bourke, 2007, p.215). As a means to interrogate this avoidance, this study investigates the 'natural' and the 'truth' as embodied by the female sexual transgressor.

Method

The aim of this study was to identify and examine power and knowledge in the production of incarcerated female sexual offenders' self-knowledge. This was achieved by interviewing eight incarcerated South African female sexual perpetrators. The interview questions aimed to identify possible discourses on sexuality, gender, maternity, criminality and perversity that female sexual offenders draw upon in producing themselves as subjects. Thereafter critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used as a means to interpret the transcriptions of these interviews. CDA aims to understand 'the relationship between text and society' and thus analysis takes place at both the micro level of language within the transcriptions and at the macro level of social discursive practices by relating core themes and

patterns within the data to discursive patterns within society (Phillips & Jørgenson, 2002, p.67). In line with Butler's (1999) call to challenge the prevailing discourses concerning gender and sexuality, the analysis interrogated the types and structures of language in which gender and sexuality are produced in order to shift understandings of these constructs by articulating 'discursive elements...in new ways' (Phillips & Jørgenson, 2002, p.76). As a white, heterosexual, middle class and female training psychological researcher, the researcher's own social experiences have undoubtedly influenced the way the data was read, understood and selected for inclusion in the report. This study is also based on a social constructionist perspective and thus acknowledges that the narratives emerging from the interview process are co-constructed by the participant and the researcher. The findings displayed by this study are therefore open to further and different interpretations and discussion.

Discussion

The 'impossible' female

Much like the female sexual offenders in a study conducted by Geiger and Fischer (2005), the participants struggled to negotiate their criminal profiles with female gendered roles such as motherhood, passivity, victimhood and submission. Accordingly, the participants in the current study drew on gendered discursive practices as a means to insinuate the impossibility of their statuses as sexual perpetrators. This finding aligns with Denov's (2003) argument that traditional gender roles function to uphold myths concerning female sexual perpetration. Access to gendered discourse also allowed the participants to assert themselves as good mothers as well as to reproduce the dichotomy of the genders by drawing on gendered understandings of masculinity and femininity. Significantly, all of the offenders constructed themselves as

characteristically female-maternal, passive, victimised and innately virtuous. In this way the participants' self-knowledge systems were defined according to female subject positions made available in broader discursive practices. Such constructions are inconsistent with the notion of a criminal and thus served to reassure both the offender and the researcher of the offender's innocence. By employing gendered constructions in their self-productions, the participants simultaneously reproduce and sustain them.

Similar to findings in Lawson's (2008) study, most of the participants in this study maintained their subjective innocence by locating a scapegoat for their crimes. For example, one of the participants, Caroline¹, blamed her son for the rape of her daughter, despite the fact that her daughter stated in court that her parents were responsible for the crime. By blaming her son for the crime, Caroline simultaneously draws on and reinforces the gendered construction of the male aggressor. In fact, nearly all of the narratives concerning the perpetrations centred on a male aggressor. Rather than viewing themselves as accomplices the participants removed their agency from their crimes by adopting the notion of the female victim and constructing themselves accordingly. Social discursive patterns which imply that men are perpetrators and women are victims have historically and socially been used as a means to construct power relations (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) and consequently, the availability of these discourses made it easy for the participants to ensure that the responsibility for the sexual perpetration was laid on the male accomplice rather than the female and that the female perpetrator became the female victim. Thus, in line with observations put forward by Denov (2003), the participants' reproduction of traditional sexual scripts forecloses alternative understandings of female sexual perpetration.

¹ Names have been changed in order to uphold confidentiality.

The most noticeable patterns of victim discourse were expressed by Doris and Eve. Both women threaded a discursive pattern of victimisation throughout their narratives which spanned their entire life histories. In line with common explanations for female sexual perpetration put forward by Higgs, Canavan and Meyer (1992) and Roe-Sepowitz and Krysik (2008), both Doris and Eve relied on transgenerational familial histories of abuse to explain their behaviour. For example, when asked about the events leading up to her crime, Doris explained that *'I was scared. We were scared for this man because he was abusing us, he were hitting us.'* Similarly Sarah explains that her sentence is *'hard to accept because of the circumstances I was living in.'*

The participants also utilised their statuses as mothers as a means to reinforce their femininity. The participants often spoke about their contact with their children and amplified these interactions even though most of them had no or little contact time with their children. Such discursive strategies allowed the participants to constantly produce and reproduce themselves as maternal subjects. The use of maternal discourse as a means to imply femininity was so strong that it often superseded other gendered understandings of women. For example, Eve, felt that the incarceration of women is inappropriate *'because they must be with their children.'*

Most of the participants' perpetrations involved offences against their own children. However, these offences were discursively renegotiated so that the narratives of the crimes centred on the participant as a protective and caring mother. For example, Sarah explained that the reason she partook in the production of child pornography was because *'I was actually scared for my daughter'* and Elizabeth maintained *'I'm a good mother for my child.'* The participants thus not only upheld their subjective innocence but also problematised themselves as criminals by producing themselves as the protector rather than as the perpetrator. This is signif-

icant as women who negate their maternal roles are perceived as negating their very statuses as females and consequently as being deviant (Weeks, 1981). Mothers, however, are viewed as nurturing, protective and asexual and thus incapable of association with sexual offence (Travers, 1999). The use of maternal discourse thus allowed the participants to avoid producing themselves as deviant subjects.

Rationalising discourse: Preserving the female psyche

In much the same way as the general public, the media and the medico-legal system, female sexual offenders tend to draw on victim discourse, histories of abuse and claims of psychological ailments to justify their offences. These rationalisations are not only lived out by the offenders but are also reinforced and consequently reproduced. Specifically, these women asserted their innocence through the implication that female sexual perpetration is not really possible and by drawing on rationalisations which align with broader social discourses that justify female sexual perpetration with underprivileged lifestyles, mental illnesses and histories of abuse (Bourke, 2007).

Claims of innocence

There was a general resistance to the confessional across all of the interviews suggesting that the participants, by virtue of their gender, are still operating outside of the incitement to discourse despite current increased acknowledgement of female sexual perpetration (Lawson, 2008) as well as increased social surveillance (Hopper, 2007). The participants' subjective incapacity to view themselves as sexual offenders affected their ability to occupy agency in their offences as well as their ability to confess. Not a single participant felt that she was guilty of a crime and this was expressed with various claims of innocence such as *'I don't know why I'm here'* (Elizabeth), *'I don't understand the charge'* (Caroline), *'I didn't commit a crime'* (Caroline), *'I didn't know what*

was happening' (Eve) and *'I know I didn't do anything wrong'* (Betty). These claims of innocence differ to more general claims of innocence usually associated with interviewing incarcerated participants (Stevens, 2008) in that these women rely on denial rather than on expressions of remorse or integrity.

Illness discourse

Bourke (2007) maintains that pathologising discourse is often drawn upon by the medico-legal system in order to justify incidences of female sexual perpetration. In much the same way, some of the participants identified themselves as physically or mentally unwell and implied that these ailments played a part in their perpetrations. Caroline expressed suicidal ideations during her interview and drew on discourse on mental instability to explain her actions. Doris also used illness discourse to explain her behaviour. When asked why she did not turn state witness against her husband in court she responded that *'I was deurmekaar² in court because I was on drugs. I was sick. I was very very sick that time...I don't even know they gave me seven years imprisonment.'* The participants' reliance on illness discourse as a means to negotiate their unfathomable statuses resonates with Foucault's (1978) argument that the construction of madness produces an explanation for those human experiences that are socially considered as 'abnormal' or 'unreal'.

Conclusion

This research examined the intersections between female sexual subjectivity and sexual offending by considering the discourses female sexual offenders draw on in order to construct their identities. This exploration of the way female sexual subjectivity is constituted, produced and regulated was conducted through the investigation of broader discursive practices that come to speak through the female sexual offenders. This provided a framework for the under-

standing of how points of disciplinary power are embedded within the discursive practices of female sexual offenders and how this, in turn, produces the offenders' subject positions. By taking into account the macro-level discourses that feed into female sexual offenders' micro-level experiences and identities, this study illuminated how disciplinary power acts to produce self-knowledge that in turn leads to the discursive coordinates by which female sexual offenders come to define themselves.

Specifically, because the participants in this study had a proclivity to rely on social constructions of men, women, motherhood and sexuality, the findings in this study demonstrate that gendered and sexualised constructions continue to structure broader understandings of identity. As a result of globally circulated gender biases, we do not have access to a language that can institutionally conceive of or concede to the existence of female sexual perpetration (Denov, 2003, Bourke, 2007) which makes it difficult and sometimes even impossible to acknowledge the female sexual offender. As indicated by Denov (2003), the legal, academic and medical tendency to rely on constructed truths about women results in narrow and limited frames of reference for female sexual offenders. Furthermore patriarchal discourses and structures inadvertently protect female sexual offenders by not allowing them to exist within academic, scientific and public space. While the resulting legal leniency may be advantageous to female sexual offenders, these women continue to deny responsibility for their perpetrations as well as agency in their actions. This has implications for the continued denial of female sexual perpetration specifically and female sexual 'transgression' more broadly at the wider societal level. If these women were given spaces to speak without being silenced by 'expert' discourse, it may allow for the opening of new possibilities in knowledge and discourse

² Deurmekaar: Afrikaans word meaning 'confused'.

for the expression of female sexuality. The rearticulation of gender as a dynamic and changing essence will also allow for a new understanding of female sexual perpetration such that it is no longer an unfathomable construct. In turn, this will allow for victims to report such incidences and for the legal system to take such incidences seriously.

In conclusion then, this study demonstrates how gender prescriptions and boundaries co-opt individuals into subject positions so that gender is actively performed and demonstrated. Gendered and sexualised realities relayed through disciplinary power have powerful social and psychological effects that ensure the maintenance of both social and individual 'truths.' Such 'truths' imply that gender is dichotomous and that females are incapable of sexual perpetration. This research thus provides a platform from which to account for the discursive silence on female sexual offenders. This discursive silence is however problematic as it ensures that female sexual offenders cannot view themselves as sexual perpetrators and as females simultaneously thus resulting in blaming discourse and instances of denial. In turn, the consequences for the sexual

perpetration are never dealt with by the victim or by the perpetrator. Accordingly, in agreement with Butler (2004), this report argues that gender and sexuality cannot be defined in strict and rigid terms. A simple and narrow definition of gender or sexuality forecloses the possibility of alternative discourse that may make female sexual perpetration fathomable to the legal, medical and academic domains as well as to the perpetrators and the victims. Instances of transgression, such as female sexual perpetration, clearly demonstrate that an entrenched ontology of gender exists. Consequently, this research calls for a more complex, variable and dynamic understanding of both gender and sexuality and for the awareness of the place of female sexual abuse and criminality within our current social constructions of 'truth', 'reality' and sexuality.

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Agora:

'Zuck Off'! A commentary on the protest against Ken Zucker and his 'treatment' of Childhood Gender Identity Disorder

Jemma Tosh

THE Division of Clinical Psychology (DCP) of the British Psychological Society (BPS) invited Professor Ken Zucker as a keynote speaker to their annual conference in December 2010 (BPS, 2010). Zucker works at the Toronto Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and is considered an authoritative figure in the controversial diagnosis and 'treatment' of children with 'Gender Identity Disorder' (Hill et al., 2006). He is also Chair of the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders Work Group for the *DSM-5* (APA, 2010). His invitation was proposed by the DCP conference committee 'expert group' who research potential speakers for the division (J. Unwin, personal communication, 15 November 2010).

Treat society not LGBT children!

This invitation sparked an angry and concerned response from many. Zucker's work at the CAMH GID clinic has been widely criticised by academics (e.g. Wilson, 2000; Wren, 2002; Menvielle & Tuerk, 2002; Hird, 2003; Langer & Martin, 2004; Lev, 2005; Bryant, 2008), organisations (e.g. Burleton, 2008; Choe, 2008; Queerty, 2009) and individuals concerned with LGBT issues and gender diversity. Zucker's treatment has been described as 'coercive' (Ehrensaft, 2008, cited in Spiegel, 2008) and in some instances 'abusive' (Burke, 1996). Zucker and Bradley (2004) emphasise homosexuality as a common 'psychosexual outcome' of childhood GID and Zucker (2006) states that the prevention of transsexualism and

homosexuality are both rationales for its treatment (although he considers the prevention of homosexuality somewhat 'problematic'). Subsequently, this 'treatment' has been compared to reparative therapy (Pickstone-Taylor, 2003) that was condemned by the American Psychiatric Association in 2000 (APA, 2000).

Zucker's 'treatment' involves emphasising the potential benefits to the child of acting in ways that are expected of their biological gender and encouraging 'sex-typical' clothing, toys, games and activities (Zucker & Bradley, 2004). Those involved in the child's life who accept their 'atypical' behaviour are considered 'problematic' and either discouraged from supporting the behaviours or are 'removed'. For example, Hird (2003) describes a case study by Zucker where the family were advised to fire the child's nanny as she was seen as encouraging cross-dressing behaviour. Zucker's justification for this treatment, which he admits lacks empirical support (Zucker & Bradley, 2004; Zucker, 2006; K. Zucker, personal communication, 3 December 2010), is to reduce social ostracism. However, he overlooks his own role in this segregation. To identify GID as pathological and requiring 'treatment,' in addition to enforcing a rigid gender binary, only encourages social exclusion to those who challenge hegemonic and normative constructions of gender.

GID: Gender is diverse

Zucker's assumption that 'stereotypical' gender binaries are 'healthy' and that deviations from expected gender behaviour are pathological is very problematic (Langer & Martin, 2004), particularly when Zucker 'treats' children as young as 3-years-old (Burke, 1996). Several clinicians have challenged this emphasis of a rigid gender binary preferring to conceptualise gender as a spectrum of possibility (Ehrensaft, 2009; Lev, 2005; GID Reform Advocates, n.d.) while others have queried the empirical validity of this underlying assumption (Hegarty, 2009). Moreover, psychiatry's long history of attempts to medicalise and naturalise socially constructed gender expectations have received much feminist critique into the pathologisation of women who challenge stereotypical gender roles as well as the negative impact that these traditional gender roles can have on women's well-being (e.g. Friedan, 1963; Ussher, 1991; Jimenez, 1997).

Academic debate or transphobic hate?

Many groups who opposed Zucker's invitation agreed with the above criticisms in relation to the narrow conceptualisation of gender and the very questionable 'treatment' of children with a diagnosis of GID. However, there were contrasting views in relation to the diagnosis of GID more generally. While there was relative agreement that the pathologisation of transsexualism is problematic and unfair, the diagnosis is a requirement for transsexual adolescents and adults to access treatment. Therefore, there were concerns that criticisms of the disorder could potentially make accessing treatment difficult or potentially impossible for gender-variant, gender-nonconforming, transgender, and transsexual individuals. These issues were discussed early on by those involved with the protest. It was agreed that for the purposes of this particular campaign, the focus would be on the 'treatment' and Zucker's work with children. This would enable the protest group to communicate a clear message that represented the perspec-

tives of those involved. It was also agreed that GID reform as part of an ongoing process of challenging trans pathologisation and discrimination would be more effective than a sudden declassification of GID due to these complex issues of institutional barriers (see Winters, 2005; GID Reform Advocates, n.d.).

'Zuck Off!'

There were a variety of perspectives about how best to respond to Zucker's keynote invitation. One option was to push for the keynote to be cancelled and his invitation retracted. This position was taken due to the lack of an alternative speaker to challenge Zucker's work at the conference. However, this perspective was also related to Zucker's involvement in the 'treatment' of children who were considered (by Zucker) as 'at risk' of becoming homosexual or transsexual. Several individuals were concerned with the potential breaches this treatment has in relation to human rights legislation, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). For these reasons it was argued that Zucker's work is potentially so harmful that he should not be given a platform that would only validate and legitimise his position further.

The other position pushed for the inclusion of alternative perspectives at the conference, and the focus of criticism was the positioning of Zucker as an 'expert' and advertising his presentation as a 'keynote', which attached value and status to his perspective. While several individuals were contacted, none were available to challenge Zucker at the conference. In discussions with the DCP conference organisers it was agreed that Zucker would be given an introduction by the DCP Chair Jenny Taylor, who would outline the objections from the other BPS sections and summarise the criticisms of Zucker's work. It was also arranged for the session to be slightly longer to encourage a more thorough debate about these issues and conference delegates would be offered a copy of my statement regarding Zucker's work and its criticisms (Tosh, forthcoming).

Enough is enough!

Several months of organisation and mobilisation accumulated on Friday 3 December, amidst freezing temperatures in Manchester city centre. This campaign, which began with only a few emails being sent out to enquire if others were aware of this keynote presentation, soon developed into an international and multifaceted response aimed at the DCP. The Psychology of Sexualities Section (POSS) of the BPS were the first to formally contact the DCP stating their objections, and included my statement describing the objections in more detail. At the same time, the protest group were organising and advertising protest meetings in Manchester. The DCP conference organisers quickly became aware of these meetings and were keen to discuss these issues with the protest organisers. However, the meeting with the DCP conference chair had limited success, as we were informed that the keynote would go ahead despite the objections from POSS and the protesters. However, the DCP were keen to arrange a panel to enable a discussion at the conference but it was difficult to find a suitable speaker at such short notice. The DCP arranged for Polly Carmichael to debate these issues with Zucker as she works at the Child GID clinic in London, but this appeared a rather superficial gesture as she was quoted as saying ‘that although his work is controversial, it is valid’ (J. Unwin, personal communication, 15 November 2010). Carmichael also cites Zucker in her own work (e.g. Carmichael & Alderson, 2004), so it is unlikely that our objections would have been voiced at the debate if this panel went ahead.

The Psychology of Women Section (POWS) sent their objections soon after this and the protest meetings increased in frequency and numbers, as we organised what our messages would be and how best to communicate them at the conference. We had also set up an online petition at the request of several individuals who wanted to participate but were unable to attend meetings (iPetitions, 2010). On the day of the

conference this petition had collected over 330 signatures from individuals in the UK, US, Canada and Australia and included comments from a wide range of concerned individuals. For example, Professor Spurlin stated, ‘This is just another example of the perpetuation of misogyny and homophobia in culture under the guise of medical authority’ and Misha Balch of Gender Alliance of the South Sound stated, ‘Dr’ Zucker’s work...is an affront to the dignity of transgendered people everywhere. Transgenderism is a reaction to a society that rejects ‘whole people’ whose personalities do not conform to the patriarchal polarised socio-political constructs of ‘male’ and ‘female’ (iPetitions, 2010).

The DCP then began to receive criticism from within the Division, from the Faculty of Sexual Health and HIV of the DCP. The Faculty sent its concerns formally to the DCP just after the conference, and the Community Psychology section of the BPS sent their objections on the first day of the conference. The Community Psychology section also produced a statement outlining their concerns, particularly emphasising the human rights legislation that Zucker’s treatment potentially breaches (The UK Community Psychology Discussion List, 2010).

In addition to these formal responses within the BPS, the awareness and support for the protest was increasing outside the organisation. Several media outlets published articles and blogs on these events and encouraged people to support the protest either by attending the meetings or signing the online petition (e.g. ‘Intersex in Australia’, 2010; Lockhart, 2010). There was also a lot of discussion within professional and activist networks via email lists, blogs, and online groups. This accumulation of interest and support demonstrated to DCP conference organisers and delegates on the day of the protest that although there were over 40 people protesting in the snow, the views they represented were supported by many more. It also enabled us to achieve more than previous protests had been able

to do, particularly in terms of having our perspective heard at the conference (N. Kennedy, personal communication, 3 December 2010). The DCP conference organisers invited two protesters into the keynote presentation to ask Zucker questions and meet with him face-to-face. Natacha Kennedy, who organised the protest against Zucker in London in 2008, and I attended Zucker's keynote presentation and voiced our concerns.

Ah...the infamous Tosh

Once inside the conference Natacha and I were escorted to the room where Zucker would present his keynote. The polite and professional atmosphere of the academic conference reminded me of the 'banality of evil' as the audience sat quietly waiting for such an abhorred individual to speak. It was a striking contrast to the overt and passionate chants originating from outside. When I introduced myself to Zucker he laughed and said, 'Ah...the infamous Tosh!'

Jenny Taylor delivered a critical introduction to Zucker's keynote, which was eagerly responded to by Jennifer Wild from the DCP 'expert group'. Jennifer emphasised Zucker as 'inspiring' and 'one of the world's leading experts' on GID before describing her professional relationship with him since her undergraduate degree in the early 1990s. This very brief introduction was awkwardly positioned between Jenny's critical introduction and Zucker's presentation, but illustrated the tense and polarised positions in relation to his work.

Zucker's presentation was uneventful and relatively monotonous to those familiar with his work, as he summarised research that conformed to his previous presentations and publications apart from a brief summary of the proposed revisions for the *DSM-5*. Zucker is an experienced orator who is unlikely to state a radical or controversial comment (apart from his very brief mention of 'ethnic identity disorder') and even less likely not to back up everything he says with 'empirical research'. The questions

following the keynote were much more enlightening, not of Zucker's perspective, but of the audience's responses to it. One conference delegate stated that he was 'very disappointed' with the keynote presentation and that he didn't understand why Zucker insisted on using a 'psychiatric and diagnostic narrative' to describe these children. Fantastically, the majority of the audience applauded this comment. Zucker's response was less fantastic, as he offered a dismissive and avoidant answer stating that the question was 'deeply philosophical' and that is why he emphasises the 'distress and impairment' aspect of the 'disorder' rather than debate whether gender diversity should be a disorder at all. However, this is contradictory to his previous work, where he has argued that if a child does not show signs of distress this should not stop a clinician from 'treating' their GID (Zucker, 1999).

Natacha summarised her own PhD research on transgendered children and highlighted the contradictions between her findings and Zucker's work. For example, Natacha's research with transgendered adults found that the vast majority were very secretive during their childhood and adolescence and were unlikely to be referred to a service during this time. Therefore, Zucker's work generalises from a very unrepresentative sample of the trans community. Zucker stated that he was unable to respond to this question without more information regarding the specific sample that Natacha used and appeared keen to find out more about her research. However, he did state that there were two 'trajectories of development' for transgendered individuals, revaluing his work from an 'unrepresentative' description of a diverse group to a partial explanation of a dichotomous group.

Jenny Taylor queried Zucker's justification for his treatment; that these children are in 'pain' and 'distressed' by their gender incongruence. She asked, how did he know that the distress was caused by gender incongruence, and not other people's responses to the child's 'atypical' behaviour? Zucker

provided an intriguing response to this question. He stated that 'Even when you strip away and hold constant issues of family rejection and peer ostracism children are still feeling incongruent and how they feel psychologically, struggles because of that disjunction. The pain and distress from that disjunction is closest to the idea of inherent distress.' Many in the audience were left wondering, but how do you 'strip away' family rejection and peer ostracism?

I asked Zucker, due to the controversy surrounding his 'treatment' and the research describing instances of this method being harmful, how could it justify its use? Did he have any evidence for its 'success'? Were there any longitudinal studies supporting its validity? He had stated in his presentation that for children who 'lose' their GID there were a number of possible reasons for this, spontaneous remission, therapy or other social factors. If he does not know the reason why children stop demonstrating overt signs of gender incongruence, how can he argue that his 'treatment' has any positive role in these children's gender development? Zucker was very clear in responding that there was no empirical support or longitudinal outcome studies comparing his 'treatment' with any kind of control group that could support his therapy. He then went on to discuss the difficulties about implementing randomised controlled trials and that this therapy is not manualised. What he didn't say was how he justified its use with children when he has no idea of its consequences.

Queer and lovin' it!

Those who attended the keynote presentation heard Zucker's perspective, but only after an introduction that questioned his role as an 'expert' and highlighted the ethical problems of 'treating' gender diverse children. The audience also listened to questions that challenged the validity of Zucker's work once his presentation had ended. As I left the conference I saw many people taking copies of my statement and was approached by several delegates who wanted more information about the protest and our objections to Zucker's work. Several delegates had also come out earlier to speak to protesters and many took pictures of our banners and signs. The protest was filmed as part of a BBC3 documentary following a transgender young person and a local student newspaper interviewed Zucker and several protesters. If this group had not mobilised and responded to Zucker's invitation the DCP keynote would have been a very different experience. The commitment by those who were determined to intervene as well as the emails and phone calls of support and encouragement helped develop this protest into an ongoing campaign. While those involved held different views on a variety of topics, or disagreed on how best to respond, we all agreed on one thing: that 'enough is enough!'

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Agora:

I don't want to talk about it: Why are young women reluctant to participate in menstrual cycle research?

Noelle McAra & Lynn Wright

RECRUITING participants for research can be challenging, and when a specific group is required this can become more difficult. Our current programme of research focuses on quantitative changes in cognition across the menstrual cycle in women with natural cycles and in women with hormonally controlled menstrual cycles. So far, the recruitment of women who are willing to complete multiple testing phases and/or menstrual cycle charts has proven problematic, and unfortunately this appears to be typical for this kind of research. When previously examining the influence of PMS on mothers' attitudes to their children's behaviour, McAra (1999) found that the response rate was low, yielding just 23 responses from the 100 participants who had freely agreed to take part. Lowe (2005) contacted 130 women for interview, yet only 11 were actually interviewed. Grace and McBride-Stewart (2007) had the agreement of 560 women, and, although 150 completed their questionnaire, only 40 completed it fully. This motivated us to examine the issue from both a theoretical and a practical angle.

We first considered how many women should be tested in such a study if the result is to be considered statistically valid. A review of the literature revealed that research can be based on results from very small samples with some studies using as few as eight participants (e.g. Garrett & Elder, 1984; Hausmann, 2005; Solis-Ortiz & Corsi-Cabrera, 2008; Bell & Bloomer, 2010; Brambilla et al., 2010; Lawrence, Klein & Carter 2010).

Smaller samples are useful when multiple testing and complex hormonal measurements are used. But as individual menstrual cycles are so varied, and are generally not the uniform 28 days as reported in many studies, drawing conclusions based on such small numbers could be rather presumptuous.

Of course, not all research into the menstrual cycle uses such small numbers of participants. In fact, many studies have used large pre-existing data sets (e.g. Resnick et al., 2006; Thilers, MacDonald & Herlitz, 2006), showing that there may be more than one valid answer to the question of sample sizes. Each has associated advantages and disadvantages. Small samples are clearly easier to recruit, but, while they provide rich and often in depth information about the experiences of a few women, are unlikely to allow us to infer much about women's experiences in general. On the other hand, large samples provide more information about differing menstrual cycles. However, the recruitment of larger samples is difficult and time consuming. Taking these issues into account, we suggest that recruiting numbers in the region of 40 to 50 women would allow us to confidently draw valid conclusions about the role of the menstrual cycle in cognitive performance.

How do researchers in this area find their participants? The most common methods of recruiting large numbers of participants is to recruit from within education (e.g. Roder, Brewer & Fink, 2009; Keisner & Pastore, 2010) or to offer an incentive such as cash (Halari et al., 2005; Lokken & Ferraro, 2006; Van Anders & Hampson, 2005), or course

credits (Burton, Henninger & Hafetz, 2005, Oinonen, 2009; Scarborough & Johnstone, 2005). Several studies have used existing data sets to good advantage. Using data from the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) and the Women's Health Initiative Memory study (WHIMS) Resnick et al. (2006) examined the effects of combination oestrogen and progesterone replacement on cognition and affect in 1416 women. Thilers, MacDonald and Herlitz (2006) examined the data of 1276 females from the Betula study into health, ageing and memory. However, these options may not be available to all researchers, and however useful pre-existing data sets are, they limit and determine what the researcher can examine.

We recruit most of our participants from undergraduate psychology student populations. Students studying psychology at undergraduate level tend to be predominantly female, and in Scotland in the academic session 2007–2008, 78.6 per cent of psychology undergraduates were female, providing a large pool of participants from which to recruit (www.scotland.gov.uk).

The student population represents a high proportion of participants used in psychology experiments (Korn, 1988). Many are critical of this practice, arguing students are not representative of the general population (Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010; Myers, 1983; Smart, 1966, cited in Wintre, North & Sugar, 2001) or that results differ when non student populations are tested. Indeed, as Medin and Atran (2004) point out, results from studies in cognitive psychology are often shown to differ when the sample is not drawn from undergraduate psychology courses, which may have implications for our research. Finally Jourard (1968, cited in Shultz, 1969) argues that there is no guarantee students are honest in how they behave or respond during research. In spite of this critique, the practice of recruiting students as participants continues. Indeed, Wintre et al. (2001) reviewed a selection of journals covering a period of 20 years, finding that 91 per cent of the 1719 articles

examined recruited participants from undergraduate psychology courses.

Recruitment issues

This begs the question, why are student populations considered problematic? As noted previously, recruitment remains difficult within this body of research, with students signing up to take part, but failing to attend all testing sessions or failing to complete and/or return menstrual charts. We recruited a group of 94 students for a pilot study and found that of the 73 women, 42 signed up and of the 35 who started the study, only 26 actually completed testing.

We believe there may be a number of explanations for why our recruitment of students has proven to be so problematic. Enigmatically, while recruiting for our research we regularly find women engaging in lively and often extended conversations about their personal experiences of menstruation, and asking questions about the research and what might be expected. These spontaneous sessions see women exchange narratives on menstruation in open, enthusiastic and often frank terms. Narratives have been used successfully to gain insight into views on, and experiences of negotiating menstruation in social contexts (Allen & Goldberg, 2009; Burrows & Johnson, 2005). But we find the problem starts when the talking stops, with women subsequently failing to complete testing sessions, particularly those that require them to give specific information about themselves and their own cycles.

Time scale may be one reason female students fail to complete all aspects of testing. Most research examining the menstrual cycle requires women to take part in more than one testing session. Participants are often required to complete a menstrual chart or questionnaires over one or more cycles, and a high proportion fail to complete these. Participation in lengthy research projects may become a low priority when coursework deadlines or exams are approaching. This is one common drawback

of recruiting from a student population. It is conceivable that students sign up for research for impression management reasons, feeling they should be seen to take part in staff research. Once they are no longer taught by the staff member the obligation to finish testing may diminish.

Some younger students may feel uncomfortable with the idea of staff or fellow students knowing they are taking part in research relating to their menstrual cycle, or simply feel embarrassed when asked questions on the subject. In our experience students initially present themselves as keen to take part in research but this willingness to take part does not continue until the end of testing. Beausang and Razor (2000) point out that often girls learn about menstruation and menarche as dirty or shameful. This negative view is noted throughout history from as early as 3000 BC when Mesopotamians isolated menstruating women. Romans such as Pliny the Elder, (Bostock & Riley, 1855) the ancient Greeks, including Hippocrates and Galen (Brock, 1916) and the bible (e.g. Ezekiel 22: 1–11 and Leviticus 15: 19–30), brand the menstruating woman as unclean. Stubbs (2008) argues that adolescents are still being given mixed messages about menstruation and that despite being a natural process it is something that should be hidden. Girls are encouraged to welcome menarche as normal and natural, yet sanitary products are designed to ensure no one will know she has her period. These messages could act to influence women's perceptions and attitudes towards menstruation, which can remain throughout their lifetimes. Stubbs (2008) notes that adolescent attitudes towards menstruation remain negative into adulthood and can contribute to body shame and self-objectification in later life. Negative attitudes and beliefs have similarly been shown to influence how women feel about other reproductive functions such as breastfeeding (Johnston-Robledo et al., 2007) and childbirth (Moloney, 2010).

It might be that our female students also learn about menstruation in this negative

way. An examination of the literature shows that a great deal of research still reports negatively on the influence of the menstrual cycle, connecting this with a *decline* in cognitive performance, (Wright & Badia, 1999), *negative effect* on mood (Natale & Alberatazzi, 2006) and links with suicide attempts (Baca-Garcia et al., 2010). Students searching for menstrual cycle research are more likely to find papers reporting negative aspects of menstruation rather than positive influences (e.g. Hampson, 1990). Unless a shift towards more positive research develops, such negative viewpoints are unlikely to change.

This negativity and stigma may be a factor contributing to the reluctance we are finding when recruiting female students. Arguably, our use of ovulation kits contributes to that reluctance. Perhaps students who are in relationships fear that husbands or boyfriends will regard their use of ovulation kits as an attempt to become pregnant. Although we have no empirical evidence of this thus far, several women joked about hiding the ovulation kits from partners or parents, which may be an issue worth pursuing. It might also be argued that the very nature of the ovulation kit may put potential participants off because it is a test often used by women who hope to become pregnant.

Although many believe that using student populations limits findings (Myers, 1983; Wintre et al., 2001; Henrich et al., 2010), we contend here that this population, and more specifically psychology students, are arguably an ideal pool to draw a sample from for menstrual cycle research. Within our area of research age is an important factor, because menstrual cycles can be irregular in the first few years following menarche. Irregular cycles also become more common as women move towards menopause. For testing purposes, including young women with regular cycles in the research allows for more accurate pinpointing of the phases of the cycle. In terms of age, the majority of undergraduate students are in their late teens to early twenties, with 65 per cent of students in further

and higher education in Scotland between 2007 and 2008 aged between 16 and 30. In undergraduate psychology courses this increases to 86 per cent, providing an ideal age range for testing (www.scotland.gov.uk). A student cohort then provides a large number of young women who are likely to have regular cycles and who are available to take part in research, but are alas not willing.

The question remains one of how these students can be recruited and retained when money or course credits are not available as incentives. We currently rely on the interest and goodwill of students when we ask them to take part in our research. Perhaps one way to encourage participation would be to make students aware of the positive aspects of menstruation. As much of the research on menstruation continues to take a negative perspective, it may be that the dominance of such research shapes the negative attitudes of many women towards menstruation. Our own research intends to examine the menstrual cycle in a positive way, focusing on enhancements in cognitive performance rather than a decline in performance. Perhaps this positive approach should be emphasised more clearly.

Future directions

As outlined previously, our most successful recruitment sessions have been those in which potential participants are invited to group discussions about what the research involves. This invariably leads to the groups talking about their own menstrual cycles, with women relating their own experiences to one another. At these sessions, women are enthusiastic about the research and their willingness to take part. This enthusiasm needs to be nurtured in order to encourage women to take part in the research and see it through to completion. Perhaps it is during these sessions that we should seek to break down the stigmatised view of menstruation and highlight to our participants the positive aspects of their menstrual cycles. We are currently arranging a series of focus groups to discover why students are failing to

complete menstrual cycle studies. These sessions will be recorded, but will be informal and relaxed in the hope that we can recreate the enthusiasm shown at recruitment sessions. In addition to exploring these young women's personal experiences of menstruation we hope to explore any further issues the women may have about taking part in such studies.

To conclude, we have considered some of the challenges faced when recruiting female students to take part in menstrual cycle research. While this can be problematic, undergraduate psychology students should provide an excellent population for recruitment. The challenge is not only to recruit large numbers of women, but to find a way to maintain their interest for the duration of the study, even when no incentives are offered. We argue that a more positive approach towards the menstrual cycle should be fostered among both researchers and participants if this is to be achieved and feel, in our experience, that focus groups could aid this process.

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Agora:

Women's Liberation Movement@40 conference review

Pauline Whelan & Kristin Aune

FORTY YEARS ON, what impact has the Women's Liberation Movement had, especially in the British context? What are its legacies, both for its active participants and for society today? How has history represented – or misrepresented – the movement? How are contemporary feminists taking feminism forward in the 21st century? Is feminism really as inclusive, diverse and collaborative as it sometimes claims? Is consciousness-raising still a useful activity? These are some of the questions that were debated at the Women's Liberation Movement @ 40: Continuities and Changes conference (WLM@40) held in Ruskin College, Oxford, on 12–13 March 2010. As well as providing a chance to celebrate the history of the British women's movement – which, many say, began at Ruskin in 1970 – the event was intended to 'bring together feminist and women's activists across borders (spatial, generational, political and demographic and others) to engage in debate and discussion around contemporary issues' (WLM@40, 2010). Rather than describe each conference session in detail, or present personal reflections on the conference (see Redfern 2010), here we identify specific themes that emerged for us across the sessions we attended that we feel are particularly relevant to ongoing debates in and around feminist psychology. This is a necessarily partial account, structured inevitably by our own positions and interests, and by the fact that we were each able to attend far fewer sessions than we would have liked. It is perhaps a testament to the vibrancy and scope of contemporary feminism that we found it difficult to choose which of the

sessions (sometimes up to seven parallel) to attend. We describe here what we feel were three key issues relevant to *POWSR* (intersectionality, reflexivity and future directions for contemporary feminism) and we hope that a flavour of the lively, engaging, supportive and sometimes frictional conference atmosphere will be evident in this retelling. We have chosen in most cases not to reference particular individuals who discussed specific ideas because many of the ideas we present here were discussed by multiple contributors across sessions. Our aim here is to present a short review of the WLM@40 conference by highlighting some of the key issues raised at the conference and addressing their relationship to ongoing work within feminist psychology.

Intersectionality

As intersectionality theory continues to be widely employed in analyses in feminist psychology (e.g. Evans et al., 2010; Ussher, 2009) and interrogated for its contemporary utility to feminist praxis elsewhere (e.g. Burman, 2004; Davis, 2008; Nash, 2008), the urgency and complexity of attending to overlapping social inequalities was a key focus of several of the talks. These discussions drew attention to gender, class, race and (dis)ability issues and highlighted the continuing importance of intersectional approaches to feminist analyses. The continued need to explore multiple levels of oppression both within and outside the feminist movement was emphasised. Class issues emerged as a dominant theme across sessions, particularly in relationship to the gendered distribution of resources. For instance, Beatrix Campbell

and the Women's Budget Group discussed the neo-patriarchal divisions of labour that still underpin UK Government policy, inhibiting women from achieving equal pay or attaining real liberation from the constraints of capitalism. Religion, rarely a theme for feminists in the 1970s, but one which increasingly visibly structures life in the 21st century, was addressed in a popular panel led by Women Against Fundamentalism. Discussions of feminist disability studies similarly highlighted the traditional invisibility of 'disabled' women in mainstream feminism as well as providing a more detailed disentangling of the 'normal' body – where the 'normal' was exposed as relying on an able, masculine, autonomous corporeality. The invisibility of disabled women in the feminist movement reflected other erasures and tensions. Attending to the contribution of black women to the feminist movement, a discussion of the erasure of women of colour from the origin stories of the Women's Liberation Movement was initiated by Gail Lewis and continued in a panel on recent oral history research with activists. These discussions served as a useful reminder of the tensions within the movement, as well as offering a more general caution about the (often unarticulated) powers of historical narration. The mythical constitution of feminism as a white, middle-class, able-bodied pursuit headed by a few – usually represented as white, middle-class, able-bodied, often academic – feminist 'stars' was repeatedly debunked in conference discussions, as well as being notably challenged by the diversity of the conference delegates (notwithstanding the limitations on this discussed below).

Reflexivity

Alongside debates about intersecting inequalities, there was attention to the continuing need to adopt critical self-reflexive modes of inquiry and activism. There was a reflexivity about competing personal commitments and the continuing difficulties of combining activist and academic agendas. While it was asserted that the feminist movement had, to

some extent, granted women a 'vocabulary and confidence' to speak about issues that they felt were important, some participants expressed the view that this feminist 'vocabulary' had become mired in academe and that academic feminists (including some conference attendees) now spoke an unnecessarily specialised language that was impenetrable to most women. However, the animated and engaging nature of the discussions that we attended – all of which included participation from both activists and academics – seemed to prove that fruitful dialogue was certainly still possible. This was underlined by the fact that many conference participants personally inhabited both activist and academic positions, and perhaps also reflects a broader resurgence of commitment to feminist activism. In other critical reflexive explorations, conference fees, childcare and access issues were all discussed as factors that prohibited attendance at WLM@40 for some. However, the conference organising team (led by Louise Livesey) worked hard to recognise and alleviate these and other related issues during the conference preparation phases. As well as their hard work, the widespread and often passionately-expressed recognition of such limitations that emerged in discussions over the weekend seemed indicative of the kind of healthy, critical self-reflexivity that provides the impetus for positive change.

Contemporary feminism: New directions

The expansive range of topics covered during the two-day event, which included – among many others – animation, popular fiction, feminist theory, technology, disability studies, religion and spirituality, working conditions, environmental activism, transnational feminism, political representation, writing workshops, consciousness-raising and violence against women demonstrated the diversity of contemporary feminist issues. Some issues were tackled from multiple angles. Concerns about the continued underrepresentation of women in science, engineering, technology and mathematics in

higher education, for example, were usefully complemented by work exhibiting the technological expertise of contemporary feminists and the power of digital tools to explore, navigate and publicise activist networks. Feminist websites, blogging and other forms of online communication were elsewhere confirmed as powerful ways to organise and disseminate information, not least by the fact that live 'tweets' were posted about conference discussions throughout the weekend. But while the evolution of technology since the first Women's Liberation Movement was clearly evidenced at this conference, the unequal distribution of technological resources was also highlighted, and cautions were sounded about submitting to erroneous assumptions of high-speed Internet access for all.

In other sessions, the specific challenges facing younger feminists, including the difficulties of inhabiting marginal positions within both the academic and political spheres, were identified and reflected tensions expressed previously by young feminists (e.g. Adams et al., 2007). Despite these challenges and the lack of widespread public recognition of young feminist work (Redfern & Aune, 2010), the important contributions and enthusiasm of younger feminists was clear, and welcomed, throughout the weekend.

Throughout the conference, reflections on the origins and legacies of the Women's Liberation Movement were combined with the enthusiasm of contemporary feminists as well as with recognition of the diversity and tensions among feminist approaches. The conference provided a very useful opportunity for connecting feminist activists working within different arenas and ended with a lively discussion and talk of hosting an annual Women's Liberation Movement event. This seemed a fittingly positive way to round off a thought-provoking, timely and well-organised conference.

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Research Review:

The politics of emotionality

Krista Carson

IN THE ARTICLE, 'Passionate men, emotional women: Psychology constructs gender difference in the late 19th century', Stephanie Shields (2007) critically examines how evolutionary foundations and the notion of complementarity were used in constructions of masculinity and femininity, and reason and emotion, in 19th century Britain and America. In her analysis of gender constructs, the author includes a thorough race and class analysis. Shields (2007) argues that emphasising differences, and using the paradoxical ineffability and embodiment of emotions, helps to maintain existing social hierarchies. This research illustrates how these social and cultural constructions, along with those of scientific psychology, reify one another. In addition to her discussions about evolutionary theory, ineffability, embodiment and complementarity, Shields' (2007) thoughtful enquiry provides useful insights into the issues associated with legitimating emotions and relying heavily on unempirical data.

During the 19th century in Britain and America, there was a striking division between public and private selves and the Victorians sometimes showed intolerance to certain types of outward emotional expression, such as anger (Stearns & Stearns, 1986). It is interesting that Shields (2007) chose to look at emotions in a time when dealing with emotions meant circumventing them; restraint of certain emotions, such as anger, was mythically perceived to symbolise piety, character and propriety (Stearns & Stearns, 1986). It was also a time of numerous double standards. Shields (2007) examines how a woman consumed with emotion was thought to embody a lack of control, which was disconcerting; however,

a man displaying certain 'passionate' emotions that were believed to be valuable in the public sphere was considered normal or natural. In the article, a case is provided for the notion that scientific definitions of 'normal' or 'natural' can sometimes be referred to as unquestioned existing beliefs when the author points out that the less worthy 'feminine' qualities were deviations from the (White, privileged) male standard in scientific psychology and popular public discourse.

In Shields' (2007) article, this legitimating or qualifying of emotions becomes particularly discernible when she claims that men were thought to possess certain cognitive abilities that were considered more valuable, while women were believed to possess stronger 'lower mental processes (emotion and certain perceptual skills)' (p.96). The author succeeds in pointing out the belief that women did not have the cognitive capacity for reason to the same extent as men, and that reason and emotion were two irreconcilable kinds of knowledge, with the latter being a less valuable human commodity. An example of how this 'belief' persists today can be seen in research such as Baron-Cohen's 'extreme male brain theory of autism.' Baron-Cohen, (2002) claims empathising (the female brain type) and systematising (the male brain type) are almost opposite abilities, while just barely acknowledging the role of socialisation practices and culture in developing these two 'brain types'.

Shields (2007) draws attention to how eminent authority figures in the medical and science fields connected women with emotion and men with reason. Further, she argues that these medical 'experts' had been

inadequate in their responses, as these types of claims were often not backed up with empirical data but with convoluted and misinformed 'folk' knowledge such as stereotypes and hearsay. In noting how 'common knowledge' regarding gendered characteristics often went unquestioned, Shields (2007) makes it clear that recognising and accepting these ideas in the scientific domain served to reify them. Mid-century psychologists were using unempirical popular discourse as a basis for their knowledge and leaving out certain pieces of information *when it was convenient for those privileged*: 'positive images of aboriginal and colonised peoples were, therefore, dismissed as the products of anti-scientific sentimentality' (Shields, 2007, p.95). The author demonstrates that the legitimating and gendering of emotions and the physical manifestations associated with a particular emotion, revolved around tacit assumptions. Furthermore, Shields (2007) briefly looks at how many of the social stances of the time were unfairly applied depending on sex, race and class, and were based on these assumptions.

In her article, Shields (2007) looks at Herbert Spencer's stance on gender and emotion and focuses on how women's traits were considered complementary to men's and how this has been/can be used as a tool to justify unequal distribution of power. Shields (2007) points out that the notion of complementarity holds the binary firmly into place, masking the inherent problem. This dichotomisation, where groups are thought about as opposites (reason/emotion, public/private, masculine/feminine) becomes problematic as it entails a value-laden and unequal mechanism that can be damaging to one half of the 'opposite' in question. Interestingly, Bonnycastle (1965) explores the concept of binaries and concludes that binary divisions all have attached values; 'the first term is often considered superior to the second term' (pp.115–116). Similarly, Shields (2007) notes that complementarity was also used to justify beliefs surrounding race and class.

This is crucial to examine because if binaries develop stereotypes and inequities, then using binaries and complementarity to categorise concepts is evidently a very limiting way of looking at people, relationships and gender systems.

Women in the 19th century were greatly affected by these social 'norms' and stigmas that were so deeply embedded and held in place. Shields (2007) names some of the traits women were thought to possess: ineffectual emotionality, limited intellectual capacity, unstable sensitivity, perceptual acumen, intuition, practicality, childishness and sentimentality. These traits, as identified by Shields (2007), were often considered inferior and ineffectual and had negative connotations; for example women's emotion might allude to sentimentality. Chesler (2005) gives an example of how this plays out when she states that Freud saw women as 'potentially warmhearted creatures, but more often as cranky children with uteruses' (p.140). While the scope of Shields' (2007) article does not thoroughly address the outcomes set out for women who did not subscribe to the rigid gender roles of the times (such as being pathologised and sometimes hospitalised), she does illustrate a key point about the way 'constructions of emotion out-of-control (were) used to disempower people' (p.106).

All in all, Shields (2007) provides an in-depth examination that reflectively articulates how ideological assumptions concerning scientific psychological constructs of gender can be damaging, as once the knowledge is claimed as a truth and embedded into institutional practices and discourse, it becomes very difficult to instill change in the collective mindset. The author shows that it is important to critically address historical and public discourse and its effects on current views regarding social hierarchies: 'As in the 19th century, even today popular culture notions of gender and emotion creep uncritically into the scientific psychology of emotion' (p.105).

The inequities that the author discusses operate on several structural levels, and

become cyclical, as some scientific ‘experts’ recycled folk knowledge of the past into their works, and then, used their findings to reify the scientific discourse. These issues are relevant to current discourse as many of these faulty assumptions make up the underlying foundation for many current knowledge bases, such as that seen in the work of Baron-Cohen (2002). Shields (2007) also creates discourse surrounding the legitimating of subjective experiences such as emotions, which is significant as it brings awareness to the notion of different ways of meaning-making and knowledge creation, other than the traditional ‘masculine’ discourse. This research has provided some insights that can help to reconcile the dichotomy and ingrained inequity surrounding reason and emotion.

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Research Review:

A feminist critique of outdated constructions of gender: A response to Zucker et al. (1999)

Ashley Brown & Em Temple-Malt

COMING FROM a critical background, it is disheartening to see myths of an inflexible gender still being adopted in psychology and psychiatry without reference to major developments in Western social culture and academic thought. This paper will briefly discuss methodological, theoretical, and ontological issues arising from 'Gender constancy judgements in children with Gender Identity Disorder: Evidence for a developmental lag,' an article published by Zucker and colleagues in 1999.

Questioning the validity of the research claims

Many researchers have pointed out the systematic errors and methodological flaws in Zucker's work on Childhood Gender Identity Disorder (GID) (e.g. Mayer-Bahlburg 2010; Bartlett, Vasey & Bukowski, 2000; Langer & Martin, 2004). Due to the brevity of this critique, only the diagnostic methods will be discussed as they directly affect sample size and selection in the 1999 study. One questionable aspect in terms of sample selection is the diagnostic criteria which states that the children are 'distressed' by their experience of being a 'boy' or a 'girl' (American Psychiatric Association [*DSM-IV-TR*], 2000). However, due to the age of the children diagnosed (in this study a mean age of 6 with a standard deviation of 2), it is unclear whether the children feel the distress, or the parents (Bryant, 2008; Wilson, Griffin & Wren, 2002). Furthermore, it is unlikely that the children would have the resources to seek out clinical therapy for

themselves; rather it is a parent that acts on their behalf. Whether or not the child feels distress is irrelevant to the study, and yet extremely relevant to the *DSM-IV* diagnostic category.

Furthermore, the 'treatment' recommended by Zucker et. al. (1999) could be distressing for the children who do not view their gender performance as problematic (see Burke, 1996). These 'treatments' include a complete restriction of access to the materials and people that contribute to the 'problematic behaviour' (Zucker & Bradley 2005). This includes the exchange of toys and peers with ones considered to be 'gender appropriate'. Zucker and Bradley (2005) state that, 'If parents allow their child to continue to engage in cross-gender behaviour, the GID is in effect being tolerated, if not reinforced' (p.612). On the surface of this statement, Zucker and Bradley (2005) are advocating the need for consistency in a treatment programme, but their curious use of the word 'tolerated' suggests that they are actively encouraging parents to be intolerant of non-normative gender expression in their children. Zucker (2006a) states that the prevention of homosexuality and transsexualism are both rationales for treatment and his particular treatment programme has received a wide range of criticism both in terms of its content and purpose (see Pickstone-Taylor, 2003; Hird, 2003; Langer & Martin, 2004; Tosh, 2011, this issue).

The projection of parental anxiety onto children is a particularly perplexing facet of Childhood GID, especially when considering

the 'genderless' and 'asexual' discourse applied to pre-pubescent children in contemporary Western culture. In Martin's (2009) study on affective normalisation of heterosexuality in early childhood, she observes that it is a heteronormative social framework that, '...leads mothers to read their children's behaviours against the dominant discourse of children as asexual whole, at the same time, using adult meanings to understand children's behaviour' (p.197). For example, Zucker et al. (1999) cite literature that suggests young children do not have concerns about their gender and yet they fail to consider this may be due to the child's agency in interpreting gender rather than a dysfunctional regulatory response.

Additionally, for all the talk of gendered play in the article, never once is it mentioned as anything more than a vector for deviant behaviour; play as experimental learning is never discussed. This play could involve the 'trying on' of various identity roles, some of which may include cross-gender play. It is therefore inappropriate to displace parental discomfort with gender play onto the child by suggesting that the referred child needs therapy because they are 'distressed' by their experience of being a boy or girl, especially in the case of young children who may not attach particular meaning to such categories. For some children who do feel distressed by their gender 'abnormality', some researchers have directed blame towards the enforcement of gender-appropriate behaviour by adults and peer groups in the child's life (Bartlett et al., 2000). However, it is also important to note that some individuals choose treatment in terms of sex reassignment surgery (SRS) if this distress continues beyond childhood (or presents in adolescence or adulthood). Furthermore, Zucker's (2006) particular treatment programme is not necessarily representative of the treatment available to children experiencing distress in relation to gender identity, as some practitioners choose to focus on family relations and encourage acceptance of gender diversity (e.g. Menvielle & Tuerk, 2002).

Conflating sex with gender

Despite, 'gender' appearing to have a significant role in this study there is little attempt by the researchers to adequately engage with any of the literature or debates about what constitutes gender and how it might be defined. In a footnote Zucker et al. (1999) outline their understanding of 'gender' as referring, '...to psychological or sociological phenomena stereotypically associated with males or females' and that, '...to maintain continuity with the extant literature, we retain the use of the term gender constancy' (p.476). From this footnote, it becomes possible to infer a number of understandings about what 'gender' means to Zucker et al. (1999). For example, they state that they are substituting 'sex' for 'gender', because it allows for continuity within existing research. This reasoning would seem to imply that they perceive gender to be a biological and fixed dichotomous category of male and female. This is done without recognising any of the entrenched issues related to sex and gender (e.g. Stanley, 2002; Delphy, 2002). It is necessary to unravel several threads tied up in creating a psychological diagnosis centred within a binary gender system because several prominent debates have been ignored in this paper primarily biological essentialism and social constructivism (although this has been very briefly addressed in a later paper, see Zucker (2006b)). Stanley (2002) explains the central tenet of such debates is whether 'sex' ('maleness' or 'femaleness') causes 'gender' (culturally ascribed notions about 'femininity and masculinity'), or whether 'gender' is socially constructed. A further explanation comes from Delphy (2002) who suggests that a dichotomous relationship exists between gender and sex. In particular, there is a tendency to characterise the relationship as 'natural'. This has important repercussions for how gender and sex are characterised. It is recognised that the concept of gender is complicated by different meanings and consequently researchers might not be referring to the same thing when they use the term gender.

The main problem with the scant definition of 'gender' presented by Zucker et al (1999) is that it seems to virtually overstate the biological component of gender; Childhood GID relies upon a perception of a natural binary order of male and female which not only operates on the heterocentric logic that physical possession of biologically given genitalia must reflect a preset psychological gender performance, but recommends treatment when there is a discrepancy between the two. Butler (1993) has written that atypical gender performance causes anxiety in those that subscribe to gender normativity because it shows '...the failure of heterosexual regimes [to] ever fully legislate or contain their own ideals' (p.237). However, this is a highly complex issue and not easily remedied, by avoiding a binary relationship. The existence and authority invested in the binary relationship of male and female categories poses a particularly paradoxical situation for many individuals in trans-communities. This is because a reliance on gender binary categories and the biological basis of adult GID enables young people and adults to receive support and treatment for gender dysphoria (see Winters, 2005).

This over-reliance on a biologically based gender binary is evident from the authors' justification for the research, in that they view it as necessary for children to conform to binaries of masculinity/femininity, through tests of constancy/consistency of gender (Zucker et al., 1999). It is further illustrated through their use of research instruments from the 1970s to test for various controls of 'gender'. Overreliance on biological understandings of gender means that such understandings ignore the constructionist aspects of gender (e.g. Cranny-Francis et al. 2003; Foucault 1978;

Plummer 1995), in particular, the role of culture and time (Stanley, 2002). Therefore, the use of such outdated methodological tools in the 1990s could be problematic due to the cultural climate inhabited by academics in the 1970s when developing these instruments. Consequently these measures should be seen as specific to the 1970s and not something that can adequately represent what it means to be male/female in the late 1990s (Langer & Martin, 2004).

There is another possibility for why the researchers avoid tricky issues of defining 'gender' and this is because it might free the researchers' to pursue tasks around researching and measuring at what age a child's 'gendered behaviour' can become consistent. In addition, they seem to be concerned with 'normative' debates surrounding at what *age* gender consistency becomes fixed and attainable (Zucker et al., 1999). Conflating 'gender' as 'sex-behaviour', enables Zucker and clinical practitioners like him, to justify therapy with the ultimate goal to 'fix' gender 'atypical' children.

Conclusions

In reflection we ask if it is appropriate to translate findings from Zucker et al. (1999) into clinical application. Previous studies that have followed the route of direct application of applying case studies with unstable theoretical foundations have led to tragedies for families¹. It is important to emphasise that gender and sex are complex areas that are not reducible to either or factors, of essentialism or constructivism. Thus we need to be careful in our applications of theory into reality; more specifically we need to be wary of the power and authority invested in 'experts' who have a very real impact on impressionable lives.

¹ Take, for example, the sexologist, John Money, who was adamant that the 'gender-gate' of children closed at the age of 2. This had tragic consequences for the Reimer family as expressed in the BBC interview cited at the end of this document.

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Book Review

*Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process:
Feminist reflections*

Róisín Ryan-Flood & Rosalind Gill

Oxon: Routledge (2010).

Reviewed by Nollaig Frost

In *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process* the editors, Ryan-Flood and Gill, bring together a broad range of readings to explore the role, implications and dilemmas around the 'unspoken' in feminist research. The book questions not the process of giving voice that feminist research sets out to address but the moments of secrecy and silence that accompany this. It reminds us that the emphasis on ensuring that voices are heard in feminist research can lead to overlooking such moments.

The contributing authors had been invited to reflect on questions about the political consequences of such moments, whether they are always indicative of voicelessness or powerlessness and the dilemmas posed by engaging with them. The resulting essays draw on the writers' research experiences to offer academic and personal reflections on agency, power dynamics, reflexivity and their role in secrecy and silence. Questions of researcher motivations, assumptions about participant identities and research omissions and dilemmas are carefully considered in well crafted readings. A rich blend of academic material with accounts of personal encounters adds a depth to the essays that will encourage readers to reflect on their own research experience.

Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process highlights that with the establishment of feminist research to research oppression and the oppressed comes ethical, practical, epistemological and methodological concerns and that these can be addressed more fully by considering what is unsaid by researcher and participant. Implications of decisions made by researcher or participant to remain silent or to silence the other are discussed with

reference to contexts that span societal oppression and individual choice. Covering research ranging from

sex tourism (Sanchez Taylor & O'Connell Davidson) to the experience of critiquing popular TV (Finding), this book highlights the importance of awareness of one's own motivation for and implications of the researcher role in making decisions about what to do with knowledge gained through research.

The book's key arguments remind us of the responsibility not to represent as commonplace that which is not, to respect that there may be essential reasons for secrecy and silence, and that the silences and secrets can be the researcher's as much as the participant's. Silence can be an important part of identity, or survival for participants, such as those who choose to remain silent about their sexuality in restrictive societies (e.g. Parpart). Similarly, choices about whether to remain silent about issues such as female circumcision challenge researchers with questions about their role in apparently condoning practices they disagree with (e.g. Moore).

Challenges to research posed by the essays are deceptively simplified by the clear and consistent writing style of each essay. The variety of research topics covered by the essays allows the reader to engage in many ways with questions of what to do with what we are entrusted with as researchers, varieties and functions of secrecy and silence and the implications of keeping or breaking silences. The range of topics includes many that might be expected in a book of feminist research reflections, such as motherhood (Ryan-Flood) and prostitution (Grenz) but the book is strengthened by its inclusion of less considered topics, such as the role of the researcher's body in research, for example in research about obesity and dieting (Throsby



& Gimlin) and dilemmas of ‘crossing the line’ when conducting covert research, for example as a female ‘door supervisor’ at a nightclub (O’Brien). Power and reflexivity recur as themes alongside the message that the book offers no definitive answers to challenges emerging from recognition of silence, only suggestions, reflections and experiences of having encountered it.

The focus on the ‘The Unspoken in the Research Process’ in Part II of the book is particularly interesting to those of us with a methodological bent. It provides valuable insight to the ways in which other researchers encounter the consequence of their decisions to keep silent or break silence. With a reading about a researcher not wanting to make known that participant selection aimed to recruit from a different socioeconomic status, so that she could maintain access to participants and continue the research (Scharff), we are reminded of the secrets of recruitment that we keep as researchers. With a reading about carrying out casual covert appraisals of who to approach to take part in a survey (Wilson) we are reminded of our secret processes of engagement with participants. With readings about downplaying one’s researcher identity in order to elicit information and avoid negative criticism (e.g. Ahmed) we are reminded of the dynamics of gaining and distributing knowledge we acquire as researchers. The other three parts of the book are provocative too in encouraging reflexive awareness of feminist research practice.

The editors acknowledge their disappointment at the lack of contributed essays from researchers from outside the UK and US/Canada. No doubt the inclusions of essays and reflections from researchers in Latin America, Africa and Asia would have broadened the perspectives of this book yet further. However, as it stands it would seem to contain sufficient material to engage and challenge readers to consider the role of secrecy and silence in conducting, understanding and disseminating research. It

should make a valuable contribution to the field of feminist research. I suspect however that in line with the tone of the book the editors will continue to reflect on the reasons for the withdrawals of these writers and with luck, will find ways to address this and so produce a second volume.

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References

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Books for Review

Recently-published and forthcoming books for review . If there is another book you would like to review but which is not listed, then please contact the Book Reviews Editor, who is happy to take requests.

Bergoffen, D., Gilbert, P.G., Harvey, T. & McNeely, C.L. (Eds.) (2011).

Confronting Global Gender Justice: Women's Lives, Human Rights.

London: Routledge

Brady, A. & Schirato, T. (2010).

Understanding Judith Butler.

London: Sage.

Dines, G. & Humez, J.M. (2011).

Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader (3rd ed.).

London: Sage.

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Introduction to Feminist Therapy: Strategies for Social and Individual Change.

London: Sage.

Frost, N. (Ed.) (2011).

Qualitative Research Methods in Psychology: Combing Core Approaches.

Buckingham: Open University Press.

Mills, S. & Mullany, L. (2011).

Language, Gender and Feminism: Theory and Methodology.

London: Routledge.

Ryle, R. (2011).

Questioning gender: A Sociological Exploration.

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Shiraev, E (2010).

A History of Psychology: A Global Perspective.

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Books Revisited: Feminist Inspirations

This is new sub-section of the Books Reviews to enable us to revisit publications which inspired us.

The Premenstrual Syndrome

Parlee, M. (1973).

Psychological Bulletin, 80, 454–465.

Gyn/Ecology:

The metaethics of radical feminism

Daly, M. (1979)

London: Women's Press.

Reviewed by Jane M. Ussher

The two publications I have chosen as inspirations first appeared in the 1970s, a decade of fervent feminist revolt and debate. At the time I was oblivious, being more interested in the activities of David Cassidy in 1973 (I was only 12 at the time), and real life romance in 1979. My feminist consciousness was not aroused until the early 1980s when I was finishing my psychology degree at Exeter University, a time marked by parties and positivism, the former of far more interest than the latter. I had not envisaged a future as an academic psychologist – indeed, both friends and tutors reacted with disbelief when I first mooted the idea of applying for a PhD. It was the combination of Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* and Mary Parlee's *The Premenstrual Syndrome* that set me on this course, effecting a revolutionary change in the way I saw both the world and the discipline of psychology.

In *Gyn/Ecology* Mary Daly takes us on an 'intergalactic' journey, a 'daring Piratic enterprise' (Daly, 1979, p.xxvi), where she exposes the misogynistic treatment of women in patriarchal culture. She argues that women's bodies have been violated and controlled through Goddess murder, suttee, foot-binding, genital mutilation, witch-burning, and gynaecology. My first taste of radical feminism, this was electrifying. Re-reading my battered and yellowed copy of *Gyn/Ecology* today, it saddens me to admit that I baulk at some of the emotive language

and hyperbole. My youthful revolutionary zeal has been dampened by the strictures of feminist post-structuralism, combined with 25 years of conformity to the rigours of academic publishing. Yet I can still see evidence of Mary Daly's thesis in my current writing and research: the regulation of the female body, the systematic silencing of women's anger and distress, and the genealogy of practices and policies which maintain women's position as Other, the second sex.

Mary Parlee's 1973 paper, *The Premenstrual Syndrome*, may seem an odd companion to *Gyn/Ecology*. In contrast to Daly's self-defined 'hagography' (p.15), Parlee's paper is couched in scientific language, is heavily referenced, and has a much more narrow focus – a methodological critique of psychological research on premenstrual syndrome (PMS). I read the paper as a third-year undergraduate student and it was a revelatory moment, the first time I felt engaged with psychology as a discipline. Here was something of intrinsic interest, something that related to my own life, and something written by a woman (when all of my lecturers were men, as were the authors of the majority of works they cited). Most important of all, it was a very smart feminist critique, published in one of the most respected psychology journals, *Psychological Bulletin*. This paper directly inspired my PhD and subsequent research on the construction and experience of PMS. Re-reading it today, it stands the test of time, both for menstrual cycle researchers, and as an exemplar of feminist scholarship that utilises the tools of the academy to challenge and engender disciplinary change.

Mary Daly inspired me with her feminist polemic; Mary Parlee taught me that there is a place for feminist scholarship within the mainstream. Writing this piece has made me realise that I do both, yet often struggle with

my conscience when operating within a scientific discourse, and feel my writing is most alive when scholarship and polemic are combined. My new year's resolution will be to struggle less, and combine more. And to try to recover some revolutionary zeal.

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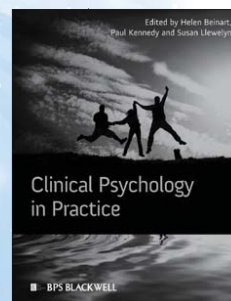
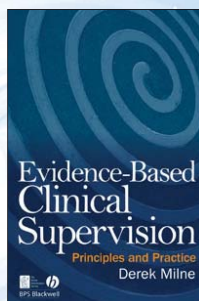
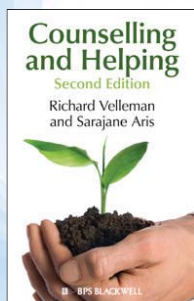
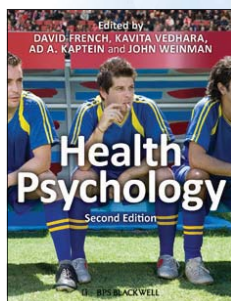
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Contents

- 1 **Editorial**
Sally Johnson & Nancy Kelly
- Paper**
- 2 **Truth, Gender and the Female Psyche: 'Confessions' from female sexual offenders**
Sherianne Kramer
- Agora**
- 10 **'Zuck Off! A commentary on the protest against Ken Zucker and his 'treatment' of Childhood Gender Identity Disorder**
Jemma Tosh
- 17 **I don't want to talk about it: Why are young women reluctant to participate in menstrual cycle research?**
Noelle McAra & Lynn Wright
- 23 **Women's Liberation Movement@40 conference review**
Pauline Whelan & Kristin Aune
- Research Reviews**
- 27 **The politics of emotionality**
Krista Carson
- 30 **A feminist critique of outdated constructions of gender:
A response to Zucker et al. (1999)**
Ashley Brown & Em Jane Temple
- 35 **Book Review**
- 37 **Books for Review**
- 38 **Books Revisited: Feminist Inspirations**

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