

Workshop report

Theory and Practice: In Search of Each Other

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In this workshop it became obvious that its title, *Theory and Practice: In Search for Each Other*, and the brief introduction included in the *Call for Papers*, could be interpreted in many different ways. This was reflected in the paper topics as well as in our discussions, led by workshop facilitator Professor Maud Eduards, Stockholm University. Hence what came to be true for the conference overall was also true for workshop number five; discussions were animated, intense and bold in the broad spectrum of topics they dared to uncover.

However in retrospect, two major themes summed up the multitude of ways to associate around the topic. For some writers, the theory/practice question dealt with a growing gap between the theoretical academic feminisms and the practical activist feminisms, and the need for developing new ties between them. For others, it was a concern within academia itself, i.e. the need to do more in terms of high-lighting feminist theorizing by bringing in more empirical findings.

Discussions within the first theme was especially inspired by listening to one of the opening speakers, Professor in Philosophy Jane Roland Martin, University of Massachusetts. In her talk, Martin elaborated upon the danger of academic feminisms becoming more and more isolated and estranged from the practice of gender equality. Martin calls this the esoteric trap, i.e. that feminist analyses are developing into a body of knowledge designed for the specially initiated alone. As we shall see below, two other philosophers Etela Farkasova and Mariana Szapuova, Comenius University, Bratislava, share their both practical and theoretical experiences of trying to combine feminist theory on an abstract level with personal reflection, both in their work with students and as researchers.

For some of the workshop participants, pedagogy was seen as providing a possible meeting point of theory and practice. One of them was Sarah Blackstock, Department for Politics at Trent University, Canada. She wrote about male initiation rites within the Canadian armed forces as well as at Canadian universities, and even proposed how these issues could be more constructively used in the classroom discussions, at the university. Edmé Dominguez Reyes, at The Peace and Development Research Institute, Göteborg University, presented the results from an empirical study of twenty-one students and their perceptions of graduate studies and research as an occupation.

Another paper which focused specifically on the Swedish context was Dana Rundlöf's paper, which discussed the historic development of the Swedish welfare state. Basing her analysis on a number of feminist political theorists, Dana Rundlöf showed how the project of eradicating inequality between the sexes in Sweden largely had failed due to an inability to address the issue of male privilege. Olga Voronkova, Graduate School for Social Research, Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw wrote theoretically on the topic of gender and justice.

A number of paper had a clear international focus. For example, Sara Goodman, Centre for Women's studies, Lund University, who compared the research on reproductive technologies in the US, Britain and Sweden. Marian Paules, Syracuse University, looked at the gendered language used in the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill hearings and elaborated upon the topic of women's ways of dismantling and resisting patriarchal control on both the local and the global levels. In her essay "Breaking the Sovereign Grip of Time?", Gillian Youngs, Hong Kong, reflected upon the ongoing debate on time and globalization. Mairi Johnson and Bice Maiguashca, whose paper has also been included in this theme issue of *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift*, show the relevance of today's feminist critique of International Relations as a field of study.