

Camila Esguerra Muelle
Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Jules Falquet (2006) *De la cama a la calle: perspectivas teóricas lésbico-feministas [From the Bed to the Street: Lesbian-Feminist Theoretical Perspectives]*. Bogotá, Colombia: Brecha Lésbica, 83 pp. ISBN/ISSN/EAN: 958-930761-2 (in Spanish).

This book combines academic, emotional, and activist perspectives. For this very reason it is a vital reading material for both scholars, interested in analyzing compulsory heterosexuality as a global political institution, which affects material and emotional conditions of women's lives in general, and for social activists, since it summarizes a series of experiences and ideas with an invaluable political strength. Falquet proposes a brilliant material reading of compulsory heterosexuality and its political and economic consequences for women's everyday lives; it represents a call for analyzing current movements and their potentials in front of several overlapping oppressive systems.

I had an opportunity to read this book for the first time, when one of its editors who belonged to an international group *Brecha Lésbica* made a suggestion to me to make a preliminary presentation of it in Bogotá. That presentation was attended mainly by scholars and activists interested in gender, cultural and feminist studies, human rights, etc. I read it as an activist, as a young researcher in the field, and also as a Latin American lesbian. At that time, I found that many questions on the book referred to very important issues of my personal and political experiences. Now, reading it for the second time, I again find it very stimulating, and strongly linked to my new personal situation (I am an immigrant in Europe, I think of myself as a privileged one, and also with my research interests in migration of Latin American lesbians to Spain. I think it is really difficult to find a book, in which so many different elements are mixed. In this book, the emotional and the political form a unity.

Jules Falquet has a Ph.D. in Sociology from the Institute of High Studies for Latin America at the University of Paris Sorbonne III. Born in France, she has lived in Brazil, Mexico, and El Salvador. She is a lesbian, a feminist activist, and a writer. Currently, she is a Professor of

Critical Political Sociology at the University of Paris Diderot co-responsible for the feminist center CEDREF (Centre d'Enseignement, de Documentation et de Recherches pour les Etudes Féministes). Her research focuses on social movements in Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular, on feminist, lesbian and women's movements, the former revolutionary project of the FMLN in El Salvador, the ongoing Zapatista Movement in Mexico, and the Landless Movement in Brazil.

In the first part of the book called *Breve reseña de algunas teorías lésbicas* [Short review of some lesbian theories] the author analyzes some lesbian theories, reflections, and struggles, focusing on some Francophone countries, the United States, and some countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Being aware of the fact that countries in the North produce more theory, which is, moreover, published on a wider scale, especially the works produced by urban white middle class female scholars, Falquet takes a clear political position — she points out that this problem 'is reflected by this book [...] and it does not stop being a limitation' (p. 16) of her work. Therefore, the author is aware of her position in the academic power networks.

Falquet questions the meaning of the word 'lesbianism', and, at the same time, she underlines the importance of using a word 'lesbian' as a way of linguistic resistance and as a basis for struggles against a male domination in the form of male homosexuality. She also shows a problem of confusing female homoerotic practices – which we can observe across the time in the whole world — with the political project, implicit in the word 'lesbian'. She explains that 'lesbian' as a category has a political basis upon which political subjects are constructed. For this very reason, 'lesbian' refers neither simply to sexual practices, nor to constructions of identity. The book provides us with a theoretical basis for understanding an autonomous lesbian movement, which is closely related in its development with feminist ideology and organization, especially with the feminism of so-called 'second wave'. However, she shows how the relationships between the lesbian movement and feminist and gay movements have sometimes been contradictory. Falquet describes three main tendencies within the autonomous lesbian movement, which co-exist currently: feminist lesbianism, radical lesbianism, and separatist lesbianism. She also recognizes the contributions made by non-white and working-class lesbians. Finally, in this part of the book she shows that she distances herself from 'pro-sex' and 'queer'

liberal theories, which, in her opinion, represent a kind of backward movement to male patriarchal thought. At the same time she stays critical about the integration of lesbian movement into LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender or Transsexual) Movement, since it represents a way of making lesbian struggles and women's exploitation invisible.

In the second part of her book, called *La pareja, este doloroso problema: Hacia un análisis materialista de los arreglos amorosos entre lesbianas* [The couple, this painful matter: Toward a material analysis of love deals among lesbians], Jules Falquet analyzes love, sexual, and economic agreements between lesbians from international and material perspectives. She alerts to the ways neo-liberal globalization imposes 'neo-nuclear family' (pp. 56-57, 60) (re)composed of and around individuals of the same sex, who are not self-sufficient materially or emotionally. This 'new' family is based on patriarchal, bourgeois, Western values, and is mainly grounded in the idea of 'love' centered in the couple. She talks about 'exacerbation of the due and wished fidelity' (p.70), which, being coupled with lesbophobic hostility, stirs up violence within lesbian couple. Such ideas of love are related with a neo-liberal way of thinking, which imposes an individualist retreat towards 'private happiness' (p. 58). Following Chilean theorist Margarita Pisano and others feminists who preceded her in this reflection, Falquet explains how such monogamist model of 'living in twos' (pp. 69,70) becomes detrimental for an autonomous development of a woman, and at the same time does not allow to consider Women as a class. As an alternative, Falquet offers examples of several female communitarian experiences in Mexico, which represent ways to break up with the dichotomy 'private sphere - public sphere', to 'go out from the bed to the street'. She assures that 'coming out of the frame' becomes more important than 'coming out of the closet', since it allows imagining a different way of living — living beyond the couple. I find this project fascinating, firstly, because it brings into practice the statement 'political is personal', secondly, because it implies that it is necessary to construct a subject, which is composed of both material and symbolic aspects, and which is irreducible to only one identity or subjectivity. It is a proposal to break up with a dichotomist thought concerning the public and the private and also with the metonymic identity, which constructs a one-dimensional, non-historical, culturally non-contextualized subject. In my view, this book breaks up the 'epistemology of closet' (Kosofsky Sedwick, 1990).



References

Falquet, Jules (2006) *De la cama a la calle: perspectivas teóricas lésbico-feministas*. Bogotá: Brecha Lésbica.

Kosofsky Sedgwick, Eve (1990) *Epistemology of the closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Brecha LÃ©sbica. Jules Falquet. YearÂ A search query can be a title of the book, a name of the author, ISBN or anything else. Read more about ZAlerts. Author / ISBN / Topis / MD5 / Any search query. Create. In Germany, feminists contributed to #YesAllWomen with posts about sexual discrimination and violence that also included the hashtag #Aufschrei (outcry), creating a transnational digital connection between two locally grounded protest actions, with reference to the Twitter campaign documenting womenâ€™s experiences of everyday sexism in Germany that created widespread public resonance in 2013.Â Digital platforms offer great potential for broadly disseminating feminist ideas, shaping new modes of discourse about gender and sexism, connecting to different constituencies, and allowing creative modes of protest to emerge.2 The example of hashtag feminism The new politics repudiated lesbian feminist ideas and celebrated â€˜manhoodâ€™ as a goal for gay men. Practices which construct this â€˜manhoodâ€™, such as sadomasochism, cutting and piercing, female-to-male transsexual surgery, and which are promoted in queer politics, need to be understood as forms of self-harm which result from the oppression of lesbians and gay men. The political agenda of queer politics is damaging to the interests of lesbians, women in general, and to marginalized and vulnerable constituencies of gay men. The book concludes by arguing that precisely the commitment to equality i