



University Women's Club of Buenos Aires

Luncheon Minutes

August 21, 2018

Palacio Balcarce, Quintana 161



L to R: Kathy Power, Ann Leibundgut, Barbara Grünenfelder-Elliker, speaker

Minutes of the UWC Luncheon meeting

Advisor Mariel Brinbaumer, in the absence of President Monica Plou, opened the Luncheon meeting at 12:40. A motion to approve the July Luncheon minutes was made by Patricia Caviezel and seconded by Kathy Hall. The minutes were approved by a show of hands.

Announcements:



L to R: Barbara Grünenfelder-Elliker, Mariel Brinbaumer, Kathy Hall

- Study Group Chair Kathy Hall reminded people to sign up for coming activities.
- Maria Rosa Braile announced the Spanish Through Experience visit to the National Academy of Tango (Academia Nacional del Tango), for September 26 at 4:00 pm.
- Christine Clarke reminded members and guests that Inés Fernández Avendaño, molecular biologist, will present "From Clinical Trials to tailor-made Health Care: General and personalized medical research in the 21st century" THURSDAY AUGUST 23rd at 6.30 pm.



L to R: Beatriz Brinkman, Phyllis Barrantes, M. Veronica Muñoz, Ema Genijovich

Program

Mariel introduced Cultural Anthropologist Barbara Grünenfelder-Elliker who spoke on "Gender, sex, and sexuality: processing facts and myths about human reality". Barbara began by defining and explaining terms she would use. The terms Gender, Sex, and Sexuality should not be confused; they are very different on the conceptual level.

Gender is a socio-cultural construct that determines roles and identities within a given society. The behaviors that identify a gender vary cross-culturally and are the result of a historical process. These roles are therefore neither universal, nor immutable. These behavioral patterns reflect relationships between "categories of people," rather than between mere individuals.

On the other hand, sex and sexuality are sometimes lumped together, as either "cultural construct" or "biological facts." For scientific purposes, it is vital to recognize both: the biological facts and limitations defined by the sex of an individual, and the culturally constructed views, rules, and opinions regarding sexuality as "sexual practice." Therefore, while gender and sexuality are determined by history and culture, and thus variable, Sex is a biological/biochemical condition.

Sex can present itself in at least five distinguishable categories: female; male; merm (individual with two testicles and external female genitalia, a male pseudo hermaphrodite); ferm (individual with two ovaries and external male genitalia, a female pseudo hermaphrodite) and the hermaphrodite with one ovary and one testicle and male and female genitalia. She explained that when an infant is born whose sex cannot easily be determined, doctors' insistence for immediate surgical intervention to construct either male or female genitalia creates conflicts for the family faced with the situation and can seriously hamper a child's development of gender identity and later sexual practice.

Barbara presented examples of how different cultures approach gender, giving us examples from matrilineal as well as patriarchal cultures. She told us how, in Samoa, women lead the family council, and where the oldest female member of a matrilineal descent group has the right of veto even in affairs that affect descendants of her male relatives. She showed us photos of people dressed in gender specific regalia that might conflict with our ideas of gender. There were other unusual and fascinating examples of how different cultures approach gender, sex and sexuality.

Finally, Barbara commented that she considers gender identity a sort of vocation, rather than a condition linked to specific sexual/genital characteristics. She suggested that it would be wise to allow a person of whatever sex the freedom to express themselves the way they felt in their own body, encouraging them to find their comfort zone with regards to how they choose to present and represent their identity.

Mariel thanked Barbara giving her a bunch of flowers. The meeting was adjourned at 3:00.

Submitted by Patricia Caviezel

L to R: Valentina Iricibar, Joanna Richardson, M. Rosa Braile, Veronica Sardon

