

## Gendered Gazes around the Twenty-First Century

This monographic issue of Culture and History provides a bilingual platform for studies from different institutions in different countries, with the participation of specialists in gender in the Hispanic context. The volume incorporates a diverse selection of articles that offer revealing and polemical perspectives on a diverse range of gender gazes in fiction around the XXI century. The contexts studied are ontologically diverse and the contributors offer approaches which provide different gender gazes. Using a gender gaze implies approaching social reality and understanding that women and men not only have different biological sexes, but also have been traditionally assigned constructed gendered roles. Therefore, the studies compiled here hope to corroborate the idea that creating an identity from a gender perspective should be understood as a cultural dialectic, an exchange interaction among different cultures, whose common goal is to conquer a harmonious ethnic and cultural coexistence.

In recent years the academic production on gender has reached its peak. History, literature and culture in the Hispanic context always had to contend with a strong tradition of male and constant practice of censorship. During the last decades there has been a historical reassessment of the concept of gender which has witnessed the birth of new and revolutionary artistic expressions. New transgressive and strategic discourses are found seeking an ideological formulation that engenders fairer and more egalitarian societies.

This volume arises from the need to unveil an innovative gender gaze to the authenticity of the construction of different gender identities in the Hispanic context. It also aims to foster collaboration between specialists from various fields, such as philology, history, sociology, cultural studies, in order to investigate and find clues of transformation of a society that has perpetuated gender inequality, of a social organization that supports gender discrimination, providing public action alternatives to resolve gender inequality. Therefore, the unquestionable value of these studies lies in having assembled a group of internationally renowned authors from different countries and specialists in various disciplines to address gender in the Hispanic context around the twenty-first century. These researchers provide new and provocative debates and theoretical approaches with valuable contributions to historiography, stimulating innovative gazes in various fields and perspectives of gender Studies.

The volume opens with an essay by Alfredo Martínez Expósito, casting an interesting approach on gender normalization in Spain. The article explores the polemical debate around the idea of normalization and the impact of literary fiction and homo-gay themed cinema in contributing to social changes. Another insightful study is offered by Brígida M. Pastor, which exposes how at the turn of the millennium Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar gives birth to “queering” identities such as the modern femme fatale in male form or psycho-femme. Pastor argues that Almodóvar is compelled to rethink the concepts of gender and sexuality in his cinema, in order to re-create identities that can only exist as part of the “queer” (gay, lesbian, bi-, trans-, or intersexed) community in their search for validation and against cultural repression.

From a literary perspective, Conrad M. James comprehensively investigates the “problem” of the border as much a problem of gender as of race. Revisiting the Haitian/Dominican Borderland, he demonstrates that the fear of black masculinity and the celebration of new world erotics become key ingredients in unravelling the meanings of border identity. Teresa San Pedro offers an enlightening reading of Guatemalan Aida Toledo’s poetry which establishes a breaking away from the gender norm that defines the traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity. On the other hand, Nuria Morgado convincingly examines the mythical representations in two of the six short stories that make up Spanish writer Lourdes Ortiz’s *Voces de mujer* (2007), focusing on female characters that enable to read the narratives with a feminine gaze. The study by Lloyd H. Davies thoroughly analyses the notion of woman and nation in Colombian Laura Restrepo’s *Delirio* (2004), focusing on the interrelationships among the text’s key themes: violence, dissimulation and delirium. Ángela Dorado-Otero provides a comprehensive analysis of intertextuality in Ena Lucía Portela’s short story *Una extraña entre las piedras* (1999) within the context of recent Cuban lesbian narrative and places Portela at the forefront of new gender frameworks in Cuban studies.

From a filmic perspective, Marina Díaz López’s article focusses on the Mexican and transnational film star Arturo de Córdova in two plays adapted into films, *Las tres perfectas casadas* (1952) and *Cena de matrimonios* (1962), showing that their similar dramatic approach to gender conflict conveys a critical view of the conventional structure of marriage. The collective article by Martha P. Zarza

Delgado, Héctor Serrano Barquín and Carolina Serrano Barquín offers an exploration of visual and textual codes in music and magazines for young Mexicans in order to demonstrate that sexual identity is strongly affected by a traditional legacy that perpetuates discrimination and violence against women. Focussing on Natalia Smirnoff's film *Rompecabezas* (2009), Laurence Mullaly eloquently conveys the challenging approach of female filmmakers in Argentina in the first decade of the twenty-first century, seeking (re)vision of the transformation in the role of women.

Social transformations in the Hispanic context during the twentieth century to the present have redefined the debate on several issues concerning gendered identities. Hence the twenty-first century is witnessing a new shaft in equality policies: the establishment of "mainstream" measures that promote gender role reversal. Gender relations are an important component in social and sexual politics and are among the main determinants of collective destiny. Gender oppression arising from male supremacy authorized by the patriarchal structure is still a candent topic of social justice.

The need for an in-depth analysis from a transversal perspective of gender is particularly urgent in the new era of modern globalization. The contributions

to this volume challenge the androcentric perspective in which scientific epistemology and cultural creation have been based on, leading to a reassessment of objectives and methods of research in different disciplines. Also its interdisciplinary nature makes this volume an original addition to gender and cultural studies, and a significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge.

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