

MÉRIDA JIMÉNEZ, Rafael M. (ed.), *Masculinidades disidentes*. Barcelona: Icaria, 2016. 254 pp. ISBN: 978-84-9888-732-7.

The collection of essays edited by the renowned gender and queer studies scholar Rafael M. Mérida Jiménez offers an interdisciplinary survey on dissident masculinities in contemporary Spain. Among the contributors, there are representatives of different disciplines, such as Sociology, Anthropology, Art, Film, and Literature Studies, as well as authors who successfully combine academic work with LGBTQ activism. Nonetheless, this variety of perspectives does not, in any negative way, affect the coherence of the book. On the contrary, all ten papers examine discursive practices on non-hegemonic masculinities in the latest three decades and help to understand how power relations perpetuate patriarchal biases connected with the notion of «masculinity» –both in the Spanish society and the LGBTQ community itself.

The opening essay, co-written by Óscar Guasch Andreu and Jordi Caïs Fontanella, is a diachronic study of male prostitution in Spain. The authors examine how the phenomenon has changed since the times of Franco's dictatorship. They distinguish between three different stages or patterns of behaviour: the outdoor model (1950-1975), the indoor model (1975-2000), and the online one (2000-2015), in which masculinity becomes more fluid and negotiable to satisfy clients' particular needs. The second paper, by Jordi Mas Grau, covers the topic of the construction of trans masculinity and the role of institutions aimed to help in the process of transition. The author criticises state hospital units for following sex stereotypes and for their lack of flexibility when it comes to their patients' individual needs. Medical issues are also present in Fernando Villaamil's text on the differences between HIV prevention campaigns conducted in Spain in the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s. The author describes various aspects, such as connotations of male bodies on posters, gender stereotypes in the context of passive and active sex roles, and also stigmatization of PrEP users. The problem of discrimination in the gay community is also analysed by Jose Antonio Langarita Adiego, who

focuses on the Spanish emancipation movement and the negative consequences of its success, namely the emergence of gay normalisation that excludes the Other on political, economic and/or ethnic grounds. This article, advocating for a more inclusive sexual liberation movement, closes the first part of the book –although it is not formally divided into sections.

The following five essays are devoted to the representations of non-normative masculinities in a variety of artistic expressions. Juan Vicente Aliaga invites the reader to have a closer look at the works of those Spanish queer artists who treated the human body as «a new battlefield». On the one hand, Aliaga is interested in sculptures of Jesús Martínez Oliva and photographs of Álex Francés showing passive masculinities, and on the other hand, he describes the productive activity of lesbian artistic groups, such as LSD or O.R.G.I.A., and their play with the image of *macho ibérico* in drag performances. The tensions between the hypermasculinity and effeminacy as a means of expression of gay identity in Spanish films are analysed by Jorge Luis Peralta, who scrutinised an impressive number of films. The paper by José Antonio Ramos Arteaga brings an overview of four theatre plays that evoke the traditional model of male bonding between the *erastes* and the *eromenos*, as known in Greek pedagogy. The motif of growing up of a queer child is also commented upon by Alberto Mira, who studies Terenci Moix's memoirs, *El peso de la paja*. The scholar argues that the figure of Ramón as a «protohomosexual», highly ambiguous child can provide a better insight into the specificity of dissident masculinities in Francoist Spain. As we can learn from the essay of Alfredo Martínez Expósito, the traditional masculinity, imposed by the dictatorship, had a significant impact on Álvaro Pombo's narrative. The novelist portrays the male homosexual identity through the lens of existential philosophy and phenomenology. Martínez Expósito argues that without considering both the historical and the philosophical backgrounds of Pombo's oeuvre, it is impossible to understand this writer's view on «homosexual authenticity» in postmodern times. Finally, R. Lucas Platero Méndez presents a case study of a notorious transphobic hate crime committed



in Madrid in 2007. The scholar scrutinises both the media coverage and the legal context of the case to reveal the ambivalence of the Spanish state towards LGBTQ civil rights and non-binary gender expressions. According to Platero Méndez, the Spanish legislation fails to protect sexual minorities when it comes to different types of domestic violence since the regulations focus almost exclusively on men's acts of aggression against their female partners. Thus, the paper invites to rethink a variety of aspects that contribute to trans people's vulnerability.

*Masculinidades disidentes* is, without doubt, one of the essential collections of essays on non-normative masculinities in Spain. It can be

considered as a continuation of previous studies such as *Minorías sexuales en España (1970-1995). Textos y representaciones* (Mérida, 2013), *Hispanic (LGT) Masculinities in Transition* (Mérida, 2014) and *Las masculinidades en la Transición* (Mérida and Peralta, 2015), which covered the earlier years of the Spanish democracy. This volume is highly recommendable to those readers who are interested both in Spain's recent past and its current representations of non-hegemonic masculinities.

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