

Recensões

***Géneros e sexualidades: interseções e tangentes*, editado por João Manuel de Oliveira e Lígia Amâncio. Lisboa: Centro de Investigação e de Intervenção Social (CIS-IUL), 2017, 222 pp.**

Mara Pieri

PhD student at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra

The book *Géneros e Sexualidades: interseções e tangentes* was edited by João Manuel de Oliveira and Lígia Amâncio and was published in 2017 by the Centre for Investigation and Social Intervention (CIS-IUL) of Lisbon, with the financial support of FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology.

The book results from a selection of papers presented during the International Conference «Gender, Sexualities and Intersectionalities», organised in Lisbon in 2015. Other articles were selected from both the Portuguese and international academic field.

The general aim of the book is to bring together perspectives on how gender is (de)constructed and (re)produced in intersectional encounters with other markers of identity. The choice of speaking about *géneros* (genders) and not just *género* (gender), as well as of sexualities, already states in the title the multidisciplinary and intersectional aspiration of the book. The plural then refers to an understanding of gender and sexuality in their «multiple contact points and crossings» (p.5, my translation). The choice of the plural in the title is appropriate also because it presents the book as a collection of different voices, which speak from several locations (mainly, Brazil, Portugal and Spain) and engage with gender with diverse, sometimes even contradictory, perspectives.

In the introduction, the editors clarify their intention to explore gender as a social order, with a particular interest in the ways gender is related to other forms of power. Aware of the neoliberal context in which much academic work is produced, their choice was to make the book available and universally accessible for free. This remarkable option shows a political connection between the topics discussed in the book and the practices of those involved in its creation, which is uncommon and admirable.

The book is divided into two parts, the first having as title «Gender: order and disorders» (my translation), the second «Destabilizing Genders and Sexualities»; each of the sections is introduced by an article from one of the editors, followed by four other articles.

The first part is opened by an account of the ways in which symbolic asymmetry has been investigated in Portugal since its first appearance as a concept in the 1980s. The author, Lígia Amâncio, accurately resumes the multiple connections between gender binary and modern thinking, linking them to the development of debate on symbolic asymmetry and gender ideology in the Portuguese context.

The second article, by António Marques, reflects on the relationships between studies on masculinity and feminist theories: the relations between the two areas of knowledge have not been linear nor simple, and historically oscillated between consensual dialogues and reciprocal antagonism. Through recalling the main streams of this difficult relationship, the author suggests there are several elements of contact that would make a dialogue profitable and offer useful tools, on both sides, to have a deeper understanding of hegemonic masculinity, structures of power and gender essentialism.

Portugal and its socio-historical background are again the focus of the third article: Maria Helena Santos gives an interesting account of how gender inequalities survived through several years of changes in the field of qualified jobs, addressing also what are the main factors of resistance against changes in this area. The article, combined with the first one, guides the reader into specificities of Portuguese local environment which also contribute to a better understanding of the context in which the book itself emerged.

The last part of Section One is dedicated to two articles in Spanish that move the focus away from academic debate to issues of citizenship and sexualities. Gracia Trujillo discusses the role of the national Spanish state in affirming rules and limits on parenting for non-heterosexual reproduction. Through the analysis of the traditional disjunction between sexuality and reproduction, the author sheds light on how political claims for parenting and reproduction formulated by non-heterosexual couples opened a debate between normalization and dissidence. The need to face a heteronormative state entailed also the alliance with other intersectional struggles beyond those connected to reproduction.

Following this line of analyses, Pablo Perez Navarro reflects upon the bond between cis-heteronormativity and the concept of public order: the author traces a useful genealogy of how public order has been constructed, focusing on the multiple legacies of normativity inscribed in this process, such as heteronormativity, compulsory heterosexuality, monogamy and gender binarism. The article constitutes a perfect conclusion for the first part of the book, as it unpacks the concept of genders and sexualities creating multiple connections, including a link to islamophobia and racism.

The second section is focused on «Destabilizing genders and sexualities». João Manuel de Oliveira is the co-editor of the book and also the author of the opening article for this section. Sewing together important contributions from Preciado, Butler, Deleuze and Guattari amongst others, the author suggests a challenging theoretical move on gender from considering it as a concept to figuring it as a rhizome, as a multiplicity of processes interlaced by connections and by a constant process of undoing norms.

Following the line of deconstruction of gender, Rita Grave, João Manuel de Oliveira and Conceição Nogueira present a reflection on performativity and dis-identification in cross-dressing. The article explores the way cross-dressing challenges gender binary and fixed categories, through excerpts from an exploratory research conducted with cross-dressers in Portugal.

In the following article, Georgia Grube Marcinik and Amana Rocha Mattos introduce the intersection between gender and race, tracing an interesting genealogy of whiteness within feminism movements and of the subsequent invisibilisation of indigenous and black voices. The authors link this history to recent events happened in Brazil at the launching of a movie, showing how the issue of race within feminism is still highly controversial.

Brazil is the context in which also Karla Galvão Adrião, Jaileila Menezes, Emilia Bezerra e Roseane Amorim write: their research focuses on the way gender, sexuality and age intersect in the construction of affective networks for a young man in North-East of Brazil. Using the concept of «integrated circuit», the authors reflect on the embodied experience of intersectionality, showing how socio-economic, geographic, racial and religious factors all interlace in the construction of sexual and affective experiences in young age.

The section closes with the theoretical contribution of Leandro Colling, Alexandre Nunes de Sousa and Francisco Soares Sena: using a play on words with *viado* (Brazilian Portuguese slang word meaning «gay»), the authors suggest *enviadescer* as a form of *queering*, a position of dissidence against norms that is enacted and produced actively.

With its variety of contributions the book offers an engaging insight on the vast array of topics related to genders and sexualities. In doing so, it also brings voices from different contexts, giving resonance to academic production from Southern Europe and Brazil, contexts that are often dismissed as peripheral or as subaltern to the English-speaking mainstream.

The authors offer a very ambitious challenge in the title: nevertheless, if genders are discussed in several ways, the same cannot be said about sexualities. The initial promise led the reader to expect more contributions in which sexual orientation, sexual practices and sexuality would be deconstructed and put in relation with other axis of intersectionality. For sure, a further development of the work could entail a more generous focus on the contribution of queer studies and post-colonial studies, both in the area of gender and sexuality, and in the area of multiple belongings.

The same might be said also about the intersectional lens used throughout the book, which seemed quite oriented to take up the more common axis of intersection – gender, class, race – and inevitably silencing other experiences of multiple connections, such as, for example, able-bodiedness, mental health, religion, relational orientation or citizenship status.

Nevertheless, the book constitutes an important contribution, and, in giving more attention to theoretical contributions than to methodological elements, it offers engaging challenges to broaden the understanding of gender(s) from different locations.

Note: This book is also available for download in e-book format: <http://gensexinter.tumblr.com>