

Rouselle, Elizabeth Smith. *Gender and Modernity in Spanish Literature: 1789-1920*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 223 pp.

Gender and Modernity in Spanish Literature: 1789-1920 explores the intersections of the two categories mentioned in its title through the study of Spanish literary works written over a period of 131 years. Each chapter examines the work of one male author and one female author through the theme of disillusion. The introduction roughly defines modernity through passing references to critics such as Jürgen Habermas and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and to some of the historical events that sparked off modern political reforms and that provide the chronological time frame for the term. Regarding the concept of modernity within a specifically Spanish context, Rouselle cites important scholars such as Michael Iarocci, Roberta Johnson, Susan Kirkpatrick, and Jo Labanyi, but mentions their works only briefly to say whether they focus on men or women writers, in order to show how her own study is unique in its balanced focus on both. The introduction also provides some working definitions of the concept of disillusion and touches on some of the ways in which modern life was experienced differently by men and women. This section of the introduction, at only ten and a half pages, is rather cursory. The remaining pages of the introduction are dedicated to summarizing the eight chapters to follow.

Chapter one studies José Cadalso's *Cartas marruecas* (1789) and Josefa Amar y Borbón's *Discurso sobre la educación física de las mujeres* (1790), contrasting Cadalso's pessimistic deception regarding Spain's modernity with Amar y Borbón's mild disillusion with women's status in society. The moderate disenchantment of José Mor de Fuente's epistolary novel *La serafina* (1802) and Mar Lorenza de los Ríos's play *La sabia indiscreta* (n.d.) is the subject of chapter two. These first two chapters together aim to show how the Enlightenment values of balance, moderation, and reason keep in check these works' expressions of disappointment. Moving from the Enlightenment to Romanticism, chapter three looks at four *artículos de costumbre* by Mariano José de Larra and two novellas by Rosalía de Castro: *El caballero de las botas azules* (1867) and *El primer loco* (1881). Rouselle looks specifically at the representations of masculinity through Larra's despair and ultimate suicide and the feminized and hysterical male characters in Castro's works. Rouselle then begins her transition to realism by examining Fernán Caballero's *Simón Verde* (n.d.) and Benito Pérez Galdós's *Marinela* (1878) in chapter four. She argues that in these novels Caballero displays her disillusion with positivism's reactionary agenda regarding gender, while Galdós shows his disenchantment with its use of physical difference as the basis for discrimination and marginalization.

Chapter five studies Leopoldo Alas Clarín's *Su único hijo* (1890) and Emilia Pardo Bazán's *La quimera* (1903) through the lens of *fin-de-siècle* decadent discourse and argues that the main characters in the two novels are able to maintain a degree of illusion only through their idle, contemplative, states. Chapter six returns to works authored by Galdós and Pardo Bazán, *Nazarín* (1895) and *Dulce dueño* (1911) respectively. Rouselle looks at how these two novels present mysticism as an antidote to modern disillusion, and argues that society is more accepting of mysticism in men (Nazarín) than in women (Lina, in *Dulce dueño*). Chapter seven positions itself squarely in the twentieth century and examines Pío Baroja's *El árbol de*

ciencia (1911) and Carmen de Burgos *El perseguidor* (1907). Rouselle emphasizes the protagonist's disillusion with the discourses of science in the former novel, and the protagonist's discouragement with the state of feminism in the latter. Chapter eight turns to Blanca de los Ríos's *Las hijas de don Juan* (1907) and Miguel de Unamuno's *Dos madres* (1920) and argues that both works reveal the authors' dissatisfaction with gender roles and the state of the family, which serves as a microcosmic representation of the state. In the conclusion, Rouselle asserts that her readings of the literary works clearly negate assertions about Spain's lack of modernity.

Covering twenty texts that belong to at least five different literary movements and that represent five different genres and sixteen different authors, *Gender and Modernity* is ambitious in its scope. Yet, in a mere 179 pages it often fails to engage in a meaningful way with important scholarship on authors, works, and topics that have already been studied extensively. It also occasionally incurs in historical imprecisions (two examples are "In 1898 . . . Spain had lost the last of its colonies" and "the hysterical woman, conveniently invented in the nineteenth century"). Because of the brevity of the individual analyses, the emphasis on traditional concepts of literary movements, and the extended time period of the study (well over a century), *Gender and Modernity* reads like a literary survey structured around the themes of gender and disillusion, the latter of which, I would argue, is not necessarily peculiar to modern literature. Where *Gender and Modernity* succeeds is in its treatment of lesser-known works and authors, its contextualization of the works in the individual chapters, and in its equal attention to texts produced during the Enlightenment, a period that is often ignored by scholars in the discussion of modernity. It is precisely this inclusiveness that will secure its place as a reference for students and scholars of modern Spanish literature, as well as a point of departure for further studies on the lesser-known works and authors studied here.

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Ryan, Lorraine. *Memory and Spatiality in Post-Millennial Spanish Narrative*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014. 240 pp.

Spanish Memory Studies have witnessed a recent "boom" in production in both the creative and academic spheres, as Lorraine Ryan correctly notes in her latest contribution to the field. Ryan offers a study of novels of memory from the perspective of their treatment of space, focusing on, in her words, "the literary representation of the complex processes of the hegemonic of space and its counteraction by the individual subject" (2). Dulce Chacón, Alberto Méndez, Emili Teixidor, Carlos Ruiz Zafón, Bernardo Atxaga, and José María Merino are each given close attention in the seven lengthy chapters of *Memory and Spatiality in Post-Millennial Spanish Narrative*. Ryan's argument begins from the principle that, following the Republican defeat in 1939, the Franco regime used the material environment to impose its own particular reading of history and hence to construct an all-pervasive postwar memory that excluded Republican perspectives and perpetuated the trauma