

Recensões

***A New History of Iberian Feminisms*, editado por Silvia Bermúdez e Roberta Johnson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018, 544 pp.**

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While most of the literature on women's studies considers feminist movements in Spain and Portugal separately, Silvia Bermúdez and Roberta Johnson's *A New History of Iberian Feminisms* (2018) offers a comprehensive history of feminist activity and writing from the eighteenth century to the present day in all areas of the Iberian peninsula. This collection of thirty-six essays traces women's long path towards the achievement of full citizenship, focusing on how feminist activity has evolved in the different regions of Spain and Portugal and the numerous ways in which this activity has been incorporated into Peninsular feminist networks as a whole. In this regard, the book represents an invaluable approach to the study of feminisms defined by their pluralism.

One of the volume's greatest virtues is the periodization system. The book is neatly structured into six time periods, each corresponding to a different stage in feminist activity and writing. In order to guide the reader, the six chronological segments are preceded by an overview of the historical context. This research incorporates a thoroughly documented theoretical foundation that sheds light on the multiple interactions between women's activity and political history in both Spain and Portugal. On the other hand, each chapter pays careful attention to women's contributions to the debates during each time period, in particular regions through rigorous and solid analyses of non-fiction writings, particularly through essays. By feminist writing, the authors broadly refer to «writing that seeks to uncover the individual and social mechanisms that constrain women's lives and/or writing that proposes alternatives to social, political, or individual circumstances that foster inequality between men and women» (p. 6).

Since the Enlightenment is considered to be the starting point for a feminist consciousness, the book opens with the eighteenth century, which is exhaustively examined in the articles from the section «Iberian Feminism in the Age of the Enlightenment». The second time period that is explored, «The Long Nineteenth Century», spans from the nineteenth century until 1920. Rather than an organized movement, Iberian feminism up to that time is represented as revolving around figures like Concepción Arenal, Emilia Pardo Bazán, Carmen de Burgos, Antónia Gertrudes Pusich and Francisca de Assis Martins Wood, among others. Nevertheless, the increasing recognition of women's rights during the Republican period promoted projects of emancipation and the emergence of what could be deemed as «first wave Iberian feminism». The research included in the third part titled, «The Iberian Feminist Movements Gain Strength under the Republics, 1920-1939», demonstrates the significance of a militant feminism that was suspended with the coup d'états in Portugal and Spain. However, while the dictatorships of António de Oliveira Salazar and Francisco Franco led to the imposition of feminine roles strongly influenced by Catholicism and traditional values, the collection of works gathered within section four delve into the subtle ways in which women managed to subvert dominant discourses through their narratives.

The last two chronological segments stretch from the early democratic era up to the most recent period. Since the ending of the dictatorial period that marked important developments in the liberation of women in Spain and Portugal, the struggle for equal rights has gone through several different stages. These chapters provide a thorough exploration of the current state of affairs regarding contemporary feminisms, which, according to the authors, are «largely the fruit of a generation that, we could say, discovered for themselves the experience of politics and felt the enthusiasm and power that came from collectively taking the initiative in the public realm, in such a way that (as some of those involved have commented) political action even turned out to be fun: a courageous generation with a powerful will to action and remarkable confidence in their ability to redesign the public

sphere» (p. 400). More specifically, throughout the past decades, feminist debates have been determined by the equality/different exchanges in Spain, the increasing presence of the Instituto de la Mujer, the National Plans for Equality in Portugal, government institutions dedicated to women's rights, and more recently, by information technology and development and the inclusion of LGBT groups, immigrant women and other dimensions of subjectivities. The final section of the book portrays contemporary feminisms as mainly concerned with four central issues: domestic violence; abortion rights; gender equality; and lesbian and queer identity.

All contributions are committed to go beyond national boundaries in order to demonstrate that it is possible to talk about Iberian feminisms. Nevertheless, the extent of the research and its broad content may be responsible for the fact that Portuguese, Castilian, Catalanian, Galician and Basque feminisms remain the center of attention, while women's movements in other geographical areas, like Asturias and Andalucía, are not discussed in sufficient depth. On the other hand, the section entitled «Iberian Feminisms' Diversity: 1996 to the Present» discusses the current influence of virtual communities in the dissemination of feminist practices, but fails to reflect critically on theories concerning transnational approaches. While recognizing that no approach can be all-inclusive, the authors state that their goal was «to complicate the standard histories of Iberian feminism by bringing this diverse production into focus and understanding its contribution to a complex web of feminist interactions from the eighteenth century [...] to the present» (p. 7). Their contribution most certainly meets this objective, as evinced by the insightful collection of essays included in the book.

It is worth noting how the eighteenth-century feminist writings, the nineteenth-century projects of emancipation, the first and second wave and, ultimately, contemporary Iberian feminisms are intricately woven together. Despite being characterized as a multilingual and culturally diverse geographical space comprised by a wide range of regions, the book highlights the presence of feminist networks, along with the existence of certain common elements, including the influence of the Roman Catholic tradition and the transatlantic dimension promoted through contacts with Latin America. The volume's most innovative aspect and its main contribution is that feminist activities in these regions are systematically considered in order to be integrated into Peninsular feminist networks as a whole. All in all, the authors have compiled a collection of essays that provides a comprehensive approach to feminist activity connecting different territories and various time periods. Besides offering a pleasant reading experience, this collection offers a point of departure for further research on plural Iberian feminisms.