

A Historiographical Revolution in Our Time

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With this double issue we complete the third of *HAHR*'s five-year tenure at Yale. One of our editorial team's initiatives has been to devote one special issue a year to provocative themes and new theoretical and methodological approaches. Each of these issues provides a forum for the dissemination of important work by established scholars and younger historians alike. Previous special issues have explored the significance of the so-called Spanish-American War of 1898 on the occasion of its centenary (1998), debated the importance of cultural studies approaches to Mexico's "new cultural history" (1999), and unveiled new research on the complex encounter set in motion by the Portuguese "discovery" of Brazil five hundred years ago (2000). During the final year of our editorship (2002), we plan to examine new approaches to the study of race and slavery in Latin America.

In the current issue, we explore a critical approach whose rapid development over the past two decades has revolutionized our field like no other: gender analysis. In her keynote essay, Sueann Caulfield reveals how far we've come: in the early 1970s, Latin American women's studies was an underdeveloped and rather isolated field, with little coherence and few practitioners, especially among historians. Thirty years later, the shift to an analysis of *gender* rather than of *women*, especially among scholars based in North America, has broadened the field to such an extent that it is no mean feat merely to take stock of the gains. The relational nature of gender as a concept implies an examination of men as well as women, raises important questions about the relationship between material and discursive dimensions of power, and about how gender articulates with other social categories such as class, race, ethnicity, and generation. In the process, gender analysis not only invites us to bring new questions to our data and explore new or woefully understudied problems (for example, homosexuality, bisexuality, and transsexuality) but also compels us to rewrite the history of more commonly studied issues and institutions (for example, the history of pervasive social concepts such as honor and shame; of labor, working-class protests, and social movements; crime and deviance; state

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formation and social reform; science and medicine). Caulfield writes, “Historians are asking quite a bit of gender: big questions such as how republican citizenship was constructed; how socialist or capitalist states achieve hegemony; why local communities respond to the call to war.” It is not for nothing that we decided that gender and sexuality merited a *double* issue!

It is a testament to the vitality of this new body of work that we had no shortage of worthy candidates for this special issue. With the exception of the synthetic, framing pieces by Sueann Caulfield and Thomas Miller Klubock, all of the other essays came to us via the normal process of submission. Indeed, our editorial tenure has witnessed a marked increase in submissions on gender- and sexuality-related themes as well studies which, while not explicitly concerned with these issues, integrate gender analysis into their conceptual frameworks. Over the course of the last decade and a half, gender and sexuality have moved from the periphery to the center of our field’s concerns, and this volume testifies to the increasingly sophisticated, interdisciplinary, and comparatively informed manner in which they have been studied.

The issue leads off with Caulfield’s comprehensive essay on the history of gender in Latin American historiography. While she is not one of the field’s pioneers, the fact that Caulfield is a “second generation” scholar, who finished her graduate work in modern Brazilian history in the 1990s, when the field experienced a veritable quantum leap, affords her a privileged position to comment on both the field’s evolution and dynamic potential. Although this volume emphasizes writing on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Latin America, Caulfield’s contribution (like Nesvig’s closing essay) also surveys the burgeoning literature on the colonial period.

Building on the foundation laid by Caulfield, a forum of four Chileanist scholars—Thomas Miller Klubock, Elizabeth Quay Hutchison, Karin Roseblatt, and Heidi Tinsman—examines the construction of gender, sexuality, and power in a variety of politically contested arenas, including leftist activism, welfarism, and agrarian reform. Our selection of twentieth-century Chile for a special section was not coincidental: as Klubock’s introductory essay makes clear, the literature on Chilean women, gender and sexuality is particularly rich and distinguished by contributions by national and North American scholars alike. These four essays leave little doubt that the recent harvest of work has a great deal to do with Chile’s strong tradition of labor, feminist and other social movements, and the engagement of Chilean and international scholars with those movements and with each other. The theoretical concerns and intellectual and political priorities of Chilean and foreign scholars, Klubock suggests (and here he echoes Caulfield for Latin America as a whole),

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have often been at variance, occasionally producing tensions between them, particularly regarding the relevance of North American feminist and post-modernist theory. Yet there can be no doubt that to the extent that North Americans have been able to dialogue with and build upon the concerns of national historians, the results have been stunning. This has also been the case for Brazil, whose sophisticated, theoretically informed literature in social, cultural, and labor history exerted a profound influence on North American students of gender and sexuality in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s.

Such interchange has been less pronounced for Mexico, although a recent conference at Yale in May 2001, "Las Olvidadas: Gender and Women's History in Postrevolutionary Mexico," organized by Jocelyn Olcott and Mary Kay Vaughan, brought Mexican and Mexicanist scholars together fruitfully with a select group of historians working on issues of gender and sexuality in Chile, Brazil, Central America, the Caribbean, the United States, and Europe. In this double issue, two Mexican scholars who teach in the United States, Pablo Piccato and Cristina Rivera-Garza, showcase the manner in which gender analysis is contributing to a new history of Latin American law and medicine. Each analyzes gender dynamics, class relations, and sexual violence in the context of the medical-legal state that emerged in early-twentieth-century Mexico.

The issue concludes with an exploratory essay by Martin Nesvig, a doctoral candidate in colonial Mexican and early modern European history at Yale, which surveys the relatively late emergence of historical and social science writing on the "complicated terrain" of Latin American homosexuality. The diversity of the issue's themes and approaches is mirrored in the variety of photographs and drawings that represent gender and sexuality in Chile and Mexico.

The double issue concludes with a section of commentary and debate provoked by our recent special issue on colonial Brazil. It is our hope that the innovative contributions on gender and sexuality in these pages will provide grist for future exchanges.

