

the museum does not reflect a popular sense of the massacre? Or is it that the massacre may not have been the most crucial event?

Citing a historical fact, like insisting upon a philosophical or sociological fact, is about as pedantically linear as one can get. Rarely in the volume do authors wonder about, much less account for, the popular in trying to understand violence, memory, and marketing. We don't know what subalterns saw when they walked through Punta Carretas or when they watched *Anos Rebeldes*. Is it possible that the popularity of the *telenovela* reflected a prevailing sense of repression lite, rather than the imposition of that sentiment? Here and elsewhere, contributors to the volume never raise doubts over shibboleths about consensus violence and repression – cultural regimens that many academics have helped to impose with severity. Despite the fact that throughout Latin America, for example, humour has been vital to an accounting for violence, these chapters tend to be humourless. More chilling, for Argentina and for other countries, the authors never address the crude and sometimes cynical politics behind the creation of memory sites and other marketing devices – particularly if we follow the logic of Susana Draper and other authors that post-dictatorship societies reflect violent continuities under dictatorship. A path-breaking collection in many regards, *Accounting for Violence* makes clear, all the same, that there is much work to be done on who remembers what.

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ALEXANDER EDMONDS: *Pretty Modern: Beauty, Sex, and Plastic Surgery in Brazil*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

In recent years, Brazil's prominence as a site for world-class plastic surgery has joined soccer, samba, Carnival, and the Amazon as yet another exotic image of the country that circulates internationally. Why does a supposedly less developed nation, in comparison to Europe and the United States, have some of the best cosmetic surgeons in the world? Moreover, this is not merely a procedure reserved for the rich and famous or even the economically comfortable middle classes. Altering the body by tightening skin, reducing or augmenting breast sizes and shapes, reconfiguring the nose, or reducing unwanted fat through liposuction has become standard practice for women of all social classes in Brazil, whether performed in exclusive private clinics or in publicly supported hospitals. What explains the wide-ranging popularity of cosmetic surgery? How has it become so easily available to women of lower classes? What does it say about Brazilian notions of the body, sexuality, race, beauty, and class? This exquisitely written

anthropological study of the beauty industry in Rio de Janeiro is an exceptional examination of this particular phenomenon. Its strength lies beneath the surface of what might seem at first glance to be a superficial subject. From the first page, *Pretty Modern* is a superb and subtle reading of contemporary Brazilian culture and society.

In post-dictatorial Brazil, consumer capitalism has intensified and domestic markets have expanded considerably. Electronic media has penetrated virtually every household. Television programming and advertisements that feature attractive young actresses and models increasingly have shaped viewers' desires and aspirations about beauty. Concurrently, new ideas about citizens' rights have developed, as has a greater sense among lower classes of the possibilities of upward mobility, as reflected in the 2002 presidential election of Luis Inácio Lula da Silva and increased government dedication to programs designed to address long-term social inequality.

In this context, what had blossomed in the 1970s as an aesthetic service for wealthy women wishing to retain a hold on their youth slowly became a medical procedure available to all. As Brazil democratized, so did the demand for *plásticos*. Beauty surgeons began to argue that the improvement in a woman's self-esteem through plastic surgery was as much a right as access to other health services. Their patients quickly appropriated and embraced this discourse. In large part, the public health system also conceded to this line of reasoning by authorizing procedures that enabled women of modest means to reconfigure themselves. Cosmetic surgery moved from being a privileged vanity of the rich to the right of an ordinary woman. This put pressures on hospitals to prepare more surgeons. Public clinics, which provided free or low-cost operations for the poor, became training schools for future doctors who could then set up profitable private practices to meet the booming market. A stable economy, installment plans, and the aspirations of millions of women to transform themselves helped fuel the industry. It has become a ubiquitous practice.

Weaving through different social classes, from socialites to slum dwellers, and interviewing people engaged in all parts of the process, from doctors to patients, Edmonds uncovers the multiple meanings placed on the Brazilian body as they relate to this technique that is almost universally applauded as a sign of advancing modernity. Science and medicine, so this perspective holds, can transform the body and play the added role of psychologist, making the patient happier about herself and her place in the world.

As the author points out, this fixation on the body and beauty might seem to be yet another misogynous trap to which modern women have succumbed, yet he insists on their agency in fashioning and recreating their self-image. In actively addressing the effects of motherhood and ageing on their bodies, mi-

llions of women seem to be taking charge of their lives. Yet, as Edmonds readily acknowledges, these women are embedded in a myriad of cultural systems and codes that place a specific set of values on female beauty and what a woman's body should be. The cultural imagery promoted by television, movies, and advertisement has set high standards. Becoming more beautiful also provides the hope of upward social mobility, whether through finding a more prosperous mate or by being chosen as a fashion model. Just as soccer has offered many boys and young men the dream of a possible path to fame and fortune, with just enough examples to fuel the fantasy, the imagined transformative power of the scalpel feeds many poor young women's aspirations for glamour and wealth, if they can only "fix" their breasts or another part of their bodies in just the right way.

The author closely examines the contradictory crosscurrents about race in Brazil that influence the sense of self among many of African descent. Changing the shape of a nose seems to imply unease with one's genetic past. At the same time, a new consumer market for people of color has redefined traditional esthetics that valued European and lighter skin over African, Indian, mixed race, and darker skin. Although black activists may criticize many of the everyday practices of ordinary Brazilians of humble origins for becoming enmeshed in consumer culture or Eurocentric beauty standards, the author is interested in describing and analyzing the complexities of Brazilian society rather than judging them.

Similarly, noted changes in sexual practices in recent decades and the increasing eroticization of the female body have placed added pressures on women to conform to patterns of sexualized beauty in order to maintain a youthful appearance and remain appealing. In some cases, the goal is to retain a partner or attract a new one. In other cases, as the author convincingly demonstrates, it is merely for middle-aged women to feel good about themselves. This study acknowledges the diverse cultural signals at play as women make the decision to undergo surgery. In the process, Edmonds has produced a stunning study about Rio de Janeiro that has echoes for Brazil as a whole.

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ROSA-LINDA FREGOSO and CYNTHIA BEJARANO (eds.): *Terrorizing Women: Femicide in the Americas*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010.

In 2001, I first watched Lourdes Portillo's documentary *Missing Young Women (Señorita Extraviada)* and have been haunted by some of the scenes in the film ever since. Viewers learned that in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, men kill