ATLANTIS
Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies
37.2 (December 2015): 249-253
ISSN 0210-6124

Joana Sabadell-Nieto and Marta Segarra, eds. 2014. *Differences in Common: Gender, Vulnerability and Community*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 250 pp. ISBN: 978-90-420-3835-6.

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Differences in Common: Gender, Vulnerability and Community testifies to the relevance of studies on community in social, literary and media criticism. In this regard, community formation is on the agenda in this period of globalization through transnational locations, contributing much to challenging the nationalist suppression of cultural heterogeneity. Nationalist discourses construct imagined communities based on homogeneity and separation in order to control differences; therefore the group of people constructed as different (ethnic minorities, women, etc.) is deemed as the "Other" which may destabilize the apparent national immunity. In contrast, multicultural, ethnic and gender discourses, such as Gunew's, highlight the subversive power of differences to construct communities. According to Gunew, the "dismantling of hegemonic categories is facilitated by the proliferation of difference rather than the setting up of binary oppositions that can merely be reversed" (1993, 1). Subverting the aforementioned homogeneous discourses, then, opens up many possibilities of integration for the outsiders. Likewise, Said states that "cultures actually assume more 'foreign' elements, alterities, differences, that they consciously exclude" (1994, 15). Studying the community as a living entity in a constant flux of differences provides new insights into its formation.

The present book belongs to this approach. In this sense, the editors' aim is to demonstrate how the sum of differences coming together shapes community. Many authors have already theorized about this contact zone, which has gained great relevance for the study on oppressed group of people: it is Soja's "Thirdspace" (1996) or Bhabha's "Meanwhile" (1990). For them, it is the place where differences merge and the "small numbers"—as Appadurai so aptly names this phenomenon—settle (2006, 49). The book's main contribution to this metaphorical space is the affirmation that body exposure and vulnerability are compulsory for the construction of this contact zone/space. To this end, this volume, which is divided into three sections and thirteen chapters, presents a serious examination of community formation through time and space from a multidisciplinary perspective: politics, history, literature, transnationalism, gender, body, postcolonial and media studies, etc.

The first section, "Gender and Trans-National Citizenship," deals with gender in relation to nationalistic discourses. The first chapter, "The Reason(s) of Nation and Gender" by Iveković, focuses on how the heteronormative nationalistic discourse excludes the "Other," mainly women, because they "do not correspond to the norm" (21). Difference is used by the discourses based on reason to deny individuals their citizenship, instead of being used to construct a community. Particularly interesting to the ongoing debate about community therefore is the importance of exchange of differences for the formation of a community. Spivak, a well-known proponent of subverting nationalism writes the next contribution, entitled "Nationalism and the Imagination." For Spivak, the feeling of being part of a community expressed by nationalist discourses is different to her own feeling of belonging which apparently disperse due to the emergence of nationalism. As soon as nationalism, founded on reproductive heteronormativity and wrongly identified with the state, became established, the notion of the Subaltern began to spread. Particularly interesting to the ongoing debate about community is how these "small numbers" subvert the national fiction by means of imaginative processes.

"The Hostage of the Womb by the Motherland" is a contribution by Martín-Lucas. The author analyzes the consequences of comparing women with nation, namely, abuses and the denial of citizenship. In this regard, it is interesting to note how different contexts provoke a range of gender performances and effects. Whereas in national contexts, there are mechanisms to control both female bodies and their citizenship (for example, birth control in China), transnationally, women may form allegiances—defined by Ong as "flexible citizenship" (1999). As a consequence, women disobey the norms imposed upon them, as Chicana feminists do, and the nationalist discourses are threatened.

Persin, in "Women and Citizenship: Poetry of Power, Time and Space," discusses the fluidity of the poetic language as the best way to subvert totalitarian discourses. The author analyzes the poetry of Zodoya ([1965] 1988) and Castro (2000, 2006) to exemplify how official discourses are deconstructed by literary texts. These poems, like Chacon's *La voz dormida* (2002), engage in accomplishing the subversive endeavor of rewriting silenced histories from the perspective of the outsider. Specifically, these poems create a new imaginative space more appropriate to oppressed women and immigrants.

Body and vulnerability frame the second section "Vulnerability and Politics." Blackman in *The Body* (2008) refers to the cultural and social theories about the body, and analyzes one of the best-known critics in this field of research: Judith Butler, whose contribution, "Bodily Vulnerability, Coalitions, and Street Politics," opens the second section. Vulnerability, like the body, needs to be understood in relation to culture, society, geography, history, media, etc. More importantly, according to the author, describing women and nations as vulnerable implies either protecting them paternalistically or excluding them from the democratic processes. Therefore, in order to oppose this hypervulnerability and achieve political changes, public exposure of the body by means of political struggles is needed.

Fuster, in "More than Vulnerable: Rethinking Community," analyzes Resnair's fake documentary *Hiroshima, mon amour* (1959) to demonstrate the impossibility of Butler's community of mourners based on vulnerability (2004). Fuster posits that community construction cannot be justified by the Western social practices that both decide which life is grievable, and then legitimate violence on the different body for security's sake. Instead, political judgment is required to control violence and mourning has to be turned into political action to form communities.

The next contribution, "Passionately Losing Oneself," by Sabadell-Nieto is an analysis of the main characters in two of Coixet's films: *The Secret Life of Words* (2005) and *Elegy* (2008). These characters are victims of their communities because they are sexually abused or have to behave according to the masculine heteronormativity. Since Martín-Lucas criticized the lack of information about women's trauma in national and war contexts, it is worth mentioning how Sabadell-Nieto highlights the insightful treatment of the character's feeling in Coixet's films during their recovery processes. In this sense, as the characters find out, recovering is only possible through human contact and vulnerability.

According to Andrés, in "Opaque Encounters, Impossible Vicinities," in Melville's short story "The Piazza" ([1856] 1997) the characters fail because they do not follow the social normative to correctly interact as neighbors with the "Other." Similarly, in *Moby Dick* (chapter 128, [1851] 1988), the refusal to rescue the "Other" in the middle of the ocean constitutes a denial of the political space that constitutes the community (171).

Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" (1991) is a valuable contribution to both the previous and the following arguments. According to Anderson, communities are imagined because they are founded on the basis of a common feature, which is shared by compatriots who have never met (6), and maintained by nationalist cultural products such as literature, music, etc. (141). Adopting this theoretical framework, the third section, "(Fictional) Identities and the Politics of Memory" analyzes different transcultural products that destabilize this imagined community. In the first chapter, "Community and the Politics of Memory," Segarra focuses on two films by Bouchareb (2006, 2010) that offer unofficial accounts of French historical events. While Poole asserts that a community is constructed through cultural elements (1999, 14), Segarra argues that "[p]olitical, folkloric, literary, musical, cinematic and culinary discourses, among others, contribute to shaping this feeling of being part of a community" (177). It is remarkable how this way of engaging with History challenges the authenticity of homogeneous official discourses.

Similarly, "Fiction Traces: The Ideal Community and Historical Sabotage" by Grasset defies the objectivity of documentaries about past events. The author contends that documentaries cannot be deemed as objective since, being cinematographic, they use film features and techniques. Moreover, in many documentaries, fictional common features are emphasized in order to maintain ideal communities.

The next chapter, "What does Difference Have to Do with Community? Derrida's Diacritic Difference" is a contribution by Masó. As outlined in this chapter, Derrida, in

his contribution to Brenner's visual anthology of the Jewish diaspora (2003), criticizes the notion of universality that lies behind the identification of oppressed minorities with larger majorities in particular contexts since it implies erasing their differences instead of linking them to construct communities.

In "Community as Transit and Stammering in Collaborative Writing," Fernández comments on two blogs by García (2004) and by Ribeiro (2010). The essay focuses on the main difference between the communities that are being formed on the internet and previous, non-digital ones, namely, the impossibility of establishing a sense of permanence and cohesion. It is interesting how both blogs emphasize the polyphony in the process of community construction: the first is an example of a community in transit, where diverse voices emerge, and the second is a stammering of the universal voice that destabilizes the authority of the official narrative.

Finally, in "Blood Ties: Interpretive Communities and Popular (Gendered) Genres," Clúa Ginés analyzes the transfictionality between Charlaine Harris' Southern Vampire Mysteries ([2001] 2009, [2003] 2009, [2004] 2009) and *True Blood* (Ball 2008), their TV adaptation. Particularly remarkable is how the author links two apparently opposed communities to construct an interpretive community.

In conclusion, thanks to these contributions, imagined communities are destabilized and differences are confirmed as pillars of a community. However, regarding the content, some previous knowledge about postcolonial, gender, transnational, historiography, media, literary and body studies is required in order to fully understand the volume as a whole. Nonetheless, this book is a much appreciated contribution to the ongoing debate about community.

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Received 11 September 2014 Revised version accepted 9 October 2015

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