

Fluid Feelings – 32, 2 (2021)

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Abstracts

Stephanie Lämmert, “Let’s hope there are some good girls”. Sugar Relationships and Feminine Respectability in Post-Independence Zambia

This essay examines the popular genre of sugar daddy stories in post-independence Zambia. Sugar relations in African history have typically been discussed using either a structuralist approach focusing on economic inequality and poverty, or one highlighting the individual agency of women in order to not present them as pawns, victims or dupes. Instead, this article zooms into the fantasies of observers of these relationships and the fluid feelings sugar babies provoke in them. Based on material from the Zambian youth magazine “Speak Out” between the 1980s and the 2000s, I argue that women engaged in sugar relations are seen to be unsettling as they potentially hold the power to dismantle adult men’s authority. Looking at the three most popular settings in which sugar stories unfold – the school, the workplace, and the national stage – this essay demonstrates that sugar stories are windows into gender dynamics and fragile masculinities, as well as into tensions around class, generation, and race. Feelings about these women range from jealousy and anxiety to fury and are inherent to a moral debate on disorder and corruption in the urban Copperbelt of Zambia

Margrit Pernau, Contested Emotions of Masculinity. The Court, the Street, and the Negotiation Table in an Indian Princely State in the 20th Century

This article investigates the movement between contested styles of masculinity, in the princely state of Hyderabad, situated in the south of India, in the 1930s and 1940s. Three spaces, at the

same time emotional and institutional, dominated political interaction. The court required a masculinity premised on balance. A nobleman had to embody military virtues, but also model his heart through the fine arts. The masculinity of the street was premised on regeneration of the community and the glorification of burning passions, while the negotiation table needed the figure of a rational man, able to tone down his feelings. These styles were contested, but not exclusive. As the case study of Bahadur Yar Jang, nobleman, orator, organiser of mass movements and skilful negotiator in discussions within Hyderabad and between Hyderabad and Indian actors shows, (some) men could move between these masculinities, divided by fluid boundaries. However, his case also shows that the fluidity has to be historicised: it was neither available to everyone, nor did it survive the radicalisation of Muslim politics in the 1940s and the annexation of the state by the Indian army in 1948.

Rukmini Barua, *Feminine Domesticity and Emotions of Gender: Work and Women in 20th and Early 21st Century India*

This article focuses on the dynamics of domesticity and social respectability amongst the urban working classes in postcolonial India. It examines how emotions are instrumentalised, articulated and experienced in the process of forging and challenging feminine domesticity. In doing so, it considers questions of fluidity, instability and ambivalence in the relationship between gender and emotions. Drawing on archival and ethnographic material from the urban industrial centres of Bombay, Ahmedabad and Delhi, the contribution further explores how emotions were operationalised in working class politics. In neighbourhoods of the working poor across India, the boundaries between the private and the public, between the home and the outside world, have historically been fluid and shifting. The social space of the home gives rise to multivalent spatial meanings in conjunction with specific bodily and emotional practices. This article suggests that women's fluid feelings towards gender roles and positions enable a reconfiguration of domestic ideals, which affirm social norms rather than posing an overt challenge.

Alexandra Oberländer, *"To be a woman is hard work". The Changing Landscape of Gendered Emotions in the Late Soviet Union*

In closely reading the 1980 Soviet blockbuster “Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears”, this article demonstrates how atypically gendered emotions in fact reified a binary-coded emotional and gendered order. Following the fairytale romance between Katia, a factory director, and Gosha, a rank-and-file worker, this film played with the boundaries of traditional gender roles. In doing so, the article argues, the film illuminated the broad scope of gender fluidity. The analysis takes into account public perceptions of the movie as presented in contemporary reviews and journal articles, concluding that key to the film’s success were the male hero’s emotionality as well as the heroine’s checked feelings. Whereas in Katia’s case her gender was constantly scrutinised both within the film and in audience reactions to it, this certainly was not the case for Gosha. The figure of the emotional man reified the gendered order of feelings with dream prince Gosha portraying its Soviet incarnation.

Esra Sarioglu, Faces of Shame in Contemporary Turkey. Women Feeling the Hierarchies of Class and Gender at Work

How do the intersecting systems of inequality (that is gender and class) take hold of women’s bodies? Are there gendered, bodily, and emotional intensities that emerge at the intersections of class and gender? Drawing from an ethnographic study of working-class women in today’s Turkey, this article addresses these questions. By offering an analysis of women’s embodied conduct at the workplace against a backdrop of global capitalist restructuring, it unveils how multifaceted dimensions of shame intersect and shape women workers’ everyday bodily modes of being, habitual modes of dwelling in the workspace, and approaching others at work. Inside the workplace where sexualised shame and shaming are ubiquitous, women workers adopt bodily modalities associated with rigidity, while women working in those workplaces where sexualised shame is rendered relatively unnecessary acquire bodily modalities of fluidity. By bringing phenomenological perspectives to bear on the concept of fluidity, the article argues that the loss of fluidity – the bodily capacity that enables the gendered and classed self to interact smoothly with the world and others – is the bodily and emotional cost of the class and gender hierarchies that working-class women bear in Turkey.