

Reading response

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



June 27, The Insanity of the Killings in Juarez: Beauty Brands and the Ugliness of Gender s The murder of hundreds of young women in Ciudad Juarez since 1993 is not new to me, as I have read and watched past news about it. After I first learned about it, I felt indignation against a machismo society that promotes and condones rape and violence against women. After reading recent articles and viewing the film, *Señorita Extraviada*, I resent that these rapes and killings have not stopped at all. Evelyn Nieves shows how the Juarez local government clearly disregards these killings, since investigations have not yielded any believable arrests. Furthermore, watching *Señorita Extraviada* intensifies my feelings of injustice in this world. In this film, director Lourdes Portillo shows various testimonies from the victims' families, which, if only used properly, can help catch the real criminal/criminals. The film also indicates a possible collusion between the police and the criminals, where it is highly probable that some of the police are rapists too, since they have not duly resolved this long-standing investigation. Unfortunately, the local and central government are blind and deaf to the pleas of families, friends, and supporters of the deceased. To make matters worse, the cosmetics industry, through MAC and its collaboration with Rodarte, shows either apathy or absurdity in creating a cosmetics line called " Juarez." Julianne Hing reports how consumers negatively reacted to the line. I appreciate that beauty and fashion bloggers made an outcry against this tasteless beauty line. These works underscore how insane these killings are because they reveal the ugliness of gender and social class codes and the ugliness of beauty brands.

These works are connected to the social construction of gender, specifically,

the visibility and invisibility of gender. Judith Lorber, in “Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender,” talks about how society creates and reinforces gender through different social, economic, political, and legal structures. Lorber stresses that “the most powerful means of sustaining the moral hegemony of the dominant gender ideology of the dominant gender ideology is that the process is made invisible...” (58). My analysis is that gender makes femininity and masculinity visible and then makes it invisible through making society accept gender beliefs and attitudes. In the case of disappearing and raped women in Juarez, their gender and social class are the main reasons that they are invisible to their government. Nieves argues for the connection between gender and lack of effective government response on the Juarez cases of rape and missing women. She says: “...in a society where men cannot be charged with raping their wives and domestic abuse is rarely prosecuted, authorities simply do not take violence against women seriously enough” (Nieves). Indeed, the cultural and social beliefs and practices regarding gender make violence against women acceptable and unimportant in the Mexican society, among many other societies. The moral hegemony of Mexico’s gendered society is invisible, but not unassailable, however. I believe that with consistent and mounting public pressure, the government will soon find the real killers and attackers of the Juarez women.

In Hing’s article, I agree with Lilo Grunewald, who thinks that MAC was aware of the connections between Juarez and the real Juarez’s issue of violence against women because that is the main appeal that MAC wanted— instant recognition and controversy. Grunewald argues that MAC is fully

conscious of its branding of its “ Juarez” line: “ I firmly believe that MAC knew what they were doing in releasing this controversial line and I find that shocking” (Hing). I confirm this because “ blood streaked eyeshadow” and brand names such as “ Bordertown” and “ Factory” (Hing) are directly suggestive of the Juarez killings. MAC knew what its line was about, which makes it a disgusting company who has no respect for women at all. Rape and violence against women are not something to be undercut through superfluous branding. My questions are: Why are American companies who benefit from the cheap labor of maquiladoras not doing anything concrete and urgent to help resolve the Juarez killings? What does this indicate regarding the American corporate attitude to women and their gender, social class, and race?

Works Cited

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