

Call for Papers

14 aprile 2020

Gender, genres and generations

A sociological analysis on changes of consumption styles in the globalised world: current scenarios and future perspectives

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For some time now, the sociological analysis has been focused on consumptions, not by using a mere economic analysis, but a multidimensional approach instead, capable of grasping the cultural and/or symbolical aspects also. In fact, consumption practices have been converted into means through which the social actors can express their identity, their membership or the universe of values they feel they belong to. In this regard, consumer goods and experiences constitute the *extended self* (Belk, 1988; 2013), which enables the actors to better define themselves and their immediate social circle.

That is part of why this CFP aims to analyse the multiple forms of the consumption universe. It is believed that sociology can offer a privileged point of view about the dynamics that underlie the consumption practices of social actors. In the today's society, in effect, consumptions seem to carry increasingly complicated and complex meanings, as to constitute one of the key elements around which the same social action is structured.

In this respect, consumption practices can contribute to the practice of subjective agency (Borgerson, 2005), but they also enable social actors to concretely and tangibly express their adherence to the gender identity in which they recognize themselves. *Gender* – as the first key word of the title – and consumption, will be the first topic of reflection proposed in this call, with the awareness of the multiple modalities through which the two terms can intersect. Several scholars have underlined how gender variables have a significant impact on the life and consumption styles of the actors (Harris, 2004). Especially, they pointed out how young women can use specific consumption practices in order to claim their voice and resist the dominant culture (Fisher and Davis, 1993). However, in the context of feminist reflection, Angela McRobbie (2008) has called attention on the necessity of a critical approach, regarding the analysis of women's role in the wide *consumer culture*. None the less, the relation between gender identities and consumptions attract attentions of researchers as an interesting space for

reflection, which we intend to investigate with a fully cross-disciplinary approach.

The second key word we intend to explore is *genre*. Traditionally, the concept of genre in the medial panorama has been asserted according to three main dimensions: entertainment, education and information. In recent times, medial genres underwent a significant evolution, related to the transformations of the media themselves, their use within the public sphere as well as the needs of production (Grignaffini, 2012). The importance of genres in the cultural consumption panorama seems to concern, above all, the television industry, which is adapting its production culture to a less linear paradigm. For instance, information appears increasingly expanded over the recognized institutional spaces, by enlarging the usual definitional framework and by calling into question the relation between daily events and opinions, within a game of mirrors favoured by the expansion of social networks. *Game show and talk show, reality show, talent show, factual* often have minimal differences, which are instead essential to make order within the show schedule and to establish a communicative deal with the audience. Both aspects are fundamental for the success of every show. Regarding the fiction, the pursuit of quality involves several dimensions (screenwriting, directing, acting ...), by bringing television closer to cinema, so much so that reference narrative models, as well as the cast, the directors, and other operators of the set often participate in productions for both apparatuses. We are talking about a model of complexity (Mittell, 2015), which operates in different directions, by influencing in a significant way both mixtures of genres and new modalities of fruition products. What we propose to investigate is, therefore, the importance that genres are acquiring in the media, in relation to the ways of creating exchange moments between productions, media products and audiences. In this, the latter are mainly linked to reference genres instead of individual titles in programming, based on increasingly transmedial fruition paths (Hill 2019).

The last key words on which we intend to draw scholars' attention is *generations*, more specifically the multiple ways in which, in an increasingly individualized society, the chronological and subcultural variable affect the consumption choices of the subjects. In particular, the present number of the magazine intends to investigate the transformation of styles and practices of consumption within the different generational cohorts, with a specific attention on the role that new communication technologies might have on such processes (Colombo, Boccia Artieri, Del Grosso Destrieri, Pasquali, Sorice, 2012).

As for the new generations, specific consumer practices seem able to create collective identity narratives, by building a real generational semantics (Corsten, 1999). However, it looks evident that young people are adopting more personalized consumption patterns, by differentiating their choices on a functional style to fully express their identity and symbolic imagination

(demonstrated by the success of very popular series like, for example, “13 Reasons Why”, “Skam” or “Stranger Things”).

Moreover, in the panorama of medial representations of generations, it is interesting to look at the space given to the old age’s world in recent years. It seems right to state that, through products of fiction and entertainment, the cultural meaning of old age is significantly changing. “The Kominsky Method” or “Grace and Frankie” are two examples of series in which established actors, like Jane Fonda or Michael Douglas, play characters that voice energies and wishes once barred from people of an older age. As a matter of fact, the use of famous, well known and familiar celebrities allows to give new meanings and sense to an age that is no longer represented as a taboo only. Besides, the *ageing*, as well as on TV, is increasingly used in advertising, cinema, magazines, but also social media, to demonstrate the common sharing of new criteria with which, at a social level, age is experienced and observed. An example is the Instagram profile "Sciuraglam" with 185 thousand followers, which portrays not-so-young cool ladies. A further question to investigate is the relationship between age, generations and gender. Among the many representations of bodies that are no longer young, we notice a consistent presence of the female sphere, in particular, in those websites showing comparisons and differences between an image from the past, the “before”, and another from the present, the “now”.

The monographic number of *Ocula* will collect theoretical and empirical contributions of scholars that, starting from the different methodological perspectives, reflect upon the processes just mentioned.

Below is an indicative, but not exhaustive, list of possible areas of reflection:

1. Consumptions, bodies and genders identity;
2. Gender and its representation through the media; medial products and productions addressing also queer and/or lgbt+ issues;
3. Evolution of representation of female/male figure in commercials and in different forms of advertising;
4. Transformation of genres and seriality, transmediality and audience’s role, also in a global perspective;
5. Representation of different age cohorts in medial narrations and commercials: is it the end of stereotypes or their reproduction in other forms?
6. Technological platforms, generational cohorts and prosumerism;
7. Media as means for observing cultural changes; gender, genres and generations in the medial representations of present and past;
8. Myths and generational icons.

References

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Deadlines

- Abstract submission deadline: ~~May 31, 2020~~. **June 15, 2020**
- Notification of acceptance or refusal: **June 30, 2020**.
- Submission of the essays: **October 30, 2020**.
- Notification of acceptance, rejection or revision request: **November 30, 2020**.
- Revised essays: **December 15, 2020**.
- Scheduled Publication: **January 31, 2021**.
- Accepted languages: **English, Italian**.

Abstracts should be sent as an e-mail attachment (300-500 words including title, author name(s), email address(es), and institutional affiliation(s), bibliographic references excluded).

Abstracts and articles must be sent to: redazione@ocula.it
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Informations

- The acceptance of the articles and their publication is subject to double blind peer review.
- The Authors can find all the editing and format rules at the page “Come si collabora” - How to contribute to Ocula, on the home page. Please read it carefully and follow the recommendations.

- There are no official limits of length to the articles, yet we recommend 40.000 characters as a reasonable maximum measure (including spaces, notes and references).
- Files format accepted are .doc and docx.
- The articles may include any kind of images.
- Images (photographies, graphs, tables) must be included in the main text file and submitted each as a separate file, in .jpg, .png, .tif, .eps, .psd formats.
- The Authors must send their contribution in two versions: one in anonymous form, to be sent to the reviewers, and the other containing name, position, email, website, biographic notes. Each version must be a separate file.
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