

Martha Batiz, award-winning author and a passionate yet visceral speaker, as I came to know, spoke to us about her short story “Broken” from her new book, *No Stars in the Sky* (2022). She took us on a journey from the origins of femicide in Mexico to her commitment, as a Mexican-Canadian writer, to raise awareness. Through the discussion, we had an opportunity to explore a topic at the intersection of women, politics, and the macho identity. The standout themes for me were the frustrating impunity for the perpetrators, the astounding resilience of the mothers who lost their daughters, and the idea that people are dynamic composites with histories and heritage unlike the static images we make them to be.

People carry baggage with them when they migrate, and this baggage cannot be reduced to the detached and neat boxes of Canada’s multiculturalism. In *The Simplification of Culture*, Bissondath (2002) writes, “Culture becomes an object for display rather than the heart and soul of the individuals formed by it” (p. 88). By having a discussion regarding femicide, I was able to engage in the Mexican cultural heritage that extends beyond the food, language, and music. I had a rare opportunity of seeing the realities of Mexico which touch on elements of impunity, resilience, and corruption. Having this opportunity to enrich our knowledge with the challenges Mexico (and the rest of the world for that matter) is facing, allowed me to see Mexicans for the multifaceted and evolving people that they are rather than reducing them to mere stereotypes.

The talk clarified the role of writers and the power they hold in their pens. Batiz shared with us her commitment to “never be indifferent” and to use her privilege to bring to light issues affecting women. I found it inspiring as it draws attention to the fact that words can bring long-term change. I, too, pledge to become an informed citizen and to take the time to research, to question critically, and to speak up when given the opportunity. Upon reaching home, I watched documentaries and read articles about femicide from the perspective of journalists, mothers, and investigative crime units to challenge myself to form a more complete perspective. As editors and as wielders of the pen, part of our role is the commitment to the people whose stories we want to highlight. It is our responsibility to our readers to present information with its wholeness.

References

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