

Symbolic Violence: male lore and female representations

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The word of faith

*In modern society, permeated by the Christian spirit, are women in a real state of inferiority relative to men? Are they condemned to a status of permanent wardship? Single, do they lack freedom to run their own lives and manage their own fortunes? Have marriage and above all maternity not perchance emancipated them? In the heart of the family of which they are the mainstay, do they not exercise a moral force over all those around them which raises them above the physical weakness which is innate to them? Is it not within the conjugal and maternal spheres that they exercise their incontestable rights and mitigated duties, enshrined by general respect?*¹

This comment was published in 1880 by O *Apóstolo*, a periodical representing the official position of the Roman Catholic Church in Brazil, challenging those who called for greater participation by women in social and political life. In the midst of a long and contradictory argument on what it considered appropriate in terms of women's behavior, the writer then alluded to the importance of the Virgin Mary. Through her sacrifice and resignation, the Virgin Mary offered "the most complete example of all virtues, heroism and grandeur" for all

women who would find in her "the source of their best actions."

He then stressed the useless nature of concerns over superiority or equality between men and women, underlining the greater importance of studying the social functions for which they show the greatest aptitude. And in the case of women, he noted "like men, they need the scope of the world to exercise their faculties, or simply the narrow confines of the home, whose duties are difficult to fulfill", basing these arguments on an explicit induction to the last solution.

This was confirmed by emphasizing that women have a special function which corresponds to the laws of the sex, "sublime in both the pains which are inherent to them, as well as in the outcome: having children." Their basic activities within the family more than at work constitute "a science which absorbs all the days, hours and minutes..." Failure to comply with this norm due to misleading publicity urging women's participation in the public sphere would result in a reduction in "honest women, increasing the cynical phalanxes of those who are not." In closing, it urges that "women should be left within the family, from whence they should not sally forth, with women happy and proud, adorned with the double crown of the love of husband and children."

Published by the Roman Catholic Church, this discourse caused no surprise, as it was already positioned as a traditional, conservative and hierarchical Institution celebrated for its support of feminine submission. What is surprising is that intellectuals calling for the overwhelming "new truths" of reason, freedom and equality took an approach similar to this institution with regard to the status of women. During the previous century, equal rights were

¹ *Conselhos Prudentes às Senhoras* (Prudent Advice to Wives), O *Apóstolo*, 07.04.1880.

claimed for all men, while at the same time excluding women who "already enjoy so many other natural advantages" that they would never have aspired to equality, as this was unnecessary for them.

The truth of the Enlightenment

Emblematic of man's access to majority and freedom, Reason is the quality distinguishing man from animal, as animals can do nothing other than obey, while man may voluntarily consent or resist, although - paradoxically enough - this is not extended to **half the human species**. Considered the most democratic of these intellectuals, Rousseau suggested an education leading to autonomy. However, with regard to women (symbolized by Sophie, the future wife of Emil), their education should be different. In women, male qualities should not be cultivated, as "woman is made specially to please man" and "also to obey him", which to a certain extent made them equivalent to the animals, according to the above statement. On the other hand, these positions ran counter to the Spirit of Enlightenment, which was opposed to all views not founded on reason.

And the contradictions multiplied. According to Diderot, the *Encyclopédie* should "throw off the yoke of authority and example in order to follow the laws of reason". However, with regard to the position of women with in marriage, the key seems to lie "in the purest source - the Scriptures themselves", acknowledging that women should obey their husbands, to whom they belong by divine decree. Still according to this work, inequality between the sexes was an imperative of nature, with power and majesty, courage and reason on the one hand, and grace, beauty, delicacy and sentiment on the other. Education should foster the development of the specific characteristics of each sex as "what is called charm and virtue in one sex is a flaw or deformity in the other".²

² CRAMPE-CASNABET, Michelle. Las Mujeres en las Obras Filosóficas del Siglo XVIII. In DUBY, Georges y PERROT, Michelle (dirección). *Historia de las Mujeres en el*

Changes taking place during the XVIII and XIX centuries in traditional beliefs about the body and human sexuality were used to ratify the presuppositions of inequality between the sexes at the social level. The concept of structural differences between the male and female body became outdated, based on the genital organs whose difference was once thought to reside only in those of women being hidden, while those of men were apparent. Now, new differences acknowledged in the genitals served as indicators for the various occupations of each sex: the private sphere for women and the public arena for men. The female body was used to deny all possibility of comparison between men and women in terms of common criteria of citizenship.³

Female inferiority whose roots lie in sexual differences extends throughout their being, particularly with regard to intellectual faculties. According to most of the Illuminist philosophers, women were ranked as beings of passion and imagination, rather than concept. Incapable of invention, even when offered access to literature and certain sciences, they were excluded from genius. Beauty - the attribute of this sex - was incompatible with the higher faculties, with praise of the character of a woman figuring as proof of her lack of beauty. Sentiment and reason are presented as supplements to beauty. For most of the Illuminists, the limited possibilities of women were patent for both abstract and general thought, meaning thinking. Thus, the genetic process of knowledge leading to abstract thought had been halted in women, with the process completed only in the male sex. Women remained frozen at the imaginative stage. And it is not that kind of imagination that genetically contributes to knowledge, but

Occidente. 3. Del Renacimiento a la Edad Moderna. Madrid: Taurus, 1992 p. 335-369. BURKE, Maria Lucia G. Pathares. *Ousadia Feminina e a Ordem Burguesa. Estudos Feministas*, V. 1 Nº 2. Rio de Janeiro, CIEC-ECO-UFRJ, 1993, p. 247/248.

³ LAQUEUR, Thomas. *La Fabrique du Sexe*. Essai sur le corps et le genre en Occident. Paris: Gallimard, 1990, p. 38.

that misleading impression which makes us take desire as reality, and which can lead to madness and even death if in excess.

Thus, the inferiority of reason in women was an indisputable fact, which they only needed to cultivate insofar as this was necessary to fulfilling their natural duties: obeying their husbands and being faithful, while taking care of their children. Related only to the world at the concrete level, women remained perpetually in childhood, unable to move beyond the world of domesticity bequeathed them by Nature. Contradictory conclusions these, as at that time the existence of women who conducted the *salons* through which the spirit of philosophy spread, burnishing the brilliance of literature and fostering the dissemination of the sciences.

These presuppositions spread and gained force during the XIX century, acquiring scientific backing. Social medicine guaranteed that biological reasons made a number of characteristics feminine: fragility, modesty, the predominance of the affective faculties over the intellect, and subordination of sexuality to the maternal vocation. In contrast, man blended his physical strength with an authoritarian, enterprising, rational nature, in parallel to unbridled sexuality Paradoxically, the fidelity of these discourses to Christian principles was clear, despite the anticlerical tone they assumed on behalf of science - the idol of the times. On the other hand, the feminine characteristics (particularly lower intelligence and less sexual sensitivity) prompted Cesare Lombroso - an Italian physician famed for his advances in criminology during the late XIX century - to justify laws against adultery applying only to women, whose nature did not predispose them to this type of transgression. Those endowed with strong intelligence and intense eroticism were devoid of the maternal sentiment, an innate characteristic of normal women, and were thus extremely dangerous. He ranked them as born criminals, prostitutes and madwomen who should be banned from contact with society.⁴

⁴ LOMBROSO, Cesare and FERRERO, Guglielmo. *La*

Domination through knowledge, consent and resistance

These theories were built up and imposed by men who established a double discourse - man about man and man about woman - which imposed constraints on women's autonomy and freedom, converting a relationship of difference into a hierarchy of inequality, constituting a form of violence. Women are treated not as subjects but rather as things, imposing gags on their speech and hobbling their activities. From this standpoint, violence is limited not only to acts of physical aggression, but also derives from cultural standardization of female submission and discrimination. In fact, advances in the process of civilization from the XVI through to the XVIII centuries correspond to a drop in crude violence, with physical clashes replaced by symbolic struggles. During this period, construction of the female identity was based on absorption by women of the norms given in male discourses; a fact corresponding to symbolic violence which assumed the adherence of those dominated to the categories on which their domination was based. A major subject for study under the history of women at the moment is an analysis of the discourses and practices reflected in multiple records seeking to guarantee women's consent to dominant representations of the difference between the sexes: division of attributions and spaces, legal inferiority, inculcation of social roles in the classroom, exclusion from the public sphere etc. Thus, defining the submission imposed on women as a symbolic violence fosters understanding of how the relationship of domination - which is built up on historical, cultural and linguistic bases - is always affirmed to be a difference of a natural order, radical, irreducible, and universal.⁵

The effects of these discourses were

Femme Criminelle et la Prostituée (translated from the Italian), 1896.

⁵ CHARTIER, Roger. *Diferenças entre os Sexos e Dominação Simbólica* (critical note). In *Cadernos Pagu* (4) Campinas, Gender Studies Center/UNICAMP, 1995, p. 40-44.

devastating. The French Revolution - whose great merit lies in its contribution to the acknowledgment of human rights - contradictorily represented backsliding for women at various levels. Despite the leading role played by women in the revolutionary movement, helping institutionalize the new order, they found themselves excluded from political and civil citizenship. The arguments of those responsible for introducing the New Order once again made use of nature as their justification of the different types of occupation imposed on the two genders. After all, men and women have different physiologies, which impose different social roles on them. For this particular aspect, left-wing positions in terms of social organization did not mean more advanced attitudes with regard to the participation of women. An example is congressman Amar da Montanha: "The social order derives from the difference between men and women. Each sex is induced by nature to the type of occupation appropriate to them."

A specific type of citizenship was reserved for women, to be exercised within the home, as the mothers of future Republicans, responsible for protecting family interests. These formulations were firmed up by Congressman Chaumette, who was opposed to women participating in the Assembly, stressing these differences between men and women. Irritated, he justified: "On whom did nature confer domestic cares? On us, perchance? Do we have breasts? Are our muscles weakened, enabling us to handle housework?"⁶

There were many protests against these decisions, with women claiming the right to political participation, education, work - in fact, full citizenship. There was no lack of martyrs in this cause. In fact, Olympe de Gouges proposed the Declaration of the Rights of Woman - analogous to the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and was sentenced to death, accused of attempting to subvert the natural order. Women's claims for equalitarian participation in society

⁶VARIKAS, Eleni. *Les Antinomies de l'Emancipation (juifs, mulâtres et femmes)*, p.4 (mimeo).

remained latent, appearing only when conditions were considered propitious.

With the consolidation of the power of the bourgeoisie during the XIX century, the division of roles and a rigid separation of spheres of action appeared between the genders: men in the public arena, and women in the private field. This division was even more stringent among the better-off segments of the population, as poor women continued to have the streets as their preferential space due to their social condition, forced to do their own shopping as well as to work outside the home, in addition to taking on countless duties which offered them greater independence; however, this did not prevent the presence of contradictions between the genders and the incorporation of this knowledge.⁷

On the other hand, the incorporation of domination did not exclude the presence of variations and manipulations by the dominated. This means that the acceptance by most women of certain canons did not in fact mean merely bowing to unpleasant submission, but also developing resources allowing them to shift or subvert the relationship of domination. This involved a tactic which mobilized for its own purposes representation that was both imposed and accepted, turned against the order which produced it. Thus, defining female powers permitted by a situation of subjection and inferiority means understanding them as a reallocation and skewing of symbolic tools instituting male domination, turned against the dominator.⁸

⁷PERROT, Michelle. *Os Excluídos da História*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1988, p.200.

⁸CHARTIER, Roger. Op.cit. Other historians also discard the vision of unilateral action of power over passive, powerless, dominated women. As stressed by Michel de Certeau, it was necessary to unveil the subtleties creatively engendered by the dominated in order to react against the oppression crushing them. Although he did not name women as a specific object, E. P. Thompson dedicates special attention to daily manifestations of resistance by subordinates. The notion of resistance thus becomes fundamental in approaches to women, and countless historians have based their efforts to reconstruct female activities on this benchmark. CERTEAU, Michel de. *Artes de Fazer*. A

Mainly from the second half of the century onward, transformations under way in a wide variety of spheres blended with the dissatisfaction of many women unhappy with their exclusion from the public arena, fostering the appearance of women's rights movement in Western Europe and the U.S.A., clamoring to change this situation. They set up their own press and organized associations, some limited to a liberal stance, while others bound their proposals to the rise of socialism. Women fought for the acknowledgment of their rights, some even moving into the terrain of sexuality. At the start of the XX century, the first generation of women physicians suggested to others how to free themselves from fear and lack of knowledge about their own bodies. These incursions were not received tranquilly. Reactions were felt not only by Governments, which repressed these movements, but also by society as a whole, particularly the masculine portion, and not a few women as well.⁹

In the Anglo-Saxon world during the Victorian era, suffragettes and their supporters were presented as challenging the wise and untouchable laws of Nature. In the name of these universal truths, the response attempted to demolish them, hoping to demoralize all those who struggled to ensure the rights of women to own property, to practice a profession, and to vote. "Cackling hens", "*hommes-femmes*", "*homesses*", and "hermaphrodites" were some of the weighty sexual epithets launched by anti-feminists against these women, while the men who backed them were called "old maids in pants." They were made so nervous by the idea of a possible confusion of social roles, fearing even unconsciously the loss of their predominance in the relationships of power between the genders, that they used a wide variety of strategies to maintain the *status quo*.¹⁰

invenção do cotidiano. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1994, p. 41; THOMPSON, E. P. *Tradición, Revuelta y Consciencia de Clase*. Estudios sobre la crisis de la sociedad preindustrial. Barcelona: Crítica, 1979, p. 51.

⁹ KAPPELI, Anne-Marie. *Escenarios del Feminismo*. In DUBY, Georges and PERROT, Michelle. Op. cit., p. 513.

¹⁰ GAY, Peter. *A Experiência Burguesa da Rainha Vitória*.

This resulted in repeated readings or hearings in writings or jokes, in tones both solemn and light, that men and women should occupy separate spheres because they had very different natures and capacities and should thus carry out different tasks. Poets, philosophers, journalists, clerics and pedagogues discoursed on the hidden powers of women, with one of them recalling that "the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world." It was thus unnecessary for women to enjoy the superficial paraphernalia of power such as better education and the right to vote for the exercise of their supremacy. After all, the vote would destroy their subtle femininity, and they should acknowledge that man "governs only the State, while woman governs both the Governors of the State as well as the Governors of the People".¹¹

Despite this bombardment, buttressed by stories and messages in women's magazines, as well as novels for girls written largely by women, more and more women reacted against this sophistry, against "their dubious royalty and their very real domestic submission." Some rebelled openly, whilst most had recourse to more subtle means in their attempts to subvert their situation. They wielded tactics allowing them to reshape the signs of domination, marking their resistance. In Brazil, identical attempts aiming at women's liberation took place. Right from the first protest by Nísia Floresta during the 1830s, women's dissatisfaction was manifested with increasing strength. A women's press was set up, whose first periodical - *Jornal das Senhoras* - dates back to 1852. Some of the more moderate of its claims stress the importance of educating woman, recalling her role as a mother, or as "a matter of spiritual refinement." Other more incisive demands urged education as a mean of achieving economic independence, also stressing the importance of civil and political rights, with some even defending divorce.¹²

ria a Freud. O cultivo do ódio. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995, p. 299-300.

¹¹ Idem, *ibidem*.

¹² HAHNER, June E. *A Mulher Brasileira e suas Lutas*

During the XX century, names such as those of Maria Lacerda de Moura, a pioneer in many fields, began to appear, although her ideas did not find the necessary response at that time. Others clustered into associations, with the activities of Bertha Lutz being particularly noteworthy, as her movement has formed the subject for various studies. This groundswell targeted the access of women to full citizenship and despite limitations common to all other women's rights movements of its time, some of its proposals - such as those focused on civil rights - have only recently been implemented. These claims triggered solid resistance, with women's right to the vote being denied throughout the entire First Republic. Violence in symbolic form appeared through a wide variety of channels, backed by all sorts of arguments.

Pedagogy as a tool

Education is a basic element in awakening the awareness of women to their subordinate condition, at the same time as it offers them a tool to escape from this condition. However, in dialectic terms it is one of the principal vehicles of the dissemination of symbolic violence, making a marked contribution to bonding representations of women's inferiority in the "thoughts and bodies of men and women." It is thus important to assess the situation of women's education from the mid-XIX century onwards.

At that time, there were no Brazilian women with a broad base of varied knowledge to make their conversation pleasant and instructive, although they could weave trivialities in a constantly agreeable manner, as noted by travelers Kidder and Fletcher in 1851. The educational situation of these women was limited to concerns over their maternal function, as they were largely responsible for the education of their children. They had to teach the earliest and most fundamental lessons in their mother-tongue, as well as geography and history. Before their children went to school, they also had to act

as preceptors, helping them study and laying down the rudiments of Latin. Following Parisian fashions - the model for Brazil at that time - the concept of the mother-teacher was pre-eminent, for women who were in a position to attempt to carry out this function. There was no lack of concern on this topic in Brazil over the need for schools that would offer girls an "intellectual and moral education" that would allow them "to teach their own children the elements of education and their duties to God and man." According to the visitors, such schools were starting to appear, some of them excellent, but parents withdrew their daughters at the age of 13 or 14, considering them as properly prepared for life and eager to marry them off quickly.¹³

This must have prompted Maria Clementina da Cruz, at the age of only 14, to write to the *Jornal das Senhoras* in 1852, questioning the depreciation of women's intellectual faculties. She demanded a "frank, complete and liberal" education for women, and claimed that she was unable to understand how "once a woman knows music, can play the piano, sew, embroider, mark and write, she has completed her education".¹⁴

Mixed schooling was banned, due not only to rigid Roman Catholic morals but also to the certainty of hegemonic science at that time on the different aptitudes found between men and women. This gave rise to very different curricula for each sex, resulting in flagrant differences in teaching. While men studied at secondary school with a view to continuing on to university courses, most girls were sent to the "Normal Schools", which trained them in teaching and/or household tasks. At the Normal School training college in Niterói, founded in 1835 and the first of its kind in South America, the students did not study algebra and geometry, but were limited "to the most

Sociais e Políticas: 1850 - 1937. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1981, p. 85.

¹³ KIDDER, Daniel P. and FLETCHER, J.C.. *O Brasil e os Brasileiros*. São Paulo: Cia Editora Nacional, 1941, p. 121.

¹⁴ BERNARDES, Maria Thereza Cayubi C.. *Mulheres de Ontem? Rio de Janeiro-Século XIX*. São Paulo: T.A. Edifor Queiroz, 1989, p. 138.

elementary notions and the most frequent applications to the elementary uses in life".¹⁵ Amidst countless material transformations in Rio de Janeiro during the second half of the XIX century, new ideas and habits began to spring up which helped reshape the social landscape, including within the family, and the female condition. The much-ailed domestic confinement of women in the higher sectors of society still found during the early decades of this century was making way for a new order. Recommendations of a religious nature were growing weaker with their bans on "games, *soirées*, meetings, comedies, operas and parties, nor visits from people dominated by the worldly spirit "at home."¹⁶ Now private parties, and political or social *salons* became frequent, fostering conditions for relationships favorable to the economic and political interest of the ruling elite. Receptions grew into an informal vehicle in the dispute for power, and women's wiles were behind the success of these events, playing a decisive role in the social ascension of their husbands. In exchange for such services, women received care and attention that they had not warranted before - but which did not mean they were encouraged to move into public activities. Among the strategies used to keep them in the sphere assigned as their own, men's incompetence was stressed in performing the higher functions exercised by women. So they had no other recourse but to leave to men the "shabby" professional and intellectual occupations. But with these contacts with the outside world, women needed a better education.

Within this context, women's education is subject to discussion. In a cycle of lectures on women, Councilor José Liberato Barroso stressed the importance of knowledge of women's history in order to understand her mission in the present. Still from an evolutionary

viewpoint he stressed that "position in society rises in step with progress and the development of civilization". This was a concept in effect at that time when the ideology of progress predominated, whose influence is still felt through to our days. But researchers show a very different situation in the progress of women, contrasting with the shrinking female participation between the Middle Ages and the XIX century, in contrast to the postulates of the speaker.¹⁷

He also discusses equality between the sexes and women's abilities for the exercise of political rights in modern society. He praises the actions of British philosopher John Stuart Mill, who claimed citizenship rights for women, which leaves one to imagine that he shared this position. However, he soon shreds this expectation, as he addresses his audience, briefly abandoning his docility and stating firmly: "in the current state of our civilization you cannot and certainly should not nurture the aspiration to exercise political rights." Impregnated with Positivist ideas, he mentions the sluggish nature of national transformations associated with the slow revolutions of the human spirit, which seems to indicate that such discussions would be premature, specifically in the case of Brazil. He returns to his praise in a somewhat bombastic manner, stressing the "brilliant role of women in the future of generations still to come and the glories of our homeland" stressing the importance of studying ways of educating women in order to shape them for "preparing the generations being born to take up their post of honor in the vanguard of progress, heading the crusaders of the future." Although the time was approaching when Brazilian women would be in full position of their faculties, at that time, "as being endowed with sensitivity, intelligence and will, women had not yet found themselves in

¹⁵ JÚDICE, Norimar. *Texto, Mulher e Discurso na Virada do Século*; produção e reprodução, 1994, (mimeo).

¹⁶ COSTA, Jurandir Freire. *Ordem Médica e Norma Familiar*. Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1979, p. 137. In general, references to medical thinking in the course of this article are based on the reflexions of this author.

¹⁷ BARROSO, José Liberato. *A Educação da Mulher*. Lecture on 15 February 1874 in *Conferências Populares* Nº 5, Rio de Janeiro, May 1874. This speaker was an outstanding figure on the political and legal scenes of the Brazilian empire, and was equally interested in issues linked to education. His biography is given in the Gallery of Outstanding Men - XIX century.

the state of evolution." A movement was necessary, designed to transform women into a being "free and equal to man, moving towards the same destiny, but sowing the truth through various means on the road of life." Hints about the different forms of activities for men and women soon become clear. This highlights the arguments postulated by all instances: religious, philosophical and scientific. He stresses the difference "in how the faculties of the soul are balanced in these two privileged beings of creation: If in man reason dominates, in women, sensitivity and imagination rule." Through to today, in western societies stamped by the seal of instrumental rationality, sensitivity is considered a preparation, an anticipation or a lower form of rational thinking. Thus, praise for women's sensitivity, excluding her from rationality, reveals a type of violence. He continued by stating that the destiny of man was "to live the external life, which makes his glory and grandeur; the woman is destined to live the inner life, just as great and glorious as the other." But a new factor follows. The author explains that this comment does not mean total dichotomization. Man should not "live only the external life, separated from the life of the home, any more than woman should live the inner life, separated from social life." This comment is undoubtedly linked to changes which, although minor, had been reshaping the forms of feminine participation, in addition to the efforts of medicine to build the "hygienic father" whose energies should be channeled to the well-being of his children on a priority basis, as the foundation of the wealth and power of the state. Paternity/masculinity, and maternity/femininity were seen as the regulatory standards of social existence and now also the emotional status of men and women.

The introduction of family hygiene designed to establish physical and psychic health guaranteeing healthy offspring and a solid governing class for the future is the objective, with respect for the laws and customs, rules and conventions. But these proposals do not reflect any weakening of the division of spheres, as restated in this discourse: man in

the public arena and woman in the private sphere. On the violence of this exclusion, it is appropriate to recall Hannah Arendt for whom private space is not defined as the space of privacy and intimacy, but rather as the place of privation. Being limited to private space is to be deprived of relationships with others through both the word and the action in building and decisions involved with the common world, meaning political existence.¹⁸ Marriage would constitute the highest aspirations of woman, with the author criticizing those who marry for material interests, something which had also been severely criticized by physicians. They challenged matrimonial practices predominant until then, where love was not viewed as a presupposition necessary to the conjugal link, and marriage was seen rather as an economic transaction, or deriving from social reasons. Age disparities between spouses or consanguineous marriages that were very common in Brazil due to these interests were combated, particularly because of risks to reproduction. Love is elevated to the main reason for marriage, alongside a healthy sexuality on which depends "the health of the children, the morality of the family and the populational progress of the Nation." Heightened appreciation of the value of sex allied to love is intended to guarantee the pleasures of life within the family, and the stability of this institution. Support of the children and guarantees of their good treatment are ensured, for the satisfaction of the State. This takes a different stance from the postulations of the Church-hegemonic until then - which viewed sex with reticence, even in marriage, linking it mandatorily to procreation.

The discourse on the ideal feminine conduct, to be shaped by education is preached not only by lectures given by worthy experts, as well as in medical dissertations, but also in a wide variety of ways, including literature and the press, in a joking manner through anecdotes, tales, leaflets etc.. The situation which I will now examine is included in this

¹⁸ ARENDT, Hanah. *A Condição Humana*. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária EDUSP 1981.

case, and the issue is presented from a negative aspect. Efforts are made to give an example that highlights within the character the attributes that are most condemned, as caricatures, highlighting the ills deriving from a faulty education.

The main male character - Ernesto da Rosa - falls in love with Chiquinha, but must compete with another suitor. The situation develops through to a dramatic close with the rivals confronting each other in person. This drastic solution is avoided and Chiquinha opts for Ernesto, whom she marries. At this point, the narrator moves away from the story-line and discourses on the character of the bride. He lists a series of elements under challenge at that time. To begin with, he states that Chiquinha did not marry for love. In fact, running counter to the female model for the period whose most outstanding characteristic was being extremely affectionate, Chiquinha has never felt this sentiment in her life, not even for her parents. "I esteemed them without a doubt, but esteem without extremes, rather a daughter of instinct and habit, than of the heart".¹⁹ Chiquinha merely chooses Ernest because her other suitor, Manuel Moura, scares her with his brutish character. "She wanted a gentle, prudent husband who although he might not hug her, would docilely accept her slightest whims, and this husband appeared to her in Ernesto, who, she believed, was being swept away increasingly by passion." In this excerpt, the heroine showed characteristics opposed to those which were believed to "natural" in a woman: docility, delicacy and submission. However, she was endowed by nature with good physical attributes and frequent praise has resulted in serious flaws in her. They made her "vain, and later a flirt, always eager to receive large amounts of homage." Her parents, "dominated by blind affection" did not have the necessary energy to take steps to correct her. Between the lines, it can be understood that they did not educate her properly.

¹⁹ SILVEIRA, Heitor da. O Melhor dos Casamentos. In *Jornal das Famílias*, Rio de Janeiro, Garnier Ed. March/April/May 1878.

Conflicts soon begin due to the whims of Chiquinha. Additionally, she was not prepared for her new status, and does not fulfill any of the duties which are inherent to her. She spends the day in the parlor at the window, playing the piano, reading novels or in *dolce far niente* while everything at home is going wrong, thanks to the laziness and dishonesty of the maids, who are the absolute lords of the house.

Idle, futile and frivolous, with just a gloss of music and literature but unaware of the skills needed to manage her home, these are some of the characteristics stressed in the behavior of the character. Reflecting the perils of an inadequate education for women, they prevent her from correcting her character and undertaking the responsibilities of marriage. The woes of Ernest culminate at a ball, when he overhears the comments of strangers on the light-mindedness of his wife who is called a flirt, although married. Forced to leave the ball with him, she vents her fury on her husband for forcing her to leave an entertainment that she was enjoying. She claims he is far too demanding, to the point of trying to make her into a slave: "to please you I have to cook, wash, starch, sweep the house and dress like an old black slave. Well, wake up, because in that way I will never please you." "I would not want that," retorted Ernesto, "what I ask of you is that you fulfill your duties as a housewife and do not just doll yourself up like a brainless miss, and that above all you behave at *soirées* in a manner that does not give rise to scandal, as you did today." Finally, after a series of arguments they decide to divorce, when the narrator wakes. It was all nothing more than a dream. Basically, the *folhetim* as a literary production offers a single purpose that is merely pedagogic. The character is presented as an anti-heroine, artificially idle, aggressive, authoritarian, mundane, futile, frivolous and vain, quivering on the threshold of the supreme sin of adultery. Through the resource of inversion, it spotlights what a woman should not be, highlighting the opposing characteristics: diligence, domestic skills, delicacy, simplicity, modesty, purity etc. The author also uses this opportunity to underline the male reluctance

to get married, which is always viewed as something sought only by women, giving rise to the title of this *folhetim*: *O Melhor dos Casamentos* (The Best of Marriages) particularly as it is all no more than a dream..... The education suggested for women thus did not aim at their autonomy or the freedom to decide on their own destiny. What was intended was to guarantee an education which take for granted these principles given above, in addition to equipping them adequately with the tools which would allow them to exercise the functions acknowledged as their own: wife and mother. Concern with women's education as shown in an article published in a newspaper dedicated to this reading public confirms this statement. It starts by stressing the importance of the issue "although so scorned by our amiable readers", hinting that this seems to indicate a certain lack of consequence in them. It regrets that this education consists only of notions of music, singing and dance, in view of the insufficiency of these superficial types of knowledge in ensuring family happiness. In fact, by the direction of most of the discourses on this issue, the allocation of this responsibility to the woman is clear, particularly in the case under study which considers her the "only source of ensuring the happiness of the family." It then lists all the feminine potential for the success of this mission.

"A woman whose heart has been properly shaped by education and who has learnt the art of housekeeping is a treasure in the home, because she is not unaware of the principles of housekeeping nor of domestic economy, and will know how to run the house, wisely managing the servants and ensuring they do their duty, balancing expenses with income and thus looking ahead to any possible needs. She will not scorn hygienic means for the good of the family and the children, far less ways of making good men, and avoiding any unpleasantness, or upsetting her husband by useless expenditures or untimely demands".²⁰

²⁰ A Educação da Mulher. In *O Cherubim*, Rio de Janeiro, 15.11.1885.

In fact, this discourse is packed with ambiguities. First it stresses the importance of education for carrying out women's duties in managing the home, on the other hand, it records her leading role in guaranteeing a well-balanced family and more specifically the welfare of the children. It also warns her to avoid "useless expenses and untimely demands" that could upset her husband. This takes a jab at feminine frivolity, a sin that is easy to incur due to the limited amounts of reason believed to be present in women. Also, by assigning her full liability for the happiness of the family, it exempts the man from any responsibility in this sphere. He can allow himself to continue on with his flaws and faults, some of which cannot be avoided, as medicine acknowledges his authoritarian, haughty character, that is tougher and less loving. For him, the home should be a place to rebuild his energies spent on outside activities in the struggle to survive and the exercise of citizenship. Any excesses should be forgiven.

However, it should not be concluded that this campaign has been fully successful. Despite efforts to inculcate these standards, in parallel, women have been expressing their discontent with the education offered them. Some have even used the actual argument directed against them. Quite possibly they intended to develop a tactic designed to mobilize an imposed representation for their own purposes, one which is accepted but turned against the order which produced it. A typical type of presentation of women's powers in a situation of subjection and inferiority which is mirrored in the reallocation and skewing of the symbolic instruments which underwrite male domination, turned against the dominator. Even in 1855, a woman could not even reveal her identity, and merely signed herself as *Baronesa* as she stressed the need to demand a more varied, and solid education for her daughters, as she felt that the existing schools were inadequate. She notes any lack of concern over cultivation of the spirit and intelligence in a girl "making her into a real lady." The appeal closes with the argument used by people who want to

keep women subordinate, by stressing their lack of preparation "on whom the future of an entire family will some day depend." She closes with a phrase that well illustrates the period: "all superficiality, no science."

Blocking the access of women to higher education prompted protests, even from women themselves. In one of them, curiously enough and perhaps ironically, excuses are offered to the "stronger sex" for daring to address it. Having demanded reparations for errors and injustices, this lists a series of ills imposed on women who "have been oppressed, mocked, and defrauded, having to live almost as though one were half-dead." It closes in a manner similar to the previous paragraph, using an artificial tactic in an attitude frequently found among those who are subject to symbolic violence: it re-uses the language of domination to mark its resistance, invoking the traditional mission assigned to the weaker sex: "did you not consider that by neglecting and humbling her, keeping her in ignorance, leaving her without the power she needs to solve the most difficult of social problems - educating her children, which are entrusted only to her, by God!"

But some people also demanded a better qualified solution, not only in the name of family responsibility but also because they considered women just as able "as man to study sciences," despite the constant repetitions to the contrary: they even affirmed the existence of women "far superior to many known scientists and who wrote works cited by leading physicians." Professional training as the outcome of education was highlighted as a need claimed by some, although in a timid way, and merely as a supplementary point as "not even a man's work is sufficient to offer his family all these conveniences....." Others, more lucid, stressed this need in order for women to achieve an asymmetrical position compared to that of men, making them worthy and able to exercise free choice, which would lead them to scorn "the puerile adulation for which they still show themselves eager"; not having to deal with doubts about their fidelity "because the need to pretend and deal with male duplicity will

end, and only then will she be able to take her seat alongside man as his companion, and never as his slave." There were also those who never even mentioned marriage as a target, stressing the importance of hard work and building up strength "for the challenges of freedom and the conflicts of life".²¹

They were not unaware that this stance represented a heavy burden. And the statement of one of the most active suffragettes shows this, recording that "the woman who studies, who thinks..... is subject to criticism and censure of her own dignity, and forms part of the distractions, the cafés and the billiards..." After all, even physicians with their mastery of scientific knowledge stated that woman was shaped to feel just as man was created to think and "those who show higher intelligence do so at the cost of the feminine qualities." Daring to outstrip these constraints was a thorny undertaking, as acknowledged in this narrative:

"It is common to speak ill of women given to letters, and to thus hint at the most awful insinuations regarding the virtues which are most prized in our sex. These foul mouths should be made to see that the woman who nurtures her spirit in pastures more substantial than gossiping about other people's lives will less easily occupy her imagination with frivolities and idle pursuits which seem so useful at the start and so often result in sad consequences. They are not convinced and then put forward examples of the most celebrated literary women whose reputation is not good".²²

With an unaffected argument, the writer reveals the stumbling-blocks facing women who opt for literature. This phenomena is not restricted to Brazil. In Western Europe as well as the U.S.A., women writers were subject to much ill-will, attributed to their scandalous behavior by the presence of eroticism in some of their works. They also suffered the effects of rivalries with their male counterparts,

²¹ BERNARDES, Maria Thereza Caiuby C.. Op. cit. p. 124; other quotes which follow: p. 138/139/145/159.

²² A Arte da Beleza - Artigo para ser somente lido por senhoras. *Jornal das Famílias*. March 1863.

unnerved at having to share with these female invaders the space which they considered as exclusively their own. It was during the XIX century that this activity really firmed up into a profession for many women. And the pressures were so great that many women writers decided to hide their identity behind a male pseudonym, including Georges Sand, George Eliot, Currer Bell and Otto Stern. A natural division of works soon sprang up here, deciding that romance was their strong point. Literary critics and historians did their utmost to keep women writers in the sentimental sphere, weaving comments on the charm, grace, purity and sensitivity found in their works. This caused enormous frustration to Louisa May Alcott in the U.S.A., who was compelled by her editor and encouraged by her father to write "a story for girls" when she wanted to produce "tales of horror exploring the somber subterranean regions of aggressive sexual passions, and even perversion".²³

An identification is also noted here, with regard to this aspect. The writer of the article mentioned above notes that there are subjects where women have a better understanding, suggesting consequently that "it should also be they who can best write on them." This reflects its incorporation into the signs found in the various discourses on female trends. However, at the same time as it indicates adhesion in symbolic terms to male domination, on the other hand it also indicates how to subvert this; thus by defending the exercise of an activity outside the home for women - in this case, literary activities. Later, a really iconoclastic attitude is taken up, to defend women's output in the terrain of the sciences, for which they were deemed inapt almost consensually.

"I thus believe that even those who are scandalized by seeing a woman writer publishing a treaty on astronomy or a compendium of chemistry would not be upset if any of them make use of the intelligence that God gave them and the experience acquired to write... about some

of the few matters falling within their sphere of competence".

Note the expression "intelligence that God gave them" meaning a certainty that women were also endowed with reason, in contrast to many people who attempted to deny this or admitted it only relatively. Furthermore, having received this directly from God, added to experience built up in the course of life translated into competence, it became mandatory to express this through writing. However, women were still to tread a thorny path. Authorities, politicians in general and jurists refused to turn a positive eye on any claims to female autonomy. They found their backing not so much in religious reasons, but rather in the science of the times, which was at that period synonymous with absolute truth. They sought to limit women in their actions, desires and emotions, assigning to nature determinations that had been established in historical and social terms. Through plays, literature, chronicles and articles in the press opposition was noted, which even went so far as to cast ridicule on militants. They were represented as masculinized, ugly, despised and at the same time amoral. However, this discourse had wide-ranging effects, with not a few ordinary men and women endorsing these opinions through statements and letters to newspapers.

Critics of women's rights were not limited to men. The monthly women's magazine entitled *Única* published articles on literature, art, elegance and sociology. Headed by a woman - Francisca de Vasconcellos Bastos Cordeiro - it also touched on this issue. It published a wide range of works by outstanding women of this period, such as poetess Cecília Meireles and even militants from the feminist movement. The struggle for women's rights was already making progress in Brazil. Chrysanthème was the pen-name of a woman who opposed the changes desired by so many. A contributor to this magazine, she acknowledged that her article was out of step with the others, which mainly called for these changes. But she felt that her "duty of a combatant to defend those who feminist and destiny have thrown

²³ GAY, Peter. Op.cit., p.366.

into the arena of combating existence.” She moves onto a reflection on the right to happiness, the first of the human rights. Women more than men, in her opinion, are eager to be fortunate, happy and peaceful, although they act in a manner running counter to these aspirations. She progresses with her arguments, showing that the independence achieved by women does not allow them to accomplish their dreams of fortune. She then discourses on the losses suffered through access to this independence, revealing an education well above the average in this discussion. This does not prevent her from having recourse to some of the slogans idealizing the traditional female condition. Her arguments are contradictory because on the one hand she claims that she does not wish to deny “the long-standing injustice and intolerance which have today vanished under the plough of progress, releasing them from their former prisons.” She then questions “her companions in the sex, “if the independence won offers them the possibility of happiness and quickly supplies the answer:

“It seems to me not, because they lose their role of loving women, of goddesses of the home, and the man easily abandons his role of providing shelter and being the head of these same homes. Has the struggle in the streets and between the walls of the offices perchance given them more pleasure and more peace than their efforts in the small heart of the family? Has she achieved with this new right to unfettered freedom for poorly-paid work, that other supreme and insuperable task which made her happy and sovereign? Does it not cost the sweet and sensitive soul of this woman more to constantly be elbowing men like this, with a wide variety of backgrounds and keen appetite, rather than the gentle living together of yore with a single man, to whom she was subject, yes, but bound by her superb label of wife, mother and daughter?”²⁴

As this is a discourse written by a woman, it offers an excellent example of the

embodiment of the dominant representations guaranteeing the differences between the sexes. Here the author reproduces a number of stereotypes that are repeated tirelessly and used to highlight the excellence of the condition traditionally assigned to women, justified as the outcome of the predisposition of her nature. Particularly outstanding here are expressions such as “goddesses of the home”, “sweet and sensitive soul of the woman”, “gentle living together of yore”, “superb label of wife”, which are nothing more than idealizations of a real situation that was largely one of constraint and oppression. The author thus opts to defend an eternal minority position for women. Efforts at growth represented by taking over the reins of her own destiny is described as a punishment, painted in strong colors, rather than as an encouragement for growth and full development as a human being. Her lack of belief in women’s potential is quite patent, blended with a prejudice about sexuality. She stresses the promiscuity deriving from contact with other men “whose appetites are always keen” eager to attack the defenseless creature who she feels ought to prefer the protection of yore, even at the price of submission. In fact, a perfect model of symbolic violence.

Conquering new spaces

During the 1920s women’s movements underwent a time of rupture, and were no longer limited to microscopic attitudes tacitly put into effect by subordinates seeking to furtively wriggle away from oppression. Some women openly undertook the campaign to obtain their rights. They organized themselves into associations and made public pronouncements, with ample use of the press, seeking support from leaders in a wide variety of fields and setting up pressure groups to win support from members of Parliament and other authorities, the press, public opinion etc.. Despite this, most of them attempted to endow their discourse with a moderate tone. Not only because they had realized that this would be the best way of female expression, but equally as a political strategy.

²⁴ CHRYSANTHÈME. *Direito à Felicidade*. *Única* women’s magazine. October 1925.

Particularly outstanding here were the activities of Bertha Lutz, whose movement took on a hegemonic character at that time. The right to work, with access to education and full political and civil rights were her main claims. Despite the many activities which she successfully undertook, taking the fight to a number of fronts, in step with the spirit of her times, votes for women took priority. She believed that access to political rights was essential to obtain guarantees on the basis of the law. Her choice was subject to criticisms calling this an inglorious struggle and limited to formal claims of bourgeoisie liberalism. From this standpoint, this achievement would be reduced to a mere concession "when of interest to the dominant class in its clashes with the urban masses threatening the status quo of the liberal game of politics".²⁵

A position of this nature thus disdained the struggles undertaken by several generations of women already concerned with this issue. And more particularly, for Bertha Lutz, there is no way of denying her actions at a decisive moment, in the midst of prejudice in a wide variety of fields, starting with Congress, through the pages of the press, in variety theaters etc.. After all, entering the public sphere was an old wish that had long been closed to women. Achieving this opened up the possibility of women assuming their full human conditions through a political action, from which they had been violently excluded.

On the other hand, similar to many international movements of this type, it suffered under countless constraints blocking the way to its objectives: women's liberation. The feminist ideals of the time fail to take into account a number of factors hindering them, some of which only became visible from the 1960s onwards. The exercise of certain activities as being more suitable to woman continued to be accepted as an extension of her maternal functions. She simply continued to do what she had always done "on a larger stage... and with more natural

talent than any man".²⁶ In fact, the substratum of symbolic violence remained present, as these tactics express the asymmetrical relationships between the genders and their meanings are rooted in the symbolic, the mental and the domestic. Without forgetting that the professions considered as most appropriate to women were those with the lowest remuneration. To a large extent the array of representations and practices forcing the division of duties and responsibilities between the genders remained, undermining full emancipation for women.

But dialectically, the practice of these activities - teacher, nurse, social worker etc. - was vital to expanding the horizons of women. Proving their competence, plunged into understanding the intricate network of power and knowledge, to an increasing extent they took over the construction of their own history. The physical move into areas that had so long been closed to them and the moral departure "from the roles that had been assigned to them, forming opinions and the transition from submission to independence..." was to awaken an awareness of gender, offering great possibilities.²⁷

This feminism also failed to question the implications of allocating to women full responsibility for domestic activities and socialization of the children. The conquest of new rights to participate in the public sphere did not involve any reformulation of family obligations between the two genders. The domestic domain continued to be considered as inherent to women, maintaining her unequal position in society and the source of a process of violence against her person. This resulted in a divided woman, guilty when obliged to work outside the home, considering her professional activities as something secondary to her main role of wife and mother, and resulting in discrimination in terms of wages, professions, union membership and rights.

²⁵ ALVES, Branca Moreira. *Ideologia e Feminismo. A luta da mulher pelo voto no Brasil*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1980, p. 181.

²⁶ GAY, Peter. Op.cit., p. 366.

²⁷ PERROT, Michelle. *Salir*. In DUBY, G. and PERROT, M., op.cit., v.4, p.461.

On the other hand, although society would not be in a position to survive without the birth and education of new generations, the movement did not demand with the necessary force the introduction of accessible establishments - restaurants, day care centers and laundries - which would allow women to share tasks that had firmed up as their own. Even in the Soviet Union, where an equalitarian society was claimed at all levels, this problem was never resolved. Although back in the XIX century Fourier called for women's liberation through the introduction of these establishments, as well as an education common to both genders, and sexual freedom also for both.²⁸

However, the difficulties must be acknowledged: at that time, women in the upper middle segments of society took on a stance of this nature, regarding a topic considered as taboo. There was the political issue, then they considered other demands as having higher priority. Faced with concern over acceptance of the movement by public opinion, they did not even dare bring up this issue, with some claiming that this was a topic that was private in nature. Maria Lacerda de Moura soon left this movement, and was an exception to this situation. Miriam Moreira Leite expressed her thoughts on various aspects of the female condition. She stressed her advanced positions which were in many aspects similar to those of the feminists of the 1960s. She was a severe critic of the double moral standards in effect and the hypocrisy reigning in the organization of the family with its complement, prostitution, causing concern over issues that were unspeakable at the time, such as sexuality and the body. This wide range of positions reveals the flexibility of the "cage" represented by culture, allowing social agents to wield relative freedom, shaped by the interface they established with the elements historically available to them. Which is highly comforting! The ideas of Maria

²⁸ Comments on the activities of Bertha Lutz were taken from my Master's dissertation. Bertha Lutz e a Ascensão Social da Mulher, 1919-1937. Niterói, Post-Graduate Degree in History, 1974.

Lacerda de Moura were considered as highly radical, allied to her keen critical spirit and particularly her excessive individualism which, according to Moreira Leite, helped edge her into a somewhat marginal position.²⁹

Women remained without the power to dispose freely of their sexuality. Remaining a virgin while single and faithful when married was synonymous with female honor; this extended to the entire family, constituting a sexually located concept - violence which constituted a source of many other types of violence. While men were encouraged to freely exercise their sexuality as a symbol of virility, in women this attitude is condemned, and they are supposed to repress all desires and impulses of this nature. Single women losing their virginity lost the right to any type of respect, and in the case of an illegitimate relationship the men did not feel responsible for their actions, with the women bearing the brunt of their "mistake". After all, "purity" was vital for women, with a lack of knowledge of the body signaling high value within a context where the image of the Virgin Mary was an example for women. Abandoned women were thus forced to risk their lives in furtive hurried abortions while others got rid of their new-borns in even more tragic situations. They were transformed into monsters, in a culture fed on the stereotype of mother love as an instinct, "because even the wild beasts with all their savagery have love." Other who dared to live their sexuality outside marriage were murdered in the name of "legitimate defense of honor".³⁰

In a situation of such violence, research also shows the presence of women taking advantage of "loopholes which private situations leave open in the surveillance of the proprietary power. Then they go out hunting".³¹ Carnival constituted one of these "loopholes". During the first two decades of

²⁹ LEITE, Miriam Moreira. *A Outra Face do Feminismo*. Maria Lacerda de Moura. São Paulo: Ática, 1984.

³⁰ SOIHET, Rachel. *Condição Feminina e Formas de Violência*. Mulheres pobres e a ordem urbana. 1890-1920. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 1989.

³¹ CERTEAU, Michel De. Op.cit., p. 101.

this century, the press fulminated against the "increasing degradation of Carnival" trying to prevent the presence of women, which was only permitted to women of ill-repute. However, the participation of women from lower-income sectors of the population expanded, as well as those from other income groups.³²

Thus, despite the sexual repression hobbling women and trying to impose the stereotype of female fragility on them, together with demands for virginity and sober conduct, the presupposition of Freud was confirmed that sexuality is the most powerful ingredient in the human constitution, and cannot easily be discarded. This meant that insatiable erotic energies backed by ample resources prompted a wide variety of inventive stratagems seeking gratification.³³

There were some more courageous women who were not content with half-measures, seeking to assume their sexuality in a fuller manner. This can be noted in the narrative by Mário Lago, mentioning "the Carnival of the perfume-spray duels, which launched many brief affairs and even more long-lasting activities." It is obvious that these activities referred to a more intimate relationship between the two sexes. He then speaks of an initiative that he feels is audacious by a group of "erotic fops" who "sought targets with their jets from the *rodos metálicos* (ether flasks) aimed to the nipple". For them, this perfume-spray game acted as a kind of test: If the girl pulled a face and withdrew under this fine, icy spray, they were already aware that there would be no rabbit to hunt in that wood, and we would move off to a different neighbourhood. But there was no lack of girls who were more receptive to these experiences, and a nervous giggle was often the forerunner of surprising victories.³⁴

The memorialist was unable to mask his misogyny in viewing such girls as easy prey.

³² *Gazeta de Notícias*, 15.02.1915; *A Noite*, 16.02.1922.

³³ GAY, Peter. *A Experiência Burguesa da Rainha Vitória a Freud*. *Apaixão tema*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1990, p.25.

³⁴ LAGO, Mário. *Na Rolanção do Tempo*. São Paulo: Círculo do Livro, no date, p. 136.

He did not see in this gesture an attempt to flee the standards of their times - where he was to build one of the richest careers on Brazil's artistic and political scene - which even he himself could not escape. He failed to realize that they also were seeking to enjoy their bodies and extract all the pleasure they could give, instead of remaining passive as they were taught.

Juliet Mitchell feels that women's liberation is dependent on the transformation of the four structures with which women are integrated: production, reproduction, socialization and sexuality. Although she stresses the predominant nature of economic demands, she also underlines the need for them to be accompanied by policies that are coherent with the other three elements. In specific cases, these policies may even play a leading role in immediate actions. According to this author, referring to the 1960s, at which time she was writing, in the Western world, the sexual aspect was the weakest link in the structures, whose simultaneous transformation depended on the liberation of women.³⁵

Accepting such presuppositions, the anonymous women who operate in the interstices of the system are daring to express their sexuality to an increasing extent, revealing the presence of desire which was only permissible in the marriage bed, and were also the precursors of women's emancipation. They made creative use of loopholes to furtively or even openly live their lives and sexuality, despite all bans and threats. Carnival represented one of these loopholes, acting as a trial balloon for the full assumption by women of their body and their sexuality in their daily lives as well. These women also contributed to the feminist clamor of the 1960s, packed with demands in the field of sexuality, whose victories did not spring only from the actions of a small group of intellectuals in the mid-field of society.

³⁵ MITCHELL, Juliet. *Mulheres - A Revolução Mais Longa*. *Revista Civilização Brasileira*. N°. 14, RJ 1967, p.5.