

# Portuguese Women's Access to Education at the Turn of the Century: the Ideology of Separate Spheres

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*What were we created for? To remain, it may be said, innocent: they mean in a state of childhood. We might as well never have been born, unless it were necessary that we should be created to enable man to acquire the noble privilege of reason, the power of discerning good from evil, whilst we lie down in the dust from whence we were taken, never to rise again.*

(...)

*Ignorance is a frail base for virtue! Yet, that is the condition for which woman was organised, has been insisted upon by the writers who have most vehemently argued in favour of the superiority of man; a superiority not in degree, but offence; though, to soften the argument, they have laboured to prove, with chivalrous generosity, that the sexes ought not to be compared; man was made to reason, woman to feel (...)*

(Mary Wollstonecraft, in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792).

A long time has gone by since Mary Wollstonecraft, with fierce rebelliousness, wrote these words against the situation of women in the wake of the French Revolution. However, this was a situation that was yet to be maintained for a long time and, unfortunately, in many corners of the Earth it is still a fact that women are created to remain, if not innocent, at least ignorant.

In the vast majority of the Western world, however, the situation is now quite different. Some weeks ago (August 25), the headline of the front page of a leading Portuguese newspaper declared in an alarmed tone of surprise that "girls have better marks" ("Raparigas têm notas mais altas"). Although the author of the article is careful in stating that the issue is not as polemical in Portugal as it apparently is in England (where the same news was received with much more concern), the fact is that, possibly echoing the polemics that the issue raised in England, the Portuguese newspaper thought it relevant to publish a front page news of the situation<sup>[1]</sup>. It is doubtless that the picture is new, but it is nevertheless surprising that in this western world of equal opportunities and fair treatment so many people are still appalled that girls are having a better performance in school than boys. It is, thus, doubly astonishing that such a fact is treated as a problematic question.

And yet the historical reasons for this surprise are well known to us, for it is indeed impressive

that in such a narrow span of time (no more than 100 years) women have made such a revolution. In fact, if we look at the situation of women in society and, specifically, at the way their education is now regarded, we will be confronted with changes that are astonishing compared to the educational practices of the beginning of the century. The statistics in Portugal (1997) tell us that there are more girls than boys both at secondary level (with a rate of 52.2% of girls enrolled in 1997), and entering the university (a rate of 56% of girls enrolled in 1997)<sup>[2]</sup> and, as was made apparent by the news of the university examinations entrance this year, girls are also first in class. So, although it is noticeable that women are more prone than men to take Humanities rather than Scientific and technological courses (with a rate of 77% of females enrolling in Letters, against a rate of 27% of women who enrolled in engineering sciences)<sup>[3]</sup>, we can easily state that they are entering to a lesser or greater extent, a wide range of professional areas, including those that have always resisted more consistently the penetration of women, like engineering, law, medicine, just to name a few.

As we know, these conquests have constituted a long fight for women notably during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries on the grounds that to have more education, and a better one, would open up more possibilities for women than those that were traditionally assigned to them; in other words, it would mean breaking the barriers of the private sphere to which women were confined.

In that sense, it is striking how essential the fight for women's education is in the voice of those who have always tried to disrupt the social order engendered by the ideology of separate spheres, which contributed greatly to the perpetuation of the belief in the inferiority of women, as has been made clear, among others, by Sherry Ortner in "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?". The argument put across by Ortner is, as you may remember, that the pan-cultural relegation of women to those activities linked to '*nature*', like procreation, nurturing, etc., carries with it a devaluation of their social role, once the nature of their activities as mothers and, mostly, as housewives entails a non-"productive", passive social role, whereas men, being responsible for all activities that involve the making of money, law and art are the real makers of *culture* and, therefore, the most active members of society; as a consequence, there is an implicit evaluation of male activities as being of a superior kind, one that is related to culture. In Sherry Ortner's words:

*(...) [Women's] pan-cultural second-class status could be accounted for, quite simply, by postulating that women are being identified or symbolically associated with nature, as opposed to men, who are identified with culture. Since it is always culture's project to subsume and transcend nature, if women were considered part of nature, then culture would find it "natural" to subordinate, not to say oppress, them. (Ortner, 1998: 29)*

From the eighteenth century on, and particularly after the French Revolution, the question of women's education, or their access to it, becomes issue for debate in several fronts. Books like Condorcet's *Sur l'admission des femmes au droit de cité* (1790), Olympe de Gouges' *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne* (1791), and, particularly, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), as well as John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869), are crucial in the way they pose the question of the precarious situation of women in society and focus on the education of women as a central act of liberation. Their arguments are going to be repeated over and over again by all those that subsequently tried to improve women's social status, by providing them a better and fulfilling education, one that would allow women, on the one hand, to become better

mothers and housewives, and, on the other hand, one that would open up to them a path into the public sphere.

However, by restricting women's action to the home, the ideology of separate spheres opens a breach in women's access to education and one that will be evoked as an argument by the defenders of women's education; as a housewife it is woman's duty to watch over the home and to provide for the harmony of family life, but it is also on her that the responsibility of the education of children falls. It is thus on the basis, and as an extension, of their motherly role, that is, as an extension of their domestic activities, that middle class women see opening up before them the access to a certain degree of education. Conservative as they are in the way women's social role is regarded, most conduct books to be read by middle and upper class girls consider that a certain level of education will help strengthen the moral force of women, favouring, in that sense, a better performance of their social roles as wives and mothers or daughters and sisters. In a French conduct book, which was still being published in Portugal in 1934, we can read, for example:

*A little lady should know all the secrets of cooking and of the household, get used to good manners, allow herself a degree of foppishness, which is almost obligatory, and at last cultivate the spirit by study and reflection (Staffe, 1934: 57)*<sup>[4]</sup>.

But it is always stressed that this study must never bring about an over intellectualisation of woman, which would inevitably lead to a loss of femininity and grace, as is stated in the same book:

*Do not understand my suggestion as an invitation to take further on a study that would unceremoniously lead you to a priggish attitude. I only advise you to avoid losing, as was common practice before, almost all trace of the little knowledge that you have acquired at school (Ibid.: 61).*

As we read on, it is noticeable that the author of this conduct book reproduces remarkably the dichotomy reason/ emotion as attributed respectively to male and female, which for women works as a restriction. It is assumed that an increasing development of reason on the part of women would lead to a loss of the capacity to be affectionate and emotive, which implies a complete disparagement of their social role. For the author of the mentioned conduct book, as well as for all those that oppose woman's emancipation, "Molière's 'bluestockings' are certainly unbearable and unattractive creatures" (*Ibid.*: 62).

As has been clearly stated, among others, by Catherine Hall, in the emerging urban and industrialised society of the nineteenth century, the separation of work and home strengthens the social separation of spheres. Thus, by working at home, women were destined to be the supporters of family life, creating a balance in a social system that provided men with a whole range of diverse activities in industry, banking, cultural institutions or political organisations (Hall, 1992: 75-93) <sup>[5]</sup>.

The figure of the "angel in the house"<sup>[6]</sup> becomes, in the words of the promoters of the ideology of separate spheres, such an idealised version of womanhood that it is almost supernatural. The same *Baronesse de Staffe*, which has already been quoted here, defines this harmonious angel in the house in the following terms:

*Endowed with moral grace, the wife is all harmony and no one like her knows how to create harmony around her. (...) See her in her comings and goings about the home, walking in light steps, opening and shutting the doors noiselessly, and never pushing either people or furniture as she passes. You will never hear her touch her tools or any other object so as to make it resound through the house (Staffe, 1934: 152).*

Being the promoters of the familial order and harmony it was believed that women should be all-innocent beings; an excess of learning would only lead to a moral corruption wholly incompatible with their family responsibilities. Women, as mothers and therefore educators should, then, be reduced to a situation of complete *innocence*, that is, *ignorance*, for the maintenance of *innocence* was seen as the primal condition for the preservation of morality. This is a basic argument given against the promotion of an equal education for men and women, an argument that would reduce the opportunities of the female sex for many centuries. An argument that is attacked from the beginning of the debate over the "Woman's Question", namely by Mary Wollstonecraft, as is made clear by the quotation with which I began this essay.

Such was the situation of women in Portugal by the end of the nineteenth century, when the debate for the education of women gained a new breadth. It is not the purpose of this paper to give a thorough account of the history of women's education in Portugal<sup>[7]</sup>; however, to set the debate that brings me here, it is important to trace some general lines of what was happening, in this context, at the turn of the twentieth century. Before 9 August of 1888, date when the first law that authorises the government to create secondary schools for the female sex is issued, the only education women were officially entitled to in Portugal was three to four years of primary education. It is obvious that, as was habit in other countries, the girls from the upper classes would have a private education, which was conducted at home under the supervision of *governesses*, usually of French, English or German origin. Important as it was, the creation of this law does not, however, set the date of the opening of any female secondary school (or *liceu* in Portuguese), once the first one was only set up in Lisbon in 1906. Before that, an establishment of general and professional education for girls was set up in Lisbon in 1885, which was called under the name of the Queen Maria Pia; later on, the school was likened to the male schools by a document issued in 1890, which allowed the girls to do the final exams in the male institutions (cf. Barreira, 1991: 39-55).

As it is, the time was ripe for the debate over women's education and the creation and improvement of female education was indebted to the fervour of such prominent defenders of the cause as the pedagogue Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho, the Republican politician, and later on President, Bernardino Machado, the woman writer Alice Pestana and the feminists Ana de Castro Osório and Virgínia de Castro e Almeida. Bernardino Machado was a leading voice in the process of creation of the 1888 law (Rosa, 1989: 12) and Alice Pestana (who wrote under the pseudonym Caïel) was the author of two important documents for the extension of public education to women<sup>[8]</sup>.

There are important books that discuss the situation of female education in Portugal at this time. I chose to analyse here the way this question is debated in three of these books, published between 1887 and 1905. The books are: Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho's *Mulheres e Criações (notas sobre educação)* (*Women and Children: Notes on education*) (1887), D. António da Costa's *A Mulher em Portugal (Woman in Portugal)* (1892) and Ana de Castro Osório's *Às Mulheres Portuguesas (To Portuguese Women)* (1905).

Reading one or two things about the female access to education by this time, I was struck by

the idea that some historians would place all these people in the same framework as defenders of women's right to education. For example, Cecília Barreira, who was already mentioned here, says:

*Also the reading some feminists have made of the concept of education reveals a quite diverse tone from the one we got used to in the books of education and conduct. **It is enough to refer the works of Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho, Ana de Castro Osório and Virgínia de Castro e Almeida** (Barreira, 1991, 67, my emphasis).*

The fact is that, while being undeniable that all these three women have written and spoken in favour of the cause of female education, it is far from true to say that they are all speaking from the same point of view. Both Ana de Castro Osório and Virgínia de Castro e Almeida are part of the first feminist movement that appears in Portugal in the beginning of the century, but it seems clear to me that we need only read one or two books by Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho to understand that she cannot be assessed as a feminist in the same way<sup>[9]</sup>. Speaking from within the ideology of separate spheres, her speech reproduces, as I intend to make clear in my analysis, all the fallacies that are indebted to her ideological point of view. The same is true of the politician and Minister of Instruction António da Costa. Although, as has been recognised<sup>[10]</sup>, the book by António da Costa that I will be analysing here is of great interest for the debate over the education of women, it cannot be considered, for reasons that I will try to make clear, a feminist book.

Even at first sight, it is clear that a more conservative approach distinguishes both the book by the Republican politician D. António da Costa and the one by the eminent pedagogue Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho from the more radical and feminist approach we can find in the volume by the Republican feminist Ana de Castro Osório. The two authors first mentioned, although advocating a necessary improvement and development in the education of women, never question the clear difference that should preside over the education of the sexes; on the other hand, Ana de Castro Osório sees the education of women as a necessary step in the way to their emancipation and social autonomy.

As we read Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho's notes on education, we will be confronted with an interesting paradox, arising out of the ideological paradoxes of the time when she was writing. On the one hand, her discourse is rooted in the positivist belief in progress and development, which makes her state that the maintenance of women in ignorance is the fundamental obstacle to social progress; on the other hand, it sounds, at times, eminently conservative, bringing to the surface the ideological roots of her deep belief in the separation of spheres. Vaz de Carvalho understands that the educational backwardness of the Portuguese women is against the rational spirit of the times and, what is more, is a deplorable situation in view of the great moral task that, as mothers and educators of children, befalls them. In that sense, she claims for women a consistent and solid education, whereby they can improve their performance in the social roles for which they are destined as mothers and wives. Thus, on the one hand, the author claims that, being ignorant, women only concur to "strengthen the impulse that opposes the triumphant and, all in all, unbeatable march which leads civilisation into the path of veritable light" (Carvalho, 1887: 9)<sup>[11]</sup>; on the other hand, there is a need to justify that the education of women is important inasmuch as through it women will be able to assume their sole social role as the true helpers of their husbands. Thus, the author claims: "Women need to be morally stronger than men so as to be able to accomplish the relatively superior task that nature and society impose on them.

(*Ibid.*: 10)" The position adopted by Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho is, then, one of relative balance in relation to what the ideology of separate spheres, from where she is speaking, would allow her to say in terms of female emancipation. So, she states:

*[Men] feel, and as far as I can see it they are very right, that to preserve this balance, which is needed to maintain the familial and social order, women must comply with and never rebel against the inferiority to which they are condemned by the laws, or against the dependence they are condemned by habit (Ibid.: 9-10, my emphasis).*

As I have already stated, Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho has never advocated in favour of the feminist cause, and she has always made clear that she was not favourable to any form of political emancipation for women; but she is a defender of the education for women and, as such, she points out her accusing finger to men for thinking that "the best means to achieve (...) this voluntary submission (...) was to condense the darkness of ignorance and superstition around the one they are forced to make their companion in life, their support in time of hardship, the mother of their children, the flesh of their flesh" (*ibid.*: 10). The author defends a certain degree of equality between the sexes, but one that can include what the ideology of the time considered the *natural* differences between men and women; it is notwithstanding clear that part of that difference implies, for the author, the consistent reification of the ideology of separate spheres.

Another fallacy that recurs in Vaz de Carvalho's argument is the belief in the moral superiority of women. This belief is, in my view, deeply ingrained in the dichotomy reason/ emotion as associated respectively to man and woman. For this author, women are infinitely superior to men in kindness, generosity and morality; therefore, the level of moral decadence that affects so many women can only be explained by a lack of education. These women are still very much the submissive *angels* Virginia Woolf tells us about in "Professions for Women", the angel she felt so important women writers should be able to kill so that they could become free writers (cf. Woolf, 1988: 58) . For Vaz de Carvalho, women are to be held responsible either for the weaknesses of men or for their feats, once, in their quality of wives, they are the makers of family harmony, or disharmony, that supports their husbands.

*I have often been told that I am very cruel to the sex I belong; that I unfairly accuse women of all evil that has happened, that happens or is about to happen in our mean planet.*

*Well I, on the contrary, am convinced that my feminine pride, that my feminine self-esteem make me concede to women a relevance no one else wants to concede.*

*I say that all evil comes from them, because I am convinced — perhaps unfairly — that from them all good could come (Ibid.: 40-1).*

Like Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho, D. António da Costa advocates in favour of the woman's cause, in the sense that he too proposes beneficial transformations in the educational system, but, as the previous author, his defence of women is made from inside the ideology of separate spheres. António da Costa's book has a much more general approach to the issue, once he makes an overall analysis of the situation of women in Portugal, both in a synchronic and in a diachronic perspective. The book is divided in two parts. In the first one, the author writes about important historical figures of women in the Portuguese society, from the middle ages to the nineteenth century. He writes particularly about Portuguese women writers throughout the times, which makes of this part of the volume a precious 'gynocritical' narrative to be taken into account, if we are to study the canonical

variations of Portuguese literature. However, the book must always be read in the light of the dominant ideology of the nineteenth century, for all the exaltation of womanhood implies the idealisation of the feminine identity as it was understood by the ideology of the time.

The second part of the book, sub-titled "Woman in the present time" is an extensive essay about the institutional and legal changes produced in the last years of the nineteenth century concerning the social stand of women. Naturally, all progress that is invoked in relation to the situation of women has always in mind the primal and *natural* condition of women, that is, their condition of mothers and, inherently, of wives. Thus, when D. António da Costa enhances the need for more and better schools for women, he invokes the need to educate women professionally; however, the professions that he finds relevant, or appropriate, for women are those that connect them to the private sphere. He asks for schools of tailoring and needlework, "maternal schools", special schools "to prepare housewives", "schools to form housemaids", but also, schools of arts (painting, sculpture, photography, engraving", or nursing schools and an innumerable variety of professions "which could fit the natural condition of the weak sex" (Costa, 1992: 360-63).

Another interesting aspect of this book, which is also common to the one by Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho, is the deep class consciousness dividing women. In that sense, it is assumed that women belonging to different social classes must have a different type of education. Therefore, it is presumed that women from the middle classes can perfectly do without a practical education, for the reason that they do not need to prepare themselves for work; women from the working classes should, on the contrary, be prepared to work and, therefore, should be entitled to a good practical education that would prepare them for the world of work which they were bound to enter. In that sense, the author distinguishes between the concepts of "instruction" (a "merely" practical education) and education, which is, contrarily to "instruction", founded in morality (*Ibid.*: 405-6). For this author, the solution for the problem of the national education of women should be the setting up of "special schools of moral, domestic, and hygienic education, separated from "instruction", in which schooling is consumed" (*ibid.*: 405).

Also ingrained in the ideology of separate spheres is António da Costa's scepticism in relation to the usefulness of further studies for women, or in women's capacity for a university education. Once again, the argument for this scepticism is given in name of "nature". It is of common knowledge today that many of the arguments provided in favour of the maintenance of women in their private sphere was the 'scientific' evidence of their biological nature. António da Costa partakes of this ideological framework when he states, for example, that, given their nature, "the use of thought is not of women's competence". He goes on to say:

*It is woman's duty to educate man, not to be educated like him. The equality of the sexes is indispensable, but it should be attained by a natural principle, and not an artificial one. Even if nature would allow her the political and scientific qualities, the woman who followed these careers, would become masculine, would have to harden her heart to oppose the hard heart of her adversary (...) (Ibid.: 419).*

Obviously, this kind of argument becomes much more powerful and credible when coming from a defender of the woman's cause... provided it takes into account the so-called *natural* differences between man and woman.

*Woman's cause is one of the great causes of the nineteenth century, like the cause of freedom in politics, like the cause of human rights in philosophy, like the cause of physic and intellectual developments in*

*education in general; (...)*

*Man is strength; woman is grace. Well: as it is, grace has little-by-little loosen her chains with smiles, and, be it with the fascination, be it with the concessions or the promises, has been prostrating by her feet those who for centuries have thought of themselves as their sole dominators (Ibid.: 420).*

This discourse, which is in a sense emancipating, is unable to understand its own ideological limits, since it is immersed in a mentality, which, at all institutional levels — scientific, religious, educational, familial, judicial — contributed to devalue women's social existence.

The only one of the three books that I proposed to analyse here which manages to transcend these ideological limits is the one by Ana de Castro Osório, *As Mulheres Portuguesas*. On the one hand, because it was written by someone who belongs to a younger generation (Ana de Castro Osório was born in 1872, whereas Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho's date of birth is 1847), but also because it was written by someone who sees herself as a feminist, the founder of the *Portuguese Women's Republican League (Liga Republicana das Mulheres Portuguesas)*, and whose writings greatly influenced the making of the Divorce Law of 1911. The great difference in Ana de Castro Osório's discourse is that she does not conceive of woman as a "second sex", to use Simone de Beauvoir's historical expression. Indeed, it is striking the way the author of this text is a strong believer in an irreducible autonomy of the female sex, not only at the juridical and political level, but, essentially, in her social *self*. The opening of the book is a clear example of this difference in tone:

*Feminism: it is a word which men in Portugal still laugh at or resent, according to their temperament, and that makes even women blush, the poor things, as if it were a serious error that some of her colleagues had committed, but which was not their responsibility, good grief!...*

*And yet, there is nothing more just, there is nothing more reasonable than this steady, though slow, walk of the female spirit into its autonomy (Osório, 1905: 11).*

If the tone of this book is much more radical than the ones previously analysed, it is also, as has been pointed out by Maria Regina Tavares da Silva in relation to the discourse of the first Portuguese feminists in general<sup>[12]</sup>, much more utopian than the other ones. Thus, if in the more conservative texts there is an idealisation of a conveniently submissive woman, here we can sense the idealisation of a woman and a man conveniently enlightened.

In the context of this idealisation, female education becomes one of the primal worries of the first feminists in a country where, as is referred by Ana de Castro Osório, illiteracy was "one of our national causes of shame;" and this shame was increased by the fact that women were those "who dreadfully rose the rates of illiteracy" (Osório, 1905: 50).

It is, then, understandable that, contrarily to what happened in other countries, where the fight for female emancipation is centred upon the question of the acquisition of suffrage, as well as in the conquest of the higher stages of education, education, at all levels, is a central preoccupation of Portuguese feminists. Ana de Castro Osório refers to it in the following terms:

*It seems to us that the best way for a woman to be a free being, able to choose by her own free-will the path she righteously wants to follow in life, is to educate her, providing her the means to earn with her work the sufficient money for her own support — when she has no one else by her side —, or for helping her husband, strained by the over-work demanded of him by competition and the high cost of modern life — when she is married. (Ibid.: 46).*

The major difference between this discourse and the one we encounter in the other two books is not



found in the awareness that all them show in relation to the pressing need of educating women, but in the ends of this education. Apart from the moral aspect, the need to strengthen woman's capacity to reason, the author enhances the fact that, educated, a woman could find the means to increase her social autonomy; that is, educated, a woman would see opening up for her new careers and ways of living, different from those assigned to her by the ideology of separate spheres. In that sense, contrarily to António da Costa, who evinces, as we have seen, a huge scepticism in relation to the ability of women to pursue scientific or intellectual careers, Ana de Castro Osório asks women to hold to their intellectual potential so as to get over the social prejudice that restrains them from developing intellectually.

*For many ladies who read and like to read, it is a discouraging fact to think that they will be put to ridicule and that the ignorant will dub them of bluestockings or doctors, if by chance they get involved in a conversation that transposes the literary limits of the newspaper serial or of the fashion of the day (Ibid.: 107).*

One hundred years later, this discourse is for many a thing of the past, but it is unfortunately for too many a constant and pressing reality. Despite the recent statistics in many western countries and the polemics raised by the recent good performances of girls in exams, in many other instances, we are not really that far from the reality Ana de Castro Osório exposes in her book from 1905. Women are still trying to get through an invisible “glass ceiling” that prevents them from reaching the higher stages of decision, in many social areas, particularly, in political and economic areas. In Portugal, and despite the statistics of the good academic performances of girls: in a Parliament of 230 seats, only 28 are held by women (which constitutes a rate of 19,6% of women); in 22 Ministers, there are only three female Ministers in office; the area of high finance is still overwhelmingly populated by men. The examples could be multiplied. This would, however, lead us to another debate and the central purpose of this paper is to debate the issue of female education at the turn of the century.

To finalise in a positive tone, we can hardly say that things have not changed, because, as Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo (the first Portuguese woman Prime-Minister), who opened the last European Conference of this sort, said, if we look at the evolution of the situation of women in the last one hundred years, we are forced to say that "Something has happened!" (Pintasilgo, 1998: 17). The fact that we are here gathered to discuss the history of this issue is only a small proof of this change; the fact, as Pintasilgo noticed in 1997, that we have a field of studies within the limits of the European Union under the name "women's studies" or "feminist studies" says much about the paths those *proto-feminist* and feminist women of the nineteenth century started opening up for us.

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## NOTES

- [1] Cf. Sanches, Andreia, "Portuguesas batem os rapazes", *Público*, 25 de Agosto de 2000, p. 20.
- [2] This data was put forward by the Portuguese *Commission for the Equality and Defense of Women* (Comissão para a Igualdade e Defesa da Mulher), and can be accessed through their internet site in <http://cidm.sitepac.pt>.
- [3] This information relates to the statistics of Education in 95, provided by the Ministry of Education; see the internet site of the *Commission for the equality and Defense of Women*, <http://cidm.sitepac.pt>.
- [4] Translated by the author of this essay from the Portuguese: "Uma menina deve conhecer todos os segredos da cozinha e do arranjo doméstico, acostumar-se às boas maneiras, não se furtar a uma garridice permitida, como que obrigatória, e por fim cultivar o espírito pelo estudo e pela reflexão." From hereon the extracts will appear in the text of the essay in translation.
- [5] See also McDowel, Linda and Pringle, Rosemary (1992), "Defining Work", in *Defining Women: Social Institutions and Gender Divisions*, Cambridge, Polity Press in association with Open University.
- [6] The phrase "angel in the house" comes from the title of a Victorian poem by Coventry Patmore, first published in 1858.
- [7] This research was done by Cecília Barreira, in her Phd. Thesis titled *Universos Femininos em Portugal: Retrato da Burguesa em Lisboa, 1890-1930* (1991) (*Feminine Universes in Portugal: Picture of the female Bourgeois in Lisbon, 1890-1930*). Some of the information contained here was taken from this book.
- [8] The documents are: "O que deve ser a instrução secundária da mulher?" e "Relatório duma visita de estudo a estabelecimentos de ensino profissional do sexo feminino, no estrangeiro" ("What should the secondary education of woman be?" and "Report of a research visit to establishments of professional education for the female sex abroad" (Rosa, 1989: 25).
- [9] We need only see the contemptuous tone she uses when talking of a North-American feminist, Victoria Woodhall, to see, for example that Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho is against the political emancipation of women: "The woman we dream of and want is not the acclaimed and illustrious foreigner who is spreading over the heads of the indifferent, or slightly moved, crowds, her convictions and her social theories. Retired inside her humble and peaceful home, the mother of a flock of children, sweet and blond, — of whom she might be the providence, the support, the supreme joy

—, the spouse of a strong and honest man — a worker, an active and laborious member of modern society —, the action of this woman would be much more restricted, but unmistakably more useful and healthier" (Carvalho, 1887: 198-99, my translation).

[10] Cf., for example, Leal, Ivone (1986) "Os papéis tradicionais femininos: continuidade e rupturas de meados do século XIX a meados do século XX".

[11] Once no translation of the three books under scrutiny here exists, there was no choice but to give you my own translation of the extracts.

[12] In *Feminismo em Portugal*, Maria Regina Tavares da Silva studies the way feminism is defined by some of the first Portuguese feminists and comments: "The terms could hardly be more emphatic, or idealistic. The ultimate goals of the feminist aspirations, the end to which the changes their ideals propose are those of truth, justice, light, human right, progress, the generous hope" (Silva, 1992: 21-2, my translation).