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Women's and Gender Studies in Portugal: An Overview from an Anglicist Perspective

1. Introduction

Feminism signifies a set of positions, not an essence; a critical practice not a doxa; a dynamic and self-critical response and intervention not a platform. It is the precarious product of a paradox. Seeming to speak in the name of women, feminist analysis perpetually deconstructs the very term around which it is politically organized.

(Griselda Pollock, *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings*, 1996, 'Introd'.)

Dear sisters:

But what is the power of literature? Or rather: what is the power of words?

[...] Which time? Our time. And which weapon, which weapon do we use or neglect? Where do we seek shelter or which is our struggle if only in the realm of words?

(Maria Isabel Barreno / Maria Teresa Horta / Maria Velho da Costa, *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, 1972)¹

The authors of this essay both teach and have been doing collaborative research within a Department of Anglo-American Studies (Faculty of Arts and Humanities) in a Portuguese University (Universidade do Minho, Braga, the north of the country), where the teaching of feminism and gender studies has an important role to play, both as a critical methodology indispensable amongst other recent critical and hermeneutical approaches to the text (be it strictly literary or otherwise visual, i.e., painting, film, performance, etc.),

1 Our translation. 'Minhas irmãs: Mas o que pode a literatura? Ou antes: o que podem as palavras? [...] Que tempo? O nosso tempo. E que arma, que arma utilizamos ou desprezamos nós? Em que refúgio nos abrigamos ou que luta é a nossa enquanto ape nas no domínio das palavras?'

and as a way to anchor literature and art in general in social reality, inviting thus a situated engagement with the object of our study.

It is not however 'easy' to teach feminist / gender studies in most places in the world (as it is not easy to be a feminist), and certainly Portugal is amongst these. You have to struggle to feed it into the curricula, you have to be prepared to argue your case when proposing a graduate or undergraduate course, or even a course within a specific degree, and it is not easy either to find a willing publisher for a monograph or a collection in the field, as the word 'feminist' is often thought of as unmarketable.

Our aim in this essay is to offer as far as possible an overview of the situation of gender studies in the Portuguese academia, mainly in connection with the teaching and research activities of English Studies. It seemed to us natural that we should first refer to what is closest to our own sphere of action, that is, the contribution to the field at the University of Minho.

We could thus trace the first teaching modules of feminism and gender studies at the English and American Studies Dept of the Universidade do Minho since the early 1990s, within a) English Literature courses, comprehending Contemporary Literature, Modernism, Victorian, Shakespeare and Elizabethan Studies, and b) seminars on Critical Theory and Theory of Literature, namely within postgraduate courses. A number of women were involved in the teaching of these courses, some of them had recently completed their PhDs in the UK, others were starting their master's and doctoral degrees in the newly created programs in Portugal. The launching of projects arrived slightly later, in the mid-1990s, first on a rather informal basis, gathering researchers, male and female, with a focus on interdisciplinarity, under the umbrella of the Humanities Research Centre at UM, CEHUM (Centro de Estudos Humanísticos da Universidade do Minho), supported by the Portuguese research council FCT (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia). Only later were some of these projects made financially competitive through the possibility of grants, namely towards the organization of conferences and ensuing publications. Amongst these it is worth mentioning three volumes which came out of those earlier projects and produced a strong impact in local academic terms, due to the novelty of their focus and for directly addressing feminism as an 'out of the closet' issue in Portugal: *A Mulher, O Louco e a Máquina* (Woman, Madness and the Machine; 1998), *Re-presentações do Corpo / Re-presenting the Body*

(2003), *Poéticas Inter-artes: do Texto à Imagem, ao Palco, ao Écran / Interart Poetics: Text to Image, Stage, Screen and beyond* (2006).

However, despite that often covered up or residual antagonism towards feminism which we referred to above, we can say that the early years of the new century auspiciously inaugurated a turn in the kind of collaborative research and individual projects, including Master's and PhD dissertations, reclaiming a clear focus in gender studies, both as critical methodology, theoretical framework and privileged case-studies. The MA in 'English Language, Literature and Culture', which had been created in 1992, was partially responsible for this development with the completion of a large number of dissertations focussing on gender studies. Moreover, a substantial number of PhD dissertations with a focus on Gender and Literature, Linguistics, Culture and most recently in the field of the Visual Arts is of paramount importance, in terms of the growth and visibility of the discipline. The attribution of postdoctoral research grants to young researchers, not part of the University staff, but integrated in the research centre CEHUM should be highlighted in this context, as it had a tremendous impact through the very significance of their engagement in research within a number of transdisciplinary fields, where Gender, Postcolonial, Cultural Studies and Visual Poetics have fostered a salutary dialogue against the strict borderlines of the disciplines, thus permitting the hosting of permanent seminars and summer schools as well as the launching of new projects. Furthermore, as far as teaching is concerned, in 2012 a new doctoral program was created at the Universidade do Minho, entitled 'Comparative Modernities: Literatures, Arts and Cultures', which will bring about important doctoral research in gender studies across the disciplines it comprises.

On a more competitive level, the first decade of 2000 brought a crucial turn in the kind of collaborative gender studies projects: in 2002, publication of the first critical anthology of contemporary feminism edited in Portugal, *Género, Identidade e Desejo: Antologia Crítica do Feminismo Contemporâneo*, which assembled a dozen of pivotal texts from a variety of fields unavailable in Portuguese before (Macedo 2002). In 2005, another significant project (funded by the Portuguese research council FCT) accomplished the first dictionary of feminist criticism in Portuguese, *Dicionário da Crítica Feminista*, coedited by Ana Gabriela Macedo and Ana Luísa Amaral. It integrated a large team of researchers, Margarida Pereira

among them, and, to this day, the *Dicionário* is the only one of its kind in Portuguese.

In 2008, following the participation of a group of researchers from CEHUM in an interdisciplinary conference on feminism and gender studies, a special issue of the Centre's journal *Diacrítica* was organized on this topic. Apart from individual essays, it also includes a series of national and international contributions by various feminist scholars that were solicited as 'personal histories' with regard to the history of feminism in different cultural and geographical locations.

Most recently, in 2011, a second collection of key texts in translation was issued, *Género, Cultura Visual e Performance: Antologia Crítica*, aiming to divulge the ongoing debate on the history of art from a feminist viewpoint and topical issues in these very challenging interdisciplinary fields (Macedo 2011).

In our view, the main asset of these collaborative projects, which engage us symbiotically as teachers and researchers, is to contribute to a deeper knowledge but also a de-essentialization of what feminism and gender studies are and what they currently stand for. At the same time, they aim to make available and promote in Portugal, and concretely within the Portuguese lexicon, the conceptual knowledge, theoretical premises, strategic conceptualizations, methodologies and awareness of the larger problem area where they are anchored, not in a static and essentialist manner, but through a transversal and interdisciplinary rapport with other fields of knowledge, theories and academic disciplines. And, most important of all, they aim to promote the engagement of students and young researchers in this transversal discipline, by sharing with them an awareness of its unsettling dynamics and ever-new challenges. For we believe, as Griselda Pollock has written, that we should at all costs make sure that the 'price of "institutionalisation" of feminism, or the "writing of feminism's history" does not effectively erase the feminist effect, or render [it] invisible' (2008: 255). As Pollock emphasizes, feminism is, above all, a 'critical practice' and not a *doxa* or an essence in search of institutionalization. Indeed, feminism dwells on a paradox; despite all the necessary struggle for its recognition, its prerequisite derives from its 'partially utopian' dimension, that is, the non-accommodation to the *status quo* and the refusal of ideological

instrumentalism, in the name of a 'future anterior of language' (Kristeva) and a positive disruption which it ought to preserve (Macedo 2013).

2. Feminism and Feminist Movements in Portugal: General Situation and Glimpses from History

As in other places in the world, the history of women's studies in Portugal may be said to have originated in the first wave of women's movements that fought for the promotion of a more egalitarian society. Here, as elsewhere, the fight for female education, female independence and female political rights constituted the hallmarks of the first women's periodical publications (in the form of magazines or newspapers) in the nineteenth century and, later on, of the first feminist organizations, which appeared in Portugal at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Rosmarie Wank-Nolasco Lamas, the first female publications to have a clear editorial line in favour of female independence were: *A Assembleia Literária* (The Literary Assembly), edited by Maria Antónia Pusich from 1849 to 1851; *A Voz Feminina* (The Feminine Voice), 1868, later re-named *O Progresso* (Progress), which survived for two years under the editorial supervision of the couple Francisca and Guilherme Wood; finally, in 1883, the newspaper *A Mulher* (Woman; cf. Lamas 1995: 25–26).

A proper feminist movement started only at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1910 a successful revolution overthrew the monarchic regime and introduced for the first time a Republican government in Portugal. It was in these contexts, in connection with the Republican Party and with Free Masonry that the first Portuguese feminist groups were established. The pioneer was the *Grupo Português de Estudos Feministas* (Portuguese Group of Feminist Studies), which appeared in 1907 led by Ana de Castro Osório. In 1909 this would give rise to the first national feminist organization, the *Liga Republicana das Mulheres Portuguesas* (cf. Silva 1983: 876–77; Lamas 1995: 32–33), which was mainly due to the efforts of some leading Republican men, among whom Bernardino Machado.² Leading

2 Bernardino Machado (1851–1944) was a leading member of the Republican Party, who would become President of the Republic of Portugal, first from August 1915 to December 1917 and again later in 1925. His voice was instrumental

feminist women like Ana de Castro Osório, Adelaide Cabete, Maria Veleza, Carolina Beatriz Ângelo, Angélica Porto, among others, were part of this national movement and were instrumental in the establishment of a feminist consciousness in different circles (although the *Liga* primarily addressed the cultivated urban middle classes). Its aims, as stated in the statutes, were to ‘guide, educate and instruct the Portuguese woman within the democratic principles [...], making her an autonomous and conscious individual; to make civic propaganda inspired by the democratic and republican ideal; to promote the revision of the laws in particular with regard to women and children, etc.’ (*apud* Silva 1983: 877, our translation).

At the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century there were also authors outside of the movement that wrote in defence of female education and autonomy, people whose pioneering contributed, if not to the establishment of a field of feminist studies, at least to a reflection that led to changes in the social condition of Portuguese women. Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho (1847–1921)³ and Alice Pestana (1860–1929)⁴ both wrote in favour of female education, though from very different standpoints. Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcelos, an eminent German philologist turned Portuguese by marriage, who was the first woman to hold a position as Professor in a Portuguese university, also pleaded for female education, for instance, in 1902 in a daily newspaper of the time, *O Primeiro de Janeiro*, where she contributed a six-part article on the feminist movement in

in the defence of the establishment of female secondary schools and in the campaign in favour of the education of women. Cf. Rosa 1989.

- 3 It must be said that, although she wrote in favour of female education, namely in a book titled *Mulheres e Crianças: Notas sobre Educação* (Women and Children: Notes about Education), published in 1887, Carvalho never endorsed in any way the notion of female emancipation. She always wrote from within the ideology of separate spheres, advocating what she viewed as the necessary separation of social roles and the maintenance of the ‘inferiority to which laws fatally condemn’ women (Carvalho 1887: 9–10, our translation). Cf. Silva 1983: 902–3 and Pereira 2001: 163–65.
- 4 Pestana, a writer and journalist, who published her fiction under the male pseudonym of (Eduardo) Caël, was a crucial voice, together with Bernardino Machado, in the campaign for the establishment of the first female secondary schools. Rosa 1989; Samara 2007: 45–57.

Portugal, stating that the most pressing problem of the Portuguese woman was her lack of education.⁵

In March 1914, with the doctor Adelaide Cabete as its head, the *Conselho Nacional das Mulheres Portuguesas* or CNMP (National Union of Portuguese Women) was founded. From the start, it was created as a federation of twelve groups and associations, but it also accepted individual people as members. The CNMP lasted until 1947, when it was closed down by imposition of the dictatorial regime of António de Oliveira Salazar, on the grounds that the regime would appoint its own female associations to deal with the problems related to women.⁶ It had an international dimension through its affiliation to the *International Council of Women* (ICW), which had been founded in 1888 in Washington D.C. and aggregated associations from all over the world, and, later on, to the *International Alliance for Women's Suffrage* (IAWS). The relevance of the ties with other European and non-European associations can be measured by the great number of women's journals received from them, of which the CNMP journal *Alma Feminina* (Feminine Soul) gives evidence (Lamas 1995: 49). The international focus of the association was greatly enlarged by the participation in international meetings, namely, in 1923, the International Conference of Rome, organized by the IAWS and, in 1925, in the International Feminist Conference, held in Washington, organized by the ICW. In both cases Portugal was represented by Adelaide Cabete, the founder and president of the *Conselho*. In 1924, the CNMP organized the first feminist conference in Lisbon: *Congresso Feminista e da Educação*. After the *coup d'état* of 1926 (which would later on lead to the establishment of the new regime of the

5 Silva 1983: 899. According to Silva, Vasconcelos criticized that the feminist movement in the Iberian Peninsula was still very incipient: 'The women submit themselves, without protestation, to the secular tradition of inferiority in culture, in the preparation for the strife of life, and even in the treatment as paid labourers in comparison with their male companions' (Vasconcelos, *apud* Silva 1983: 899).

6 According to Manuela Tavares, the order to close down the association was issued by the Governador Civil de Lisboa (Civil Governor of Lisbon), asserting that 'the State relied on the *Obra das Mães para a Educação Nacional* (Society of the Mothers for National Education) for the task of educating and guiding women' (Tavares 2010: 45, our translation).

Estado Novo / New State), the climate in Portugal was not congenial to the development of feminist ideals and the international focus of the *Conselho* would fade out due to lack of financial support.

It must be said that the First Wave of feminism in Portugal was very fruitful in terms of publications on women's issues. Women would publish articles in the magazines and journals of the associations, but they would also publish books, some of which stand out as strong first-wave feminist pamphleteering. Since it is impossible to name them all, we just mention some of them, like: Ana de Castro Osório's *Às Mulheres Portuguesas* (To Portuguese Women; 1905), Virginia de Castro e Almeida's *A Mulher: História da Mulher – A Mulher Moderna – Educação* (Woman: History of Woman – The Modern Woman – Education; 1913), Maria Velleda's *A Conquista: Discursos e Conferências* (The Conquest: Speeches and Conferences; 1909), Aurora de Castro e Gouveia's *Reivindicações Sociais e Políticas da Mulher Portuguesa na República* (Social and Political Claims of the Portuguese Woman under the Republic; 1921).

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the presence of women was gradually growing at all levels of education. The first woman to get a degree from a Portuguese university was Domitila de Carvalho in 1894,⁷ at Coimbra (at the time still the country's only university). According to Joaquim Ferreira Gomes (*apud* Samara 2007: 63), 23 women enrolled at Coimbra until 1910 and 280 from that date to 1926. In 1911 two new universities were created, the University of Porto and the University of Lisbon. This meant that more students could attend university, and the number of women attending courses increased as well. Their preferences lay in the Humanities, followed by Medicine and Pharmacology. According to a study by João Peixoto, the percentages of women attending university

7 Although she was the first woman ever to enter university in Portugal, Carvalho seems to have compensated for her singularity by taking three degrees. She first entered the University of Coimbra in 1891 to study Mathematics, but graduated both in Mathematics and Philosophy. In 1899 she returned to take a degree in Medicine, which she concluded in 1904. Her professional career further seems to prove her singularity, for she was the headmistress of the first female secondary school to be established in Portugal, the *Liceu Maria Pia*, from 1906 to 1912 and became one of the first three women members of the Portuguese parliament, during the *Estado Novo*. Cf. Samara 2007: 59–73 for a concise biography.

in Portugal, in comparison to those of men, were 20.3% in 1940, 26% in 1950, 31.4% in 1960 and 45.5% in 1970 (Peixoto 1989: 184). However, on the whole, we are talking of minimal numbers (in fact, both for men and women), at least until the 1970s. The admission numbers for women would be inferior to those of men until the 1980s; by the middle of that decade (in 1985) female and male admissions were even and from then on there has been a reversal with higher female enrolments, even if in the 1980s there was still a minority of women attending engineering courses and a majority attending courses in the arts and humanities (cf. Lopes / Perista 2010: 195).⁸

From 1947 until 1974, that is, until the Carnation Revolution overthrew the dictatorship established by Salazar in 1932, women's studies did not have much of a chance to be set up. Nevertheless, in response to the closing down of the CNMP, Maria Lamas, a journalist, prominent feminist leader and the last president of the CNMP, wrote an important book with the title *As Mulheres do Meu País* (Women of My Country), which was first published between 1948 and 1950.⁹ In it Lamas gave a thorough account of the Portuguese women's situation all over the country and in all the different occupations that they held. During this time many feminists integrated their action in the movements fighting the regime, namely the *Movimento de Unidade Democrática* (Democratic Union Movement), also known as MUD, and the *Movimento Democrático Nacional* (Democratic National Movement), also known as MDN, where many of the former feminists together with younger women developed their own oppositional politics, sometimes in specific feminine cells.¹⁰ Thus, during this period the political action of women was diluted into the various oppositional channels, be it the movements mentioned above, the student unions in the country's three universities or the only organized political party (however clandestine), the Portuguese Communist Party. In other words, the political battles against the regime and, later on, against the colonial war going on in several Portuguese colonies in Africa did not leave much space for further forms of fight. As Manuela Tavares states:

8 Enrolment data with variation by sex are available at the site of *Pordata*. <<http://www.pordata.pt/en/Portugal/Search+Environment/Table>> (23 June 2014).

9 It appeared first in installments and only in 1950 was it issued in book form.

10 For more details about the oppositional movements, cf. Tavares 2010: 45–131.

The great aspiration to equality of rights between the sexes that the second wave of feminisms brought to women in the United States and Western Europe did not, however, find similar resonance in a country where the antifascist fight was still absorbing the energies of many women and where the dimensions of class and gender did not manage to meet in that struggle. (Tavares 2010: 93, our translation)

In the chapter dedicated to professional women in *As Mulheres do Meu País* (1948–50), Maria Lamas stressed that although there were already many professional women working in such diverse areas as education, health, law, laboratories, public services and private enterprises, most behaved as if this did not have a bearing on women's social roles, which were still viewed as linked to the domestic and the maternal (Lamas 2002: 440–41). Understandably (in the face of the recent closing down of the CNMP), she saw the reason in the absence of women's studies in the country: 'To this state of affairs greatly contributes the absence of female institutions especially dedicated to the study and solution of woman's problems and to her enlightenment, as to her position in the family, in society and in national life' (Lamas 2002: 442, our translation).

Nevertheless, some women's groupings emerged even under the restrictions, in the face of such a long-lasting regime, which, despite some changes over the years, invested the family with the centrality of the social organization and firmly maintained the ideology of separate spheres. The *Movimento Democrático das Mulheres* / MDM (Women's Democratic Movement) was established in 1968 (Tavares 2010: 136), but it was essentially a movement that fought against the regime, directing its efforts against the Colonial War and supporting political prisoners; its action would be extended after the revolution. Also a Portuguese branch of *The Grail* (*Graal*), a progressive Catholic movement, was founded in 1957 headed by Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo.¹¹ It led a pioneering action for the improvement of the social condition of women (Tavares 2010: 148–50).

11 Pintasilgo would be a leading political voice in the first governments after the Carnation Revolution. Having taken part in the first, second and third provisional governments as a secretary of state and minister for social affairs, she would be the first (and until now the only) woman Prime Minister of Portugal in 1979. For information about the important social and political activities of Pintasilgo cf. the site of the *Centro de Documentação e Publicações da Fundação*

In 1972, foreshadowing the downfall of the regime, a book was published that would draw the attention of international feminists to Portugal: *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* (The New Portuguese Letters), by Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Velho da Costa, referred to in the epigraph to this chapter. This book – a collection of texts written collectively by these three (they have never disclosed the authorship of any of the parts) – was banned by the established censorship and seized by the political police; the three women were accused of immoral behaviour and obscenity and faced a trial, but would be acquitted immediately after the Revolution, in May 1974. In the meantime, this case led to a wave of international solidarity on the part of feminist movements, and worldwide many demonstrations were held in support of the three Marias (as they came to be known). One of the effects of this wave of solidarity was the establishment in Portugal of a *Women's Liberation Movement*, just after the Carnation Revolution and the end of the trial for obscenity in May 1974 (Tavares 2010: 176–94).

3. Women's and Gender Studies in Portugal

3.1 General Overview

Although, as we have tried to demonstrate in the above section, there were several women's organizations in Portugal throughout the twentieth century, but especially before the fascist regime of António de Oliveira Salazar, it was only after the revolution in 1974 that we can speak of the establishment of women's studies in Portugal, first still outside academic structures. One of the institutions that had an instrumental impact was the governmental *Comissão da Condição Feminina*, CCF (Commission of the Female Condition), later re-named *Comissão para a Igualdade e os Direitos da Mulher*, CIDM (Commission for Woman's Rights and Equality), and currently under the name of *Comissão para a Cidadania e Igualdade de Género*, CIG (Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality). This commission was

established in 1975,¹² under the tutelage of Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, who was at the time Minister of Social Affairs.¹³ Its purpose and mission were to ‘support all forms of promoting Portuguese women’s awareness and the elimination of discrimination practiced against them, in order to integrate them into the transformation process of the Portuguese society [...]’. One of the first tasks, in view of the lack of information concerning women, was to get a quantitative as well as qualitative overall picture of their social situation.¹⁴ Thus, through its publications, the commission made an enormous contribution to the field of women’s and gender studies, at a time – the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s – when the presence of these studies in the universities was only very tentative.¹⁵ Simultaneously, the commission was also instrumental in developing women’s and gender studies as a research field, especially within the social sciences.

Concomitantly, in 1979, the *Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego*, CITE (Commission for Equality in the Job Market) was established. Thus, according to Rosa Monteiro (2010: 31–56), from the middle of the 1970s to the middle of the 1980s, the preconditions that led to the establishment of a very advanced legal framework for the promotion of labour equality were created in Portugal. According to this author: ‘The existing space in the Portuguese political and institutional system for such a “woman’s” agenda was a space conquered [...] by more or less institutionalized women’s networks (staff belonging to the *Comissão da Condição Feminina*, politicians, civil servants, representatives of women’s

12 According to a historical outline published by CIG, the commission was officially created in 1977 (‘institutionalized in November 1977 by Decree-Law No. 485/77 of 17 November’; CIG, our translation). See also, in relation to this, Monteiro / Ferreira 2012: 15–16.

13 According to the CIG outline, its history goes back to the time before the Revolution, when in 1973 the *Comissão para a Política Social relativa à Mulher* was created, presided by Pintasilgo. This commission, in turn, had originated in a former working group of 1970 (CIG). This information is confirmed in Monteiro / Ferreira 2012: 16.

14 In relation to this cf. Magalhães 2001: 31 and Pinto 2008: 40.

15 A first impression of the amount of work produced by the commission at this time can be obtained from the list of its publications, available at the site of CIG. See especially the collection ‘Cadernos Comissão Feminina’, launched in 1976.

organizations) against the indifference and even hostility of a civil society insensitive or uncritical concerning these issues of the status of women, even at a revolutionary and democratizing moment like that of the 1970s' (Monteiro 2010: 39, our translation).

There is a broad consensus (cf. Magalhães 2001: 32–38) that in Portugal the constitution of Women's Studies as a university discipline was slow and may be said to date back to the final years of the 1980s. The retardation is attributed both to the general underdevelopment of research in Portugal and to the financial problems of the time (very few economic resources were available), as well as to the near absence of women in academia (*Idem*: 32). Other reasons seem to be connected to a certain resistance to change within the academic disciplines themselves (cf. Magalhães 2001: 33).

Be that as it may, women's studies, gender studies or feminist studies started to come into being in Portugal at the turn of the 1980s to the 1990s, making themselves visible in the form of MA or PhD dissertations, publications, seminars or courses, but not, it must be said, as an autonomous discipline.

In 1991, the *Associação Portuguesa de Estudos sobre as Mulheres*, APEM (Portuguese Association of Women's Studies) was created and its journal *Ex-Aequo* launched in 1999. The APEM has been instrumental in congregating all the people that are dedicated to women's studies in Portuguese universities, as well as in other institutions. Its activity has been wide and far-reaching, namely the organization of several conferences, congresses and seminars, some of them in collaboration with universities, and publications.¹⁶

In 2001 and 2002, *Ex-Aequo* dedicated two volumes (Nos 5 and 6) to assessing the state of women's studies in Portugal. They contain contributions from the different disciplinary areas within which women's studies have developed here, namely the social sciences and the humanities. Thus, from within such disciplines as Philosophy, Literary Studies, Cultural Studies, Education, Sociology, Social Psychology, History, Economy and Law, experts give an outline and take stock of the way their disciplines have drawn on feminist / gender studies. A number of them agree that the great impetus

16 This is well described in Ferreira 2000: 125–28 and Magalhães 2001: 27–68.

in the development of women's studies was mainly felt in the 1990s,¹⁷ although in some disciplines, such as Education and History, it was from the 1980s onwards that the gender focus made its appearance in the form of dissertations and colloquia, among other things. By the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, several MA and PhD dissertations had been produced in all the areas mentioned before. Funded research projects in the field and subsequently teamwork, mostly interdisciplinary, also became established in the 1990s, at first timidly but slowly growing in visibility and impact, which in our view meant a groundbreaking step in the process of recognition of the research field and discipline – the *Dicionário da Crítica Feminista* (Macedo / Amaral), referred to earlier on, is amongst these.

As was stressed in the Introduction, the institutionalization of gender studies in the Portuguese academy has not been an easy task; much has been done either through the adoption of clear feminist perspectives in the courses taught (for example, studying literature with an emphasis on gender and feminist criticism) or through the adoption of themes and issues that were concerned with women. However, from the 1990s onwards women's studies have gained a new institutional visibility, either through the introduction of degree programs in gender studies, or through the introduction of gender and women's studies courses in graduate degree programs of a more general turn.

There has been long-standing work in gender studies within departments of psychology and social studies in several Portuguese Universities, amongst which we can mention the *Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e do Emprego – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa*, ISCTE – IUL, and the leading work of Lígia Amâncio in the area of gender stereotyping (cf. Amâncio 1994). Another landmark in the area of social sciences is the establishment in 2012 of the *Centro de Estudos Interdisciplinares em Estudos de Género*, CIEG (Centre of Interdisciplinary Studies in Gender Studies) in the School of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Lisbon. At the Universidade Nova de Lisboa work in women's studies has also been conducted, particularly linked to the disciplines of Sociology, Philosophy and History,

17 In her article on the state of women's studies in the field of literature, Ramalho (2001: 108) observes that by 1995 they were taking their first steps in Portugal, but not as an autonomous branch of knowledge.

which led to the launching of the journal *Faces de Eva* and which has enabled the recent creation of an MA course in Women's Studies, with the title 'Women's Studies: Women in Society and Culture' (started in 2013).

The first Portuguese degree course in Women's Studies was an MA at the Universidade Aberta (Open University) in Lisbon, which started in 1995, followed by a PhD in 2002, at the same university. These are interdisciplinary courses with a focus on women's studies, with a strong connection to the social sciences (History and Sociology), as well as to Philosophy; the leading role of Teresa Joaquim, coordinator of the degree, should be highlighted in this context.

In the curricular year of 2007/2008 the University of Coimbra started an MA in Feminist Studies, followed, the next year, by a doctoral program. These new programs have meant greater visibility in an area of studies which, as we have tried to demonstrate, made their entrance in the Portuguese academia in the 1980s, but have been slow to develop.

3.2 Focus on English Studies

According to Martin Kayman (2000: 15), the introduction of English Studies at Portuguese universities dates back to the first decades of the twentieth century, with the creation of the Faculties of Letters in Lisbon, Coimbra (the old Faculty of Theology was transformed into the modern Faculty of Letters in 1911) and Porto (the Faculty of Letters there being founded in 1919). Thus, the institutionalization of English Studies at university level was, in Portugal, a rather late affair. As acknowledged by Kayman in the same article, as far as ideas and the arts are concerned, Portugal, a Catholic country, 'traditionally drew inspiration more from France and Italy' (2000: 14), although the situation changed radically in the second half of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, at so many other levels, especially in the economy and in politics, the relation with England and English was a much older one, which means that the English language had been studied since at least the seventeenth century, when the first English grammars for Portuguese speakers were produced (Kayman 2000: 14).

In general, women from the high bourgeoisie were particularly exposed to the study of languages, since, as happened in other European countries, they were educated at home by governesses and, apparently, Portuguese

governesses came mainly from other European countries like France, England or Germany.¹⁸ The girls were taught in the languages of their tutors. This means, on the one hand, that these girls read and wrote in French, English and German (or, at least, in one of these languages) and, on the other, that they were acquainted with the culture of these countries. Thus, for example, we can find a book by Cláudia de Campos, a by now obscure nineteenth-century woman writer, titled *Mulheres: Ensayos de Psychologia Feminina* (Women: Essays on Feminine Psychology), about several women writers, where the author deals with her English education and the influence she received from English women writers like Charlotte Brontë.¹⁹ This book is not only a good example of the influence of English literature and culture on Portuguese women, but represents a study of female writers in a remarkable work of gynocriticism *avant la lettre*. Notwithstanding, the pervasive cultural tie was essentially with French.

In Portugal, the cultural transition from French to English was mainly felt after the 1960s and, as explained by Kayman (2000), the big push of English appeared in the 1970s and the 1980s, when there was a reform in the ‘classical’, older universities of Coimbra, Lisbon and Porto, as well as the introduction of new teacher training courses in the newly founded universities of Minho, Aveiro and Universidade Nova de Lisboa, and, later on, in the Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, among other polytechnics where English started to be taught. This represents an enormous growth in the teaching of English in Portugal, which, from the late 1980s onwards, began to replace French as the main foreign language of communication.²⁰

With the increase of English and North-American departments in several universities all over the country, the influence of English Studies started to be strongly felt in Portugal and with it, the obvious spreading of women’s

18 Cf. Cecília Barreira 1991: 39–40.

19 More information about this in Pereira 2003: 143–47.

20 This does not mean that English and English studies were absent from Portuguese society before. The English language was taught at secondary level from earlier on and it must not be forgotten that the first-wave feminists from the beginning of the twentieth century were well aware of the battles that were being fought by their counterparts all over the world, notably in the United Kingdom and the United States. Cf. Pereira 2005.

studies connected to these departments in universities like Minho (as stressed in the Introduction) as well as Coimbra, Aveiro and Porto.

Despite the transdisciplinary approach to the subject, the MA and PhD courses in Feminist Studies in the University of Coimbra were launched by the Anglo-American Studies group, which still coordinates the course and constitutes the majority of its teaching staff. In the assessment made for the *Ex-Aequo* volume about the situation of Women's Studies in Portugal, Maria Irene Ramalho (the scientific coordinator of these programs in Coimbra) argues that the development of women's studies is largely affiliated to an Anglo-Saxon tradition. In addition, she establishes a link between the development of Women's Studies in the United States and the parallel development of the discipline of American Studies (Ramalho 2001: 108–9), explicitly stating that a 'brief overview of the route taken by the two areas in the United States will easily confirm that they have affirmed and consolidated themselves, academically as well as institutionally, in close connection' (*idem*: 109; our translation). In the Portuguese case, Ramalho herself as an Americanist seems to prove a similar route. On the whole, we can say that in Portugal the connection between gender / feminist studies and Literary Studies is certainly more significant in departments of Anglo-American Studies than in other literature departments, particularly Portuguese ones.

Accordingly, we can find the engagement of English Studies with gender and feminist studies in several other Portuguese universities (this includes the American Studies variant of the field, which in Portugal belongs to the same departments or disciplinary sections). As far as the University do Minho is concerned, we gave a detailed overview of the situation in the first part of the chapter. We would only like to stress that the input (teaching and research) given to the field, comes primarily from the English and American Studies Department, when we focus on the Humanities. Nevertheless, it should be highlighted that significant research has been carried out in the Schools of Psychology, Sociology and Media Studies. In the University of Porto an optional introductory course titled 'Introdução aos Estudos Feministas' has been taught to undergraduate students of Humanities programs since 2002. Ana Luísa Amaral, who has created and taught this course up till now, also coordinated from 2004 to 2012 a variant of Women's Studies in the MA in Anglo-American Studies, where several graduate courses were taught on Feminist Studies, feminist utopias and women's writing.

Simultaneously, in the MA in Comparative Literature, a course entitled 'Estudos Feministas e Estudos Queer' has been offered since 2004. All this means that there is a visible body of feminist research being conducted within the Anglo-American department at the University of Porto.²¹

At the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon, and in connection with the teaching and research produced in the Department of Anglo-American Studies, a large and solidly anchored department, there has, at least over the last two decades, been work done with a focus on Women's Studies, namely at postgraduate level, MA, PhD and postdoctoral research. This is also the case in other universities where English and North-American Studies exist as a field of study and / or a department, notably the University of Aveiro and Universidade Nova de Lisboa, although in this last case the development of gender studies is not predominantly linked to English.

4. Some Final Notes as a Conclusion

As this essay tried to demonstrate, the feminist ideals have been present in Portugal since the end of the nineteenth century at the least, and although there is not a widespread awareness of the feminist fights in Portuguese society, the historical legacy is not to be overlooked. Nevertheless, the history of this legacy, actively engaged with society and with bringing about change, reminds us that, as was mentioned in our Introduction, feminism as a critical practice must resist institutionalization, so as not to be made invisible as 'history', that is, as a finished process and a stagnated theory, rather than an engaged critical praxis and discourse.

Although women's and gender studies often are not considered an autonomous academic discipline, which is signalled by the absence of undergraduate courses and the scarcity existing at MA and PhD levels, there is evidence of a continuing strong body of research in gender and women's studies linked to a wide variety of disciplinary fields – from Law to Economics, from Psychology to Sociology, from Education to History, from Literary Studies and the Visual Arts to Linguistics –, which can no longer be ignored.

21 Currently, Ana Luísa Amaral is coordinating an inter-university project which aims at creating a wide international network around the study of *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*, reflecting the variety of national and international research which has been done around the subject.

As we hope has been made clear, the feminist impetus in the Portuguese academy stems as much from the positive contamination that comes through the contact with the feminist empowering movements outside the academy as from the academic discourses that, especially from the 1980s onwards, have started to permeate the social movements themselves.

As far as the Humanities are concerned, and notwithstanding the substantial work that has been produced in gender and women's studies linked to disciplines such as History (cf. Vaquinhas 2002: 147–74) and Philosophy (cf. Joaquim 2001: 60–106), in the field of Literary Studies and Linguistics the major output has come from within departments of English Studies. There is undoubtedly a fruitful relation between Anglicist Studies (in their English and American variant) and gender studies in the Portuguese academy, which have positively 'contaminated' each other over the years, at least over the last two and a half decades, as we have shown, certainly with a clearer incidence in particular locations and more welcoming contexts.

As a final note, we would like to reemphasize the need to de-doxify and de-essentialize the concepts of feminism and gender studies, as a 'dynamic and self-critical response and intervention not a platform [which] perpetually deconstructs the very term around which it is politically organized' (Pollock 1996: XX). We thus defend the future of *feminisms* in the plural, whether within the academy or outside it, firmly anchored in difference and heterogeneity, rather than attempting to represent a single and homologous version of sameness.

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