

INTELLECTUALS, MATERNAL AUTHORITY, AND THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE CREATION OF PORTUGUESE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Intelectuais, autoridade maternal e a participação das mulheres na criação da literatura infantil portuguesa ao final do século XIX

Intelectuales, autoridad maternal y participación de las mujeres en la creación de la literatura infantil portuguesa de finales del siglo XIX

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Abstract: This article aims to investigate gender markers in the European matrices of children's literature and in the participation of women writers and publishers in the creation of Portuguese children's literature in the nineteenth century. The underlying hypothesis is that, in contrast to other fields of literary and didactic production, women found in this literature an area of activity that was less hostile and in which sex and the qualities attributed to the female gender could be seen as advantages. For women intellectuals, this type of production made it possible to address mothers and children as agents of social transformation, while at the same time giving their production a political character and the recognition of their place of authority in debates about education.

Keywords: women intellectuals; motherhood; feminism; Portugal.

Resumo: Este artigo tem como objetivo investigar marcas de gênero em matrizes da literatura infantil europeia e na participação de escritoras e editoras na criação de uma literatura infantil portuguesa no século XIX. A hipótese subjacente é que, em contraste com outros campos da produção literária e didática, as mulheres encontraram nessa literatura uma área de atuação menos hostil e na qual o sexo e as qualidades atribuídas ao gênero feminino poderiam ser vistos como vantagens. Para mulheres intelectuais, esse tipo de produção permitiu dirigir-se às mães e às crianças como agentes de transformação social conferindo, ao mesmo tempo, um caráter político a sua produção e o reconhecimento de um lugar de autoridade nos debates sobre educação.

Palavras-chave: mulheres intelectuais; maternidade; feminismo; Portugal.

Resumen: Este artículo pretende investigar los marcadores de género en las matrices europeas de la literatura infantil y en la participación de escritoras y editoras en la creación de la literatura infantil portuguesa del siglo XIX. La hipótesis subyacente es que, a diferencia de otros campos de producción literaria y didáctica, las mujeres encontraron en esta literatura un ámbito de actividad menos hostil y en el que el sexo y las cualidades atribuidas al género femenino podían considerarse ventajas. Para las intelectuales, este tipo de producción permitía dirigirse a las madres y a los niños como agentes de transformación social, al tiempo que confería a su producción un carácter político y el reconocimiento de su lugar de autoridad en los debates sobre la educación.

Palabras clave: mujeres intelectuales; maternidad; feminismo; Portugal.

INTRODUCTION

Arising at the end of the nineteenth century, children's literature in Portugal differed from that of other European countries, intimately linked as it was to the notion of a civic pedagogy aimed at national transformation. One of the main points of contention centered on education and women's place in society and politics. In the final three decades of the nineteenth century, renowned intellectuals and others who would later rise to prominence grew concerned with the education of children and young people and the need to produce reading material for these stages of life. In contrast to other fields of literary, artistic and educational production, women found in writing, publishing and later, illustration for children's literature, an area of activity and intervention that was not only less hostile, but in which the female sex and gender could even be seen as an advantage. Nevertheless, despite being socially, culturally and politically valued, this type of production was devalued intellectually.

A clear example of this contradiction lies in the text by Eça de Queirós entitled "Christmas Literature", published in February 1881 in his column *Cartas da Inglaterra* (*Letters from England*) in the *Gazeta de Notícias* in Rio de Janeiro. With the British Christmas still fresh in his mind, the author wrote that England possessed "a real literature for children, which has its classics and its innovators, a movement and a market, publishers and geniuses - in no way inferior to our literature of somber men." The examples continued: "France also has a children's literature as rich and useful as England's ... Belgium, Holland, Germany, lavish these books on children; in Denmark, Sweden, they are a glory of literature and one of the treasures of the market." Eça lamented the lack of such books in Portugal, stating that he was certain that children's literature would benefit the country as it would "considerably elevate the level of intellect among us." He suggested that "poor and intelligent ladies could be employed to write these simple stories." (Queirós, 1881).

The scarcity of original publications for young readers of Portuguese until the end of the nineteenth century gave grounds for the allegations that both, Portuguese and Brazilian children's literature were non-existent. These allegations were commonplace in prefaces, which, as Glória Bastos noted, were "a privileged place for authors, translators, adapters and even publishers to set out their different perspectives on children and their education and, usually, based on these two aspects which they regarded as fundamental: the role of books and literature." (Bastos, 1997, p. 12) These debates, as in other countries, included the polemic between the defenders of a realistic and moralizing literature, in line with the legacy of the Enlightenment and Christianity, and those who valued the fantasy and supernatural elements of the oral tradition.

FEMALE MATRICES IN PORTUGUESE-LANGUAGE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

There were several literary matrices of children's literature in Portuguese, two of which stand out due to their strong female presence from the very beginning and their wide circulation through translations and adaptations: fairy tales and a type of prose fiction with a pedagogical and moral character that rejected the fantastical. At the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century in Portugal, the two models were still seen as opposed, even though moralizing literature often made use of fairy tales.

Several studies relativize the pioneering role of Charles Perrault (1628-1703) in adapting and writing fairy tales, highlighting the erasure of female contributions behind the establishment of the genre in Europe. Jack Zipes, among others, emphasizes the role of two authors, Straparola and Basile, who are thought to have lived in Venice in the sixteenth century, and who were translated and widely circulated in seventeenth-century France. These authors would be the source of many of the tales disseminated in the literary salons of Louis XIV's court after being "sanitized" with the removal of the more grotesque or immoral passages and adapted to be fit for the "civilizing process", serving to promote social values and rules according to the desires of the rising classes (Zipes, 2006, p. 32).

The recreation of tales in seventeenth century salons, places of intellectual sociability in which noblewomen played a prominent role, allowed literate women to occupy a prominent place in the construction of the genre that would go on to be exported from France. The publication of some of the tales by Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy (1650-1705), Catherine Bernard (1663-1712) and L'Héritier de Villandon (1664-1734) would even precede those of Perrault, and the first and best known among them, Mme D'Aulnoy, surpassed the author in sales and translations during the eighteenth century. According to Faith Beasley, these writers dealt with "social issues such as marriage and the status of women" and "pushed social commentary to the limits of acceptability using the thick veil of extraordinary fictions." (Beasley, 2000, p. 86) Zipes, who attributes a more subversive use of fairy tales to the *conteuses* from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century compared to male writers, stated that:

If we examine this fairy tale in its historical context, then it becomes evident why it fits sociologically and psychologically into the civilizing process. First, younger women of bourgeois and aristocratic circles were constantly being forced into marriages of convenience with elderly men, who were not always physically appealing or likeable. Second, women had become equated with potential witchlike figures by the end of the seventeenth century, so control of their alleged sexual powers of seduction was linked by church and state to control of diabolical forces. Third, open sexuality had become a clandestine affair; that is, it was to be hidden and privatized because the church had ordained sex without marriage a sin and repulsive (Zipes, 2006, p. 63).

Authors like D'Aulnoy, according to Allison Stedman, were fiercely critical of absolutism. Towards the end of the seventeenth century the salons saw a rapid decline as they lost patrons to Versailles. Furthermore, “the academies that Louis XIV developed [...], which admitted only a select group of male authors and intellectuals, detracted from the patronage and literary influence that the salons had formerly enjoyed and ultimately became a breeding ground for antifeminist sentiment, excluding women writers and intellectuals and criticizing their works” (Stedman, 2005, p. 38).

Despite translations and adaptations in popular printed materials that circulated among all age groups, the concept of fairy tales as children's literature would only be consolidated in the nineteenth century, when after being criticized by the Enlightenment, they were once again valued by the Romantic movement. This does not mean that they were not present at the origin of the moralizing literature aimed at children, which was hugely successful from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. Or even that the genre did not retain common elements with fairy tales when the fantastical was absent, as fairies were replaced by strokes of luck or wealthy benefactors who would reward the good deeds of disadvantaged and honest individuals, for example (Myers, 1991, p. 98).

Two of the most famous female authors of this kind of literature who used everyday episodes to teach values, especially to girls, included adaptations of fairy tales in their books: the English writer Sarah Fielding (1719-1768), with her book *The Governess; or, The Little Female Academy* (1749) and French author Jeanne Marie Leprince de Beaumont (1711-1780), with her *Magasin des enfans, ou Dialogues d'une sage gouvernante avec ses élèves de la première distinction....*(1756), with Beaumont's version of “Beauty and the Beast” being the most widespread in the following centuries.

While the *conteuses* wrote for the sophisticated salon audience, their tales taking the form of parodies and targeting an audience that was not defined by gender nor age group, critically displaying in their stories how politics and court society affected women's lives, female writers like Fielding and Leprince de Beaumont were more conservative and wrote books aimed at educating children and adolescents. Histories of literature have considered both to be the founders of children's literature in their respective countries. This does not mean that these texts had no political function which, although conservative, promoted the value of education and female economic emancipation through the professional activities of writing and teaching, provided by the example set by the authors themselves. In this sense, as Elizabeth Harries points out, the use of fairy tales in Fielding and Beaumont's educational projects demanded “the framing and domesticating gestures that the dialogues provide. Both writers talk about their own tales (and others’) as potentially dangerous, echoing Locke's strictures about ‘Notions of Spirits and Goblins’ that might potentially trouble children's minds”(Harries, 2003, p. 105).

Following the *Magasin des enfants* of 1756, Beaumont published the *Magasin des adolescents* (1760); and the *Magasin ou instructions pour les jeunes dames qui entrent dans le monde, et se marient* (1764). The author's works were a resounding success in Europe, resulting in the publication of numerous editions of both the original and its translations. In Portugal, in addition to the circulation of the French originals, translations of *Magasin des enfants* and *Magasin des adolescentes* were published in the eighteenth century by Father Joaquim Inácio de Frias (1749-1805).

The first book, entitled *Thesouro de meninas, ou Dialogos entre uma sabia aia e suas discípulas. Nos quaes reflectem e fallão, as meninas, segundo o genio, temperamento, e inclinações de cada uma; e representando-se os defeitos da sua idade, se mostra de que modo se podem emendar* (Treasure for girls, or dialogues between a wise nanny and her disciples. In which the girls reflect and talk according to their character, temperament and inclinations; and by representing the faults of their age, it is shown how they can be remedied) was first published in 1774. By 1797 it had been reprinted four times and by 1837, eight. From 1846, a “New edition, adorned with prints, and much improved” was announced, and between 1874 and 1883 at least four editions of the book were published by Viuva Bertrand & C.^a, keeping the “Translator's Prologue” which had been added since the first edition (Frias, 1883).

The translation of the *Magasin des adolescents*, entitled *Thesouro de adultas: ou dialogos entre huma sabia mestra com suas discipulas da primeira distinção* (Treasure for female adults: or dialogues between a wise mistress with her most distinguished disciples), had its first and second Portuguese editions in 1785 and 1818 respectively. The third edition, from 1859, was “amended in some passages in relation to the original” (Leprince de Beaumont, 1859).

It is possible that the Portuguese translator was inspired by the titles of the English translations, which he mentions in his prologue, *The young misses magazine* and *The young ladies magazine*, in order to give the Portuguese editions a more clearly gendered meaning than the originals. Regardless of the titles, Frias questioned the exclusive use for girls in his “Prologue,” explaining that when he translated the book for “the good of the State” in order to give it “illustrious citizens,” he thought that it should “be the first to be given to boys or girls, as long as they are destined to learn letters.” As for the girls, he felt that the work would help “to make them docile, obedient and virtuous: to give them a glorious desire to know, and to instruct them.” In line with the distrust of fairy tales of the time, Frias felt that:

the use of these could be harmful if Madame Leprince did not teach her pupils [...] the difference between a tale and a fable, and between a fable and a history; with which the children learn that a tale is make-believe, [...] without the same harm coming to them as from the nannies' tales, which only serve to disturb their imagination and make them conceive fear of things that are indifferent to them (Frias, 1883, p. VIII).

As well as notions of civility, the book also contained lessons on sacred history, ancient history, geography, and even physics, among other subjects. The reception and circulation of the book, in turn, would influence other translations and originals published throughout the 19th century, such as the three books by Pierre Blanchard with the phrase *Thesouro de meninos* (Boys' treasure) in their title (1813; 1813; 1818). Or even in the books written by José Inácio Roquete, *Thesouro de meninas, ou lições d'uma mãe a sua filha* (Girls' treasure, or a mother's lessons to her daughter) (1855) and *Thesouro da mocidade portuguesa ou a moral em acção* (The Portuguese youth's treasure or morality in action) (1857). In the twentieth century, the title *O Tesouro da Juventude* (Youth's Treasure), an adaptation of the American *The Book of Knowledge*, in turn adapted from the British *The Children's Encyclopedia*, demonstrates that the meanings attributed to the association between the word "tesouro" (treasure) and children's books still had great value for Portuguese-speaking readers.

Interestingly, two of the authors already mentioned in this article, Madame D'Aulnoy and Madame Leprince de Beaumont, both separated from their first husbands on their own initiative, an unusual occurrence for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Like Fielding, for much of their lives they lived off the proceeds of their labor, facilitated by the social capital they possessed. In an unusual approach to intellectual history, Cheryl Turner noted the emergence of two key aspects to the increase in the number of women writers in England at the turn of the eighteenth into the nineteenth century. Firstly, "its function as a source of income for impecunious, literate women without apparently posing a threat to their respectability; and the ascendancy of the middle class among literary women." Secondly, the legitimization of women's voices in didactic literature, which "helped to define certain genres (such as children's books, educational texts, and of course the novel), in which they could hope to be successful and, importantly, earn money" (Turner, 1994, p. 65).

With a few rare exceptions, the financial aspect was decisive for nineteenth-century Portuguese writers. This is not to say, however, that writing in general, and writing for children in particular, did not occupy a fundamental position in the intervention projects of these intellectuals as a cultural mediation of their political and social thought.

MOTHERS, MAIDS AND NANNIES IN PORTUGUESE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

In Portugal, women have been present in children's literature from the very beginning. Whether in actual life, as writers, preface writers, editors, and illustrators, or in the depiction of mothers, handmaids, or nannies, as characters, sources, or recipients of the books. Mothers acted as readers and mediators of the texts, responsible for educating their children according to the best pedagogical principles, while nannies or handmaids acted as bearers of a disappearing oral tradition. In

contrast to France or Brazil, to name two culturally comparable countries, in Portuguese children's literature the mother and nanny figures are never portrayed in conflict (Bérenguier, 2016; Hansen, 2022).

In addition to the reception of ideas and dialogue with the debates taking place in other countries where female authorship was gaining legitimacy in the educational field, constituting what Rebecca Davies labelled “written maternal authority” (Davies, 2014), in Portugal this idea was driven by the notion of the mother-educator and also by the success and dissemination of the literacy method developed by João de Deus, presented in his *Cartilha maternal ou a arte da leitura* (Maternal primer or the art of reading) (1876). The method was propagandized as a faster and more effective way of combating the high rates of illiteracy. According to the author, a more effective literacy method could not be “essentially different from the charming method by which mothers teach us to speak, which is by speaking, teaching us living words, which entertain the spirit, and not dead letters and syllables, as the masters do” (Deus, 1878, p. 2).

Studies of the history of Portuguese children's literature traces its roots back to the end of the nineteenth century, and highlights some founding books: *Contos para a infância* (1877) by Guerra Junqueiro; *Flores da infância* (1880) and *Os contos da mamã* (1883) by Maria Rita Chiappe Cadet; *Contos para os nossos filhos* (1882), by Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho and Gonçalves Crespo; *Contos nacionais para crianças e Jogos e Rimas infantis* (1883) by Francisco Adolfo Coelho; *Tesouro poético da infância* de Antero de Quental (1883), *Às mães e às filhas* (1886) and *Primeiras Leituras* (1889) by Caiel, Alice Pestana's pseudonym. Other women writers appeared in the following decade, such as Margarida de Sequeira who edited a Children's Almanac (1892); Virgínia de Castro e Almeida with *A fada tentadora* (1895) and *Histórias* (1898); Ayora with *Contos Azuis* (1897); Cacilda de Castro with *A bebé e a boneca* (1898) and Ana de Castro Osório with the collection *Para as Crianças* (1897-1913). Ana de Castro Osório and Virgínia de Castro e Almeida continued to produce children's literature for decades, while, at the same time, other authors and collection directors were appearing, such as Maria Velleda, Maria Paula de Azevedo, Emilia de Sousa Costa, Maria O'Neill, Fernanda de Castro, etc. (Barreto, 2002; Bastos, 1997; Hansen, 2016; Pires, 1982).

Mothers, handmaids and nannies appear in different forms in these books. In the preface to the second edition of *Contos para a infância* (Tales for childhood), Guerra Junqueiro said that in order to “educate children it is necessary to love them. ... That's why the great educators, like Froebel, have a kind of maternal virility.” (Junqueiro, 1881) In the preface addressed “To mothers,” Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho and Gonçalves Crespo, expected to “receive encouragement for new works of this nature in the sincere applause of mothers and the friendly welcome of our little readers.” (Carvalho & Crespo, 1882) The project for new books was interrupted by Gonçalves Crespo's untimely death in 1883, but Maria Amália's interest in children's literature persisted. Antero de Quental, in his book's “Annotation”, wrote:

Although this little book is intended exclusively for children, I dedicate it to mothers, and I hope to make it a gift of some value. ... This little volume is therefore intended above all for home reading. Perhaps it wouldn't be out of place in primary schools either: ... I think, with Froebel and João de Deus, (and with reason and nature) that the type of teaching is maternal [...]. If mothers and intelligent teachers welcome this little book, I will applaud myself for this small service to the cause of education. (Quental, 1883, p. V–XV)

Maria Rita Chiappe Cadet dedicated *Flores da infância* (*Flowers of Childhood*) to her pupil François Lallemand, entrusted to her “care by maternal love.” (Cadet, 1880) The poem “Mother,” included in the volume, is dedicated to Marie Lallemand, the book's editor and François' mother. Three years later, the author published *Os Contos da mamã* (*Mommy's Tales*), which suggests the voice of a narrating mother in its title. (Cadet, 1883b) Caiel, in keeping with the title of her book, addresses *mothers and daughters* in her debut work. Curiously, she didn't marry until she was 41 and never had children, but the “written maternal authority” was nevertheless extended to women in general. (Davies, 2014; Varella, 2020) The supreme claim to this authority is expressed in the “biography” of the two-year-old Prince Manuel, included in the *Almanaque das Crianças* (*Children's Almanac*) and written by Margarida de Sequeira: “No one, for the time being, can write his biography. And yet I [...] in my eminently bourgeois simplicity, find the courage to talk about him. The reason is very simple – I am a mother – Mothers always know how to talk about children” (Sequeira, 1892, p. 10).

Maids or nannies appear, for example, in Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho's preface to *A fada tentadora* by Virgínia de Castro e Almeida. While lamenting the scarcity of books for children, the writer states that she considers the moment “disastrous for childhood” due to the disappearance of the “last representatives of successive generations of imaginative old handmaids, possessors of a truly marvelous repertoire of tales and stories for the use of their children [...]” (Carvalho, 1895) Claudia de Campos, in the preface to Ayora's *Contos Azuis* (*Blue Tales*), recalls that: “As a little girl, [...] I would listen avidly to the stories and legends that my nannies or my patient cousin Feliciano would tell me.” (Campos, 1897) Ana de Castro Osório, in a letter to the children's section of the *Branco e Negro* weekly, said she asked everyone “- Do you know stories about fairies and enchantments? - Just like you do when a new maid enters your house ...” (Osório, 1896).

By inserting these references, authors and preface writers were indicating the two types of imagined readers with whom they were in dialogue: the reading mediators, predominantly mothers, and the children themselves.

PORTUGUESE INTELLECTUALS AND WRITING FOR CHILDREN.

More than just “poor and intelligent ladies,” according to Eça de Queirós’ reductionist description, the women who contributed to the creation of Portuguese children's literature were recognized intellectuals, professional writers who, among other things, produced literature for children. Most of these women already had a public profile, writing in newspapers, publishing poetry, novels, literary and social essays, behavioral books and others, in which they set out political ideas and projects that also found expression in children’s literature. Others began their literary careers writing for children and then went on to write for other audiences. Most Portuguese women writers at the end of the nineteenth century, like the men, were polygraphs. Some made clear the place of their writings for children as a form of social and political intervention, claiming the aim was to educate future citizens. Others used rhetorical strategies such as “affected modesty,” expressing their desire to entertain children or using the excuse of a story composed for a specific child which, due to the encouragement from personalities more “authorized” to assess the quality of the work, would then be published. This stance, which was more common in debut works, served to cultivate support from established intellectuals and to avoid associating the writer’s name with a form of literature considered a lesser genre. The arguments of public and private utility were often mixed. In this article, I will highlight five Portuguese authors, the best-known writers of children's literature in the nineteenth century, to briefly analyze the place of children's literature in the biography and work of each one of them.

MARIA RITA CHIAPPE CADET (1835-1885)

A teacher, translator and poet, before writing for children she had already been recognized by critics for her poetry published in periodicals and for two books published in 1870 and 1875. A widow, she was not able to make a living on writing alone and in the mid-1870s, Maria Rita Chiappe Cadet was working as the manager of Mme Lallemand's bookshop and as her son’s tutor. When she wrote her first children’s book, *Flores da infância* (The Flowers of Childhood), published a year before Eça de Queiroz’s chronicle cited at the beginning of this article, Maria Rita fell into the category he referred to as “intelligent and poor ladies”, and perhaps he had already heard about the book when thought about it. (Cadet, 1880) It should be emphasized that “intelligent and poor”, in that context, applied mainly to impoverished women of any class. The extreme economic vulnerability of women, even in the upper classes, was the result of the customs and laws that regulated marriage, property and labor, a theme that appears more or less explicitly in the texts of all the authors cited here. Little is known about the biography of Maria Rita Chiappe Cadet, and even less about

Marie François Lallemand, but some of the founding books of Portuguese children's literature are the result of their co-operation. Cadet devoted the last years of her life entirely to writing for children and had her work published exclusively by Lallemand. There were two books of short stories and eleven plays that formed the first collection of this genre in Portugal, entitled "Teatro Infantil" (Children's Theatre). Lallemand, on the other hand, only appeared as a publisher in Maria Rita's books, ending this activity after the writer's death in 1885.

On its cover, *Flores da Infância* was dedicated "to the Portuguese youth." In her letter to François Adolphe Lallemand, included in the book, Maria Rita says that she is giving it to him for his birthday, "so that these simple and fugitive narratives, like your first years, are not lost from your memory, [...] hoping that they can also serve as entertainment and instruction to other children as they have served you, making you respectable and congenial." In the preface, addressed to her "young readers," the author once again uses modesty, saying of the book and the stories that "they were not written with ambitions of glory or ideas of interest. [...] I have gathered them here so that they may be kept in the memory of those for whom they were improvised, because they all contain good advice for Portuguese children, to whom I also dedicate them." (Cadet, 1880) The alleged lack of interest and improvisation served to free the author from a commitment to the children's literature genre as she promoted her more "serious" books on the back cover of the volume.

In the *Children's Theatre* collection, the objectives were announced by the publisher who claimed credit for the collection.

The publishing house of Madame Marie François Lallemand, always with a view to publishing books of recognized usefulness, and noticing that Portugal lacks books containing short scripts, or children's comedies, suitable to be recited in schools and families, and to develop good diction in children, allowing them to become accustomed to pronouncing words with precision, making them feel at ease and accustomed to speaking in public, without misunderstood shyness, acquiring the manners of society, decided to undertake the publication of small monthly books, containing pieces of the most scrupulous choice, and of the most delicate language, the preparation of which is entrusted to our distinguished writer, Ms. Maria Rita Chiappe Cadet (Lallemand, 1884).

The individualized dedications in all the volumes seem to indicate that books written and published as gifts may have become a business opportunity for both the author and the publisher. The publication of the works was sponsored by figures from the Portuguese elite, mostly women, who commissioned works to give as gifts for some occasion. Sometimes the name of the characters corresponded to that of the child, such as the "very interesting" four-year-old Helena, niece of the Viscountess of

Marinho, to whom the monologue *O segredo de Helena* (Helena's Secret) is dedicated. (Cadet, 1884e) Even though the children were not always named, the name of the adult through whom the author "offered" the book was always emphasized, such as the "distinguished actor José Carlos dos Santos, Knight of St. Thiago [...] recitation teacher at the Royal Conservatory of Lisbon," to whose "female disciples" Cadet dedicates *A mascarada infantil*, or to the daughters of the "Excellencies" Viscountess of Ribeira Brava, Viscountess of Olivais, and D. Eugenia Mendes dos Reis. (Cadet, 1883a, 1884a, 1884b, 1884c, 1884d, 1884e)

MARIA AMÁLIA VAZ DE CARVALHO (1847-1921)

In 1882, when Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho published *Contos para os nossos filhos* (Tales for our children) with her husband, Gonçalves Crespo, the couple had two children and were both well-known writers. The book established the author as a prominent figure in children's literature in Portugal, whose authority on the subject appears in the prefaces she wrote at the request of other authors and, after her death, in the tribute paid by the authoritarian Estado Novo regime (1933-1974) which named the national children's literature prize after Maria Amália. The *Tales*, which came from the "vast literature of the North," were adaptations, so, according to the authors, they were "neither a work of erudition nor a critical work." (Carvalho & Crespo, 1882) It was the ninth book published by the author, who also contributed to widely circulated periodicals in Brazil and Portugal. Her books were reprinted several times, but *Contos para os nossos filhos* reached its tenth edition in 1940 and can be considered her greatest commercial success. From the second edition (1886) onwards, the book was "approved by the Council of Public Instruction for use in primary schools" (Carvalho & Crespo, 1886).

Descended from an impoverished but well-connected aristocratic family, Maria Amália was brought up by her mother and an illiterate nanny. Her marriage to the poet Gonçalves Crespo, born in Brazil to an enslaved woman and taken to Portugal as a teenager by his father, a merchant who wanted him to study at the University of Coimbra, began a very productive phase in the author's life. The couple worked hard and lived modestly, yet Maria Amália ran a well-known and well-frequented literary salon at her home, which several prominent figures referred to. After the death of her husband and the loss of a son in 1883, she continued to work for the rest of her life to provide for her family, as well as maintaining her literary gatherings at home, to which she certainly owes part of her professional recognition. Maria Amália was the first woman to join the Lisbon Academy of Sciences in 1911. Her literary output spanned several genres. Her biography of the *Duque de Palmela* (1898) (Duke of Palmela) is considered her most important work and was patronized by the Duke's descendants, who gave the author a *villa* in Cascais. According to critics, the work reconstructed the

establishment of Liberalism in Portugal and gave Maria Amália a place in the writing of political history in Portugal. She was recognized during her lifetime by personalities from across the political spectrum. She was an important voice in the defense of women's education and financial independence, the main requirement for women not to be subjugated by men. On the other hand, she was against divorce, political participation and believed that men and women had different "natures" and therefore should not have the same professions and roles. Her conservative positions and her anti-feminism, even though the author said she "liked the feminist movement in many ways," became associated with Maria Amália's memory. (Lopes, 2005; Luca & Silva, 2022; A. C. da Silva, 2003)

ALICE PESTANA, CAÏEL (1860-1929)

Known by the pseudonym Caïel, Alice Pestana gradually gained a prominent position among the intellectual elite of the late nineteenth century after her debut book, *Às mães e às filhas* (To Mothers and Daughters) (1886). Born to a bourgeois family, Alice lost her mother at an early age and was sent to live with her grandmother, who ensured that she would have an excellent education, later complemented by exams in various subjects at the National Lyceum in Lisbon. When she asked relatives for financial support for this purpose, she emphasized the need for these studies to guarantee her own independence and pay the bills in the house where she lived with her grandmother and younger brother. Fluent in several languages, she began her career writing articles in English for *The Financial and Mercantil Gazette* in Lisbon. She was an advocate of female education, and her social and pedagogical concerns earned her recognition not only in Portugal, but also in Spain, where she moved after marrying Pedro Blanco Suarez in 1901 (Câmara, 1996; Rosa, 1989).

Às mães e às filhas (1886) was a collection of "short stories" previously published in the magazine *Repúblicas* under the pseudonym "Caïel." According to the author, the incentive for publication was the anonymous appreciation of Tomás Ribeiro, editor of the magazine, reproduced from the first edition of the book. Alice said she was not giving in to "an impulse of personal pride, but to the need to justify, and even justify, the appearance of the book," because it was "a literary debut, unpretentious and modest, with no other aspiration than that all mothers should be able to advise their daughters to read it" (Caïel [Alice Pestana], 1886, pp. 5–6).

The second edition of the book contained opinions from other personalities published in the press, the result of the author's own publicity work. The most prominent names were Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho, Camilo Castelo Branco and Júlio Cesar Machado. It is interesting to note that Tomás Ribeiro, allegedly "responsible" for Alice's courage to publish the book, and alongside Camilo Castelo Branco one of the directors of the magazine *Repúblicas*, was also responsible for Maria

Amália Vaz de Carvalho's literary debut with a poem written twenty years earlier. The publication of Caíel's book, therefore, integrated the author into an important social network. Still in the nineteenth century, the author would write two other books for children, *Primeiras leituras* (First Readings) (1890) and *O Tio Victorino* (Uncle Victorino) (1900), the latter being a collection of booklets published as separate instalments in *Revista Branca, dedicada aos pequenos e aos novos* (White Magazine, dedicated to children and the young), which she created herself. Committed to women's education, Alice Pestana carried out studies on the subject in various countries, some with government support. She campaigned for feminism and pacifism at the turn of the century, joining various associations, and in the twentieth century she dedicated herself to the cause of "delinquent children" (Pestana, 1935).

VIRGÍNIA DE CASTRO E ALMEIDA (1874-1945)

Born to a noble and wealthy family, and the only one of the authors analyzed herein who did not need to write "for a living," Virgínia de Castro e Almeida's long career shows that she never regarded writing as an amateur activity. Virgínia was educated at home and was fluent in several languages. After her literary debut at the end of the 19th century with the children's books *A fada tentadora* (The alluring fairy) (1895) and *Histórias* (Stories) (1898), and after the birth of her three children, she returned to children's literature, directing the "Biblioteca para meus Filhos" (Library for my Children) of Livraria Clássica publishing house, made up of titles authored by Virgínia herself and her husband, agronomist João da Mota Prego. The collection, published between 1907 and 1913, was aimed to science popularization. In the same period, Virgínia published works aimed at wives and mothers, *Como devo governar a minha casa* (How should I manage my household) (1906) and *Como devemos criar e educar os nossos filhos* (How we should bring up and educate our children) (1908), the latter a comprehensive manual based on scientific articles and the works of Froebel and Pestalozzi, and a trilogy aimed at young people, comprising the titles *Terra Bendita* (Blessed Land) (1907), *Trabalho Bendito* (Blessed work) (1908) and *Capital Bendito* (Blessed Capital) (1910).

Following a painful divorce, one of the first after the law was passed in Portugal, she lived abroad for long stretches of time. In 1922, she founded a film production company in Paris. She also translated Portuguese historical sources into French and English. In the 1930s and 40s, Virgínia grew close to the Salazar dictatorship, writing dozens of titles for the National Propaganda Secretariat for the *Pátria* (Homeland) and *Grandes Portugueses* (Great Portuguese Individuals) collections, for children and young people. (Balça, 2007; Ribeiro, 1994) In the last years of her life, she created the character Dona Redonda, about whom she said she aspired to achieve what Lewis Carroll had most likely achieved with his Alice, "to create a work that would have the

effect and influence on Portuguese children that *Alice in Wonderland* had and has on those for whom it was written” (Almeida, 1957).

ANA DE CASTRO OSÓRIO (1872-1935)

The last author highlighted deserves special attention. As well as being an ethnographer, writer, Freemason, feminist publicist and republican, Ana de Castro Osório was also the publisher of all her work for children. She is considered one of the most important figures in Portuguese children's literature and one of the most important intellectuals active on the political and social stage in Portugal in the first decades of the twentieth century. The daughter of a judge and a housewife, she began writing for children as a contributor to the “Histórias para crianças” (Stories for children) section of the weekly magazine *Branco e Negro* in 1896, and soon after she set up her own publishing house, in Setúbal. Her literary debut, like Caiel's and Virginia's, was in children's literature. Like the other writers, Ana's output covers a variety of genres, especially her numerous contributions to periodicals in Brazil and Portugal. However, her work as editor and director of the periodicals *O jornal dos pequeninos* (1907-1908), *A Mulher e a Criança* (1909-1910), *A Mulher Portuguesa* (1912-1913) and *A Semeadora* (1915-1918) should be highlighted. In writing and publishing, her activity expresses the two audiences chosen by the intellectual as the vehicles of her political project: women and children. (Gomes, 2016, p. 101)

A republican and feminist activist, Ana organized civic associations such as the Republican League of Portuguese Women (1908), the Feminist Propaganda Association (1911), the Women's Commission for the Homeland (1914) and the Portuguese Women's Crusade (1916). She advocated equal rights between the sexes, female education and economic independence, restricted suffrage for women, equal pay and divorce law. In 1905, she published *Às mulheres portuguesas* (To Portuguese women), considered to be the first Portuguese feminist manifesto (Esteves, 2008; Silva, 1983).

She began her career publishing Portuguese folklore tales, which she had collected herself, in fascicles that formed the collection *Para as Crianças* (For Children) (1897-1913), the name of the publishing house created for this purpose in 1897. Aimed at the school market, Ana also produced books with a more realistic character, typical of the civic-patriotic literature so valued by educators at the turn of the century, including *A minha Pátria* (My Homeland) (1906), *Uma lição da história* (A lesson from history) (1909), *Lendo e aprendendo* (Reading and learning) (1913), *De como Portugal foi chamado à Guerra* (On how Portugal was called to war) (1918), *Os nossos amigos* (Our friends) (1922). The success of the collection of traditional tales was matched by the re-editions and print runs, in the tens of thousands, of the books approved for prizes and reading books in Portugal and in some Brazilian states.

Some authors suggest that Ana de Castro Osório set up her own publishing house because she was unable to find a publisher interested in publishing her books. It is this author's opinion that the impetus to create a publishing house aimed at a specific niche may have been motivated by economic and political reasons. On the one hand, there was a gap in the market and, on the other, publishing gave the author freedom and control over the means of disseminating her project for the Portuguese nation. This possibility is corroborated by a letter from Ana to her father: "Because we didn't have children's literature, I have already created one with educational, artistic and even traditional value, so my books should sell and make money" (*apud* Neto, 2008, p. 51).

Married to republican journalist Francisco Paulino Gomes de Oliveira (1864-1914), Ana relied on her husband's partnership in publishing ventures and political activism. Appointed consul in São Paulo after the proclamation of the republic in Portugal (1910), Paulino moved with his family to Brazil, where, during his stay, the couple invested in a "Luso-Brazilian Literary Propaganda Company," responsible for publishing some of Ana's books for school use. From Brazil, the author continued to collaborate with Portuguese periodicals and kept the publishing house *Para as Crianças* active. Her stay ended with Paulino's death in 1914, but she remained professionally and politically prolific. On her return to Portugal, she set up a Masonic women's lodge and became involved in efforts to support Portuguese soldiers. In 1919 she founded another publishing house, Lusitânia, through which she published her last children's books in the 1920s, most notably *Felício and Felizarda's Adventurous Journeys to the North Pole* (1922) and *Felício and Felizarda's Adventurous Journeys to Brazil* (1923). Increasingly disappointed with the republic, like her friend Virginia de Castro e Almeida, Ana moved closer to the authoritarian nationalism that would mark the following decades.

FINAL REMARKS

An interest in children's literature and its production was the common thread between some of the most prominent women writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Portugal. All the writers analyzed here were professionals who were recognized even by their male peers, and most of them depended on the income from their writing to support themselves and their families. In the profiles presented, we find some patterns and idiosyncrasies in the trajectories of these intellectuals. Maria Amália, Caiel, Ana and Virginia were educated at home, some by their own mothers. Perhaps for this reason, one of the most frequent themes of their writings was female education with the aim of making women more capable of bringing up children and, in doing so, they claimed a social and political role for themselves and for educated women, although not always explicitly. Most of these authors' writings,

including children's literature, were aimed at women represented in their role as educators in the domestic environment.

Of the writers featured, only Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho was a mother when she started writing for children. Maria Rita Chiappe Cadet and Alice Pestana never had children. Only Alice Pestana and Ana de Castro Osório were openly feminist, but in the turn-of-the-century Portuguese version, women's education was the main objective of feminism. According to the "manifesto" to Portuguese women, "To educate the mother to be the educator of her children; to educate the woman in general to live from herself, and for herself, when she belongs to the enormous legion of those who remain single [...]. This is the true feminism." (Osório, 1905, p. 56) Apart from the last sentence, all the authors would agree with this statement. Motherhood was the trump card for affirming the social place of women as educators, and it was with this argument that Portuguese intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth century, just as Davies said of English women in the previous century, "employed their limited influence to present their own epistemological, political and religious ideas and beliefs" (Davies, 2014, p. 11).

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, we find signs of change, both in the status of children's literature and in the profile of the women who dedicated themselves to it. It was at this time that some of the best-known authors of children's books in Portugal made their literary debut in children's literature. In other words, starting their careers in children's literature did not prevent women writers from being recognized as influential intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century. Moreover, unlike all the writers who preceded them, with the sole exception of Maria Rita Chiappe Cadet who made her debut late in life, Virginia de Castro e Almeida and Ana de Castro Osório dedicated themselves to children's literature until the end of their lives, which meant that children's literature accounted for a significant part of their respective works.

The women who wrote for children at the end of the nineteenth century left a fundamental mark on Portuguese children's literature. They certainly benefited not only from the literary matrices, but also from the symbolic legacy that we can characterize as political, left by their predecessors in other European countries, which took shape in the idea of a "written maternal authority." (Davies, 2014) Like them, their texts for children were part of a project of cultural mediation and it is significant that the target audience was always limited to national children, even if for commercial and financial reasons they desired to reach other markets too. It was in relation to Portuguese children and mothers, perceived as important vectors of national transformation, that the writers analyzed in this text found in children's literature a place to claim authority and political intervention in Portugal.

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