

WOMEN OF GANGSTERS: chronicle of a less-than- musical city _____

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Whenever the subject is violent crime, where outlaws are in charge, women are not the main protagonists. They are not the bosses (or "they don't have their noses on the line", as the group slang would have it), and they don't defend their place in this business through the constant use of guns. Guns, the epitome of phallic symbols, are men's business, and they mark the passage from occasional, peripheral crime to a full-time career in this violent enterprise. However, women are not left out of the world of crime entirely. On the contrary, they play a diversified, complex role in it. Statistically speaking, women generally participate much less than men do in crime. According to a survey we did in a poor neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, women represented less than 25% of the 370 individuals involved in the drug gangs there and only a slightly higher percentage of the some 1,500 individuals involved in either occasional theft ("moonlighting") or full-time careers in theft and robbery.

Such statistics differ little from data in penitentiaries in other countries. In England, for example, men now stand six times greater chance than women of ending up in a penitentiary, while young people (under 21 years of age) run a risk of imprisonment five times greater than people over 21, and working-class individuals are four times more likely to be

put in jail than those from the middle class (Jones, 1981). We can attribute such discrepancies both to the more repressive public policies in relation to poor youth and the pervasive male-chauvinist culture in this institutional context.

According to street slang, the majority of the women "involved" in this business (those who are not actually counted as members of drug or robbery gangs) play a secondary role in such delinquent activities. They specialize in robbing shops and supermarkets, where they take clothing, food, drink, and anything else they can get their hands on to divide up among themselves or share with their men. The older women are more skillful at the art of carrying various kinds of merchandise between their legs and walking around the supermarket as if nothing were going on. They are the so-called "minas¹ de pisa" (or "light-stepping girls"), since they walk around the stores without arousing suspicion. The younger women, who are not as skillful at "stepping light", walk into the stores, fill up shopping bags, and walk right out past the cashiers and security guards, taking their chances. They are known as "baggers". They are not considered thieves, nor do they see themselves as such, since they don't carry guns or get involved in the drug wars. As one bagger put it:

"women go for the goods, but they're afraid when they do.... It's easier for men, since men can pull their guns and start a war. Me, a woman, I'd never do

¹ "Minas": a corruption of *meninas*, or "girls", akin to "chicks".

that, because there aren't any women's gangs² in Rio de Janeiro.

I only met three women who were not thieves per se but had become famous in the poor neighborhood I studied because of their part in criminal activity: old Dadá³, owner of a marijuana drop-off point since the 1960s; Sueli Brazão, a brave thief who fought for her men at knifepoint; and Dona Erinis, mother of a convict, who minded a marijuana hustle for her son. Nearly all of the rest of the women merge into this mass of juvenile delinquents who practice petty theft, shoplifting, picking pockets, etc., either to supplement their low wages (many of them both work and steal) or because they no longer want to work. It is an anonymous mass that is ignored by official crime statistics and never makes newspaper headlines. However, the relationship between women and criminals is extremely complex and interesting and helps explain the division of labor in crime.

Dadá belonged to the underworld in the old days, when the drug traffic was not such a lucrative business, organized at gunpoint. It was a sleepy, almost family business, since it only involved anonymous pushers, a supplier who brought the goods in by truck, and a small, familiar bunch of customers. Dona Dadá was no different from other women who headed families, a common situation in poor Brazilian neighborhoods. With several children by various fathers who she raised by herself, she set up in business without fighting for the spot or having to

kill off her competitors. She and another woman, Dona Maria, sold for the same supplier. But she was different from other mothers of matricentric families in that she was familiar with the underworld - old and battered, she used to force some of her customers to have sex with her before she would give them their drugs. She was a mixture of mother-woman and macho who chooses and imposes his will on his sex partners. When the drug war began in 1977, she gave up selling marijuana and turned her spot over to Zé Pequeno (Little Joe), a famous neighborhood gangster, since deceased. Dona Dadá is still alive and has a number of grandchildren.

Sueli Brazão was a strong, brave, independent woman who became famous in the neighborhood in the seventies. She had neither a permanent hustle nor a permanent man. She did not hesitate to employ violence, robbing and stealing in order to keep her economic independence and support whatever man happened to be with her. She used a stiletto to hold off rival women. She was a samba dancer with a passionate temper. Men and women feared her. In her own way, she warded off the kind of violence that women in the marijuana traffic usually suffer, but the price she paid was to become like the men in their methods for solving disputes. She was a female in her love for men and a male in her way of fighting for them. When street life changed and gunfights became commonplace, Sueli decided to straighten up. She got married and had kids and is now a respectable housewife. Dona Erinis got into the action when the drug trade had already become a synonym for warfare. To keep hold of a marijuana outlet, you could not lower your guard for a minute, and that is how things still are today. A "front man" is obliged to keep all his underlings in line, to keep his eyes peeled, to make sure his competitors are not taking too big a slice of the action by selling more or better goods or acquiring more fire

²The term "gang" ("quadrilha" in Portuguese) is only used when the members carry guns to defend themselves from the police, victims, possible witnesses, and competing robbers and are at war with other gangs. The term is thus not used to designate any other group of individuals that may join together for some criminal act, like the "arrastão", or "dragnet", which is more the result of a momentary, contagious experience, even though it is also performed by a group.

³All names are fictitious

power. He has to do right by his supplier, who is no longer just a man coming around in a truck. Otherwise, he gets ripped off, has his spot taken, or is simply wiped out by competitors from both inside and outside his gang. To carry a gun at all times, to kill or be killed, and to keep constant surveillance over the gang's power are simply everyday concerns for Dona Erinis. She only took charge when her son was arrested, and she did it to guarantee his control over a marijuana outlet. She is also a mixture of mother-woman and macho in her dispute over men. Old and toothless, she even uses a gun to force men to have sex with her. She once kept a cocaine addict at gunpoint, with a lot of coke, to force him to spend an entire weekend with her. He left her place straight for the hospital. Dona Erinis is still in charge of her son's gang, and every day she runs the risk of violent death.

These three masculine women were always referred to by people from the neighborhood as special cases, out of the ordinary. In fact, in their life histories, they deny the more common experiences told by women who take part in the world of crime. Yet they managed to be accepted like this and to become famous in their respective neighborhoods.

Women's involvement usually begins either when they fall in love with criminals or get hooked on drugs. They start to steal in order to help support their boyfriends or to buy dope. They also hide drugs and guns at home and shoplift to give their men fancy clothes and money. However, hanging around a drug outlet and a gang of men means running the risk of getting raped by the boys. The rationale, in the words of some gangs, is a twisted one: "She gave in to my brother," or "She gave in to somebody," so now, "She has to give in to everybody else", whether she likes it or not.

Still, other women are not free from danger, especially the prettier, more coveted ones. To insinuate, to be seductive,

to dress up in such a way as to highlight the beauty of one's body, can be fatal for a woman in the neighborhood. To go out too much and with several different men is interpreted as behavior fitting of a "slut". Some of the "sluts" had been gang-raped by members of the "bad", "heavy", "bloody" gangs. Others had been raped by just one man. But "dykes" are also at risk. One of the more terribly moving interviews was with a lesbian who had been gang-raped by all of the boys from one gang on the same night. This woman left the neighborhood and never returned.

Some of the criminals who were seen in the neighborhood as twisted and cruel became famous, like Maninho Negão ("Little Big Black Brother"), who claims to have raped over a hundred poor, middle-class, and rich women in the course of years of activity as a rapist and thief. Even today, years after being killed, the mention of his name arouses disgust in neighborhood women and probably helped sow hatred of poor youth in the adjacent middle-class neighborhoods, where he used to wait for husbands to leave home before breaking in and raping the women. Maninho Negão, however, was killed in prison as revenge for having murdered a truck driver who furnished dope to local gangs.

Gang members thus keep strict, violent control over women's sexual behavior. Meanwhile, men brag about their own prowess whenever the women they seduce or rape are considered "sluts" and only half-censure each other good-naturedly when one of the guys goes overboard and rapes any other woman for just any reason. The only ones who are considered rapists are the ones who do it as a habit. Only then do the men talk about somebody "raping other men's daughters" or "not respecting families".

While the law of the streets used to radically condemn rape and prescribe exemplary punishment for transgressors, at

a time when family morals still prevailed, nowadays sexual liberation has become so intertwined with rape that, like death, it has become banal⁴. Only habitual rapists are identified and sometimes thrown out of the neighborhood or lynched⁵. The problem is that gangs have abandoned the kind of "respect" for others that used to prevail in the underworld, although some attempts have been made to politicize and maintain a respectable façade for organized crime in Rio de Janeiro.

Yet it is the criminals themselves who are quick to cite seductive women as the cause of feuding among men: "It was a woman who led me into the life of crime." Many of them speak of the en-

⁴Some anthropologists, like Sahlins (1987) and Dumézil (after Sahlins) have suggested a relationship between power that is external to society, which takes on the signs of virility, and the violation of the people, which takes the signs of femininity. Hawaiian chiefs came from the sea and were considered foreign gods; they symbolically received native women during the enthronement rituals. Dumézil, taking the rape of the Sabine women in Roman historical formation, differentiates between a virile, youthful, violent power prevailing in the beginning (*celéritas*) and a mature power based on the peaceful, procreative character of a well-established people (*grávilitas*). The paradoxes and problems of legitimacy and force are present in the utilization of rape of women by a violent yet virile power.

⁵The gang responsible for the most rapings was called the "lower cases", a band of thieves that went to war with the most powerful gang in the neighborhood because of the high cuts taken on valuable stolen goods the "lower cases" brought back to fence. After Zé Pequeno's murder, the "lower cases" took over the hustle after a violent struggle and were nearly all killed off during a subsequent battle with the *Comando Vermelho* (the Red Commando, an organized crime ring) Because of their disrespectful behavior, the "lower cases" were held in low esteem by the community. The Red Commando follows a policy of seeking support from the local population and therefore combats local criminals who mess up the business. It also follows a strict rule of capital punishment for stoolies or those who kill merely out of personal revenge. Death is their punishment for individuals (men, women, and children) who squeal or kill for personal motives, but not for rapists

emies they have made because of women. Everyone knows the story of the fight between Zé Pequeno and Manoel Galinha, the first big fight in the neighborhood, at dances that were held by post-rock hippies. Peace and love as an ideology had already run its course at these dances, and gangs waged violent fights over women. Manoel Galinha was a handsome working man with a beautiful girlfriend, who was coveted by Zé Pequeno, a gang leader who expanded his drug business at the point of a gun. He wanted to "have it all", to take over all the drug outlets in the neighborhood. Zé Pequeno, who was short and ugly, was unsuccessful in winning the woman's heart and took vengeance, humiliating Manoel in front of his girlfriend by shooting him in the buttocks and slapping her around. Manoel decided to organize his own gang and take revenge. A war had been started that would last for several years, involving other gangs even after the main protagonists had been killed. Hundreds of young people died in the process (Zaluar, 1985 and 1992)⁶. While women would appear to be the main bone of contention, they are in fact just one more factor in the significance of relations between men, which is in fact the key issue. The same kind of struggle is waged over weapons, dope, and stolen goods. As one disillusioned young pusher said in an interview: "...dealing dope is a business of getting even. Pushers have always got an eye on other men's goods, even their women. They'll kill just to get another man's woman."

It takes violence for the leader of a drug gang to prevail. Many inexperienced

⁶Many women died in this war from stray bullets or bullets on target. There were young women, girls, even pregnant women killed, often after being tortured because they were suspected of informing or treason, while for others there was no apparent motive. A total of 722 young people were killed in the course of 15 years of warfare.

young men get into warfare because of rivalry over a woman. Dope hustling is thus cited by disillusioned pushers as a place of distrust and animosity, where there is no mutual respect except for the other man's gun.

It is also a sexually charged, virile world. All the men carry guns, and to carry a gun is to "fucking strut" or to "have your iron in your belt". To show off your weapon, or "to pull your gun out", is a common characteristic of such urban outlaws, yet one which can often prove fatal. Instead of the verb to rob, they say "to mount" their victims, used both for mugging people on the streets and for breaking and entering. To kill somebody is to "lay them down". The prime audiences for such displays are apparently the women they are trying to impress with their power and the money in their pockets. Yet these are the first men to be grabbed in police raids. In spite of this notorious fact, the young outlaws never tire of bragging that the "chicks" go for men who carry guns, because they feel more protected. Women confirm this version:

"...so a guy goes and puts a gun in his belt, thinks he's really cool, picks up a whole bunch of women, makes a baby in one of them, and dies overnight. Sometimes the older guys get women involved in this who have nothing to do with the scene, and they think it's all gonna be cool, like it's gonna be like that famous guy with all kinds of women, with silver necklaces, and they're gonna have it easy, go to a nice motel in a fancy car and all that.... Most women like outlaws...because of their guns, they figure if anybody messes with them, they're gonna get it.... I think a guy like this thinks, like, he's got an iron in his belt, he's got a gold chain and a Champion watch and he thinks tomorrow he's gonna have a calculator and I don't know what all, and that he's cool. And then, one fine day, he goes out to rob for his lady, and he gets it."

In this game of seduction, it's important to flaunt fancy clothes and other outward symbols of wealth: a gold chain, car, expenses at motels, etc. That's what shows you have money in your pocket that you can spend any time you want, since "women don't like to rough it". Young men say they go into crime to show off for women and conquer them. However, under this emblem of the femme fatale, womanhood is reduced to a prop for a young man's prestige in the neighborhood: to go to a dance surrounded by women, with money in your pocket, to have everyone greet you, admire you, envy you. Even here, femininity is just one more factor in the competition between men.

Still, womanhood can take on other meanings. When the subject is prison, women are something else, like Amelia, a "true woman" in the eyes of the streetwise carioca of yesteryear, who hated to work and loved samba and a vagabond lifestyle⁷. An outlaw's true woman is one who - together with his mother and sisters - helps him in his hour of need, when he's in prison and needs money, a lawyer, clothing, food, and everything else. Like Amelia, she suffers for her husband, brother, or son. But unlike Amelia, this devoted woman may come to steal, lie, deal drugs, and even kill (or be killed) if necessary in order to help her prisoner, either in collusion with his narcissism or to save his life. However, she cannot remain transfixed in the domestic world of womanly concerns and traditional roles that Amelia never gave up. This woman's struggle is one of life and death.

⁷ "Amelia was a true woman" is the refrain from a famous samba sung for decades in Rio de Janeiro, telling of a woman with no vanity. The meaning of the name Amelia was expanded beyond the song itself and came to designate any woman who stays home without complaining, doing the housework and taking care of the children

While some of these women are blinded to the evil done by the men they are protecting, in the words of the criminals, they may be their last link with morality. Such women represent both protection and authority. They are the only ones who can get some kind of respect from these men⁸. They are sometimes successful in convincing their men to give up their lives of crime. The moral and sentimental discourse I heard from some criminals about giving up crime reflected both the fear that their mothers might find out where the money was coming from and the subsequent shame and worry attached to such a discovery, in addition to the suffering of having a son in prison. In families torn by the indifference of the father figure⁹, for those on the cutting edge between crime and work, mothers can help them stay away from crime, which is otherwise fostered by a lack of dialogue with figures of authority like fathers, teachers, the police, and judges.

⁸ People from the neighborhood and the juvenile delinquents themselves tell a number of stories about these women that are respected because of their moral authority. One of these women, called "tia" ("auntie") by the young men, used to care for a little flower garden in an empty lot they used to play football. In the interviews, many of them reported being careful not to let the ball fall on the flowers.

⁹ It is a mistake to think that the main cause of opting for crime is the lack of a father figure in the family. Of the some 100 people interviewed that were involved in crime, 68% were from complete families. Father figures were lacking in only 27% of the cases. However, aloof, indifferent, or authoritarian fathers are common, a situation which overburdens the mothers with the responsibility for the children's moral upbringing. "My mother was the one that taught me morals," is a common statement in poor neighborhoods. The problem is that fathers, even when they are present, have a bad relationship with the children (both boys and girls), showing indifference and a lack of disposition for dialogue. Even so, one cannot affirm that the problem is situated only in the family. On the contrary. In modern society, parents are not the only ones responsible for the socialization of youth. The moral crisis more institutional than anything else

A careful reading of the interviews revealed the multiple meanings ascribed to femininity by violent outlaws. Yet it also showed the critical view women have of them. As a former woman thief and now respectable housewife told me, the men cannot stand going without: "They think, you've either got it, or you ain't got it, there's no two ways." Neither will they submit to anything or anyone: "They think they can get away with anything." Here may be the crux of the issue: exacerbated male pride and a thirst for unbridled power in a historical context of moral and institutional crisis, with no restraints on the highly lucrative, expanding market for illicit drugs, sought by consumers as part of the good life.

While the indifference of the father figure leads to this unbridled search for goods and power by violent means, feminist psychoanalytical theory is correct in affirming that conventional masculine identity (patriarchal, authoritarian, and chauvinistic), due to the father's negligence in raising children, becomes an unbridled flight from submission to the mother and everything she represents. And in this case, it is the only moral upbringing these young men have had. Feminist psychoanalytical theory is also correct when it suggests that these revolted men are far from being post-conventional subjects, characterized by pluralism and acceptance of and/or conviviality with others, who might be capable of overcoming the dominant system. On the contrary, these young men reproduce the system in various ways, in the way they conceive of masculine identity and relate to their "others", the women.

In this case, to say that the women's moral strength comes from their police power within families (Donzelot, 1977) and that it prevents men from manifesting their revolt is to imply that the drug traffic, gang war, and violent crime are viable alternatives to an unjust society. The powers deriving from the drug traf-

fic are as horrifying as the worst of tyrannies and in no way contribute to the building of a new, more just society. There is an undeniable fact in many Brazilian cities today, particularly Rio de Janeiro, that the drug traffic is destroying poor working families and that the warfare it unleashes is taking the lives of thousands of young people, particularly those of color. For these social groups, this "way out" has been self-destructive. Donzelot's theory belies his male-sexist and intellectually-imperialist character, since it ascribes a negative value to aspects of the feminine experience in the home, including raising children, while it exalts such values as greed, warfare, and violence, results of male aggressiveness and thirst for power which turns women into both objects of avarice and preferential victims.

In the current historical context, revolt in the face of injustice and hypocrisy is lost in acts of violence that escape comprehension by common people and are increasingly attributed to an absolute evil, in which women are nothing more than bit actresses or victims. Hatred is no longer devoted to witches, but to twisted criminals who seem to stop at nothing with their destructive action. Like characters from Dostoevsky, these outlaws have not learned to live with freedom in modern times, in which God no longer exists, moral parameters have weakened, and institutional restraints are unjust, inefficient, or nonexistent, as in the case of the drug trade. What these young men fantasize as absolute independence is actually a death trap, both for them and those around them.

While they are just bit actresses in this modern tragedy, some poor women have succeeded in overcoming the new social roles imposed on them by this economic system of drug traffic and organized crime. Together with children, they resist falling prey to this world of violence. Some reaffirm their protagonism, changing themselves and their lives by choosing conventional feminine roles,

as housewives, wives, and mild-mannered mothers. Others, who are much less common, try to escape from violence by taking up arms themselves. In the process, they lose their femininity and embody male attributes developed in these times of rage. Like Maria Moura, a character from a novel by Rachel de Queiroz who in the violent 18th century experienced the same kind of dilemmas in a struggle that could only be won by plunging into the men's war:

"...No one had ever heard of a woman standing up to a soldier by force. A man like that thinks the only thing women are good for is having conniptions. Well, I'll teach them. And I have the feeling that I'm losing the battle, that I'll have to retreat with my men, but that I'll be firing back as I go. And I'm leaving a trail of blood behind me. I'm going to look for land in Serra dos Padres, and maybe there I can start a new life, me and the boys. With nobody tramping on my neck or hanging me from a hammock hook."

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THE MISFORTUNES OF VICTIMISM

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In this article I intend to analyze feminist discussion of conjugal violence, based on writings published in Brazil in the 1980s¹. Particularly, I want to call attention to the fact that women appear in this literature as passive beings, or victims. Since they are not the protagonists of their own situation or fate, they are considered victims, even when they act against other. This notion leads the discussion into a dilemma, the effects of which are unfavorable for political action to combat violence. "Victimism" is the worst possible route, whether to understand the phenomenon of violence or to encourage substantial changes in inter-gender relations.

The idea of women as "non-constituent subjects" was formulated by Simone de Beauvoir in her pioneering work, a reference for the feminist movement. Marilena Chauí (1985) has recently linked this dimension of feminine reality with the problem of violence. Her article is frequently quoted in books and studies on this issue in Brazil (Azevedo, 1985; SEADE, Conselho Estadual da Condição Feminina, 1987; Centro de Defesa dos Direitos da Mulher, 1981; Felguin and Bordini, 1987). All of these works have drawn on the philosophical conceptualization developed in Chauí's article, but they have abandoned the interesting analysis that the author does on violence practiced among women

and the difficulties they have encountered in promoting mutual solidarity. Before all else, it should be stressed that these studies have a strong activist approach. As one of the researchers states, they assume a "necessary subjectivity" (Azevedo, 1985:13), or a lack of neutrality by those who take such studies as appropriate tools for both denouncing the problem and proposing concrete solutions to it. The political perspective in these articles, books, and research reports draws on Marilena Chauí's concept of violence (1985) to explain situations of violence against women as the result of an overall subordinate condition. By classifying such situations as violence, they go on to demand punishment, without any deeper investigation of the issue.

The book *Mulheres Espancadas - A Violência Denunciada* (Battered Women: A Denunciation of Violence), by Maria Amélia de Azevedo, in addition to illustrating the feminist movement's view, is also cited extensively in other articles and books (Bordini and Felguin, 1987; CECF and SEADE, 1987). In this book, interpersonal violence, particularly that practiced against women, is considered a phenomenon with "multiple determinants", thus negating the argument that defines violence as the result or manifestation of "structural" violence derived from the capitalist system, exploitation, and poverty. The author takes Marilena Chauí's perspective, that violence is a violation of an individual's freedom and right to be the constituent subject of one's own history. This definition allows Azevedo to analyze violence against women as a specific form of interpersonal violence in conjugal relations. This is the object of her book: to understand why men beat their women. For this purpose, the book distinguishes between two sets of factors. The first consists of conditioning factors: oppression perpetrated by the capitalist system, institutions that discriminate against women, male chauvinism, the

¹ As references, I take writings and studies produced by Brazilian feminists in the 1980s: Albano and Montero (1982), Azevedo (1985), Chauí (1985), Felguin et al (1987); Felguin and Bordini (1987); Oliveira, Barsted, and Palva (1984); Sorj and Montero (1985); and SOS-Mulher São Paulo (1980). It is important to note that the vast majority of studies and publications on this subject are from the 1980s, and this was my reason for deciding to comment on them.

effects of differentiated education, etc. In the second set, she defines precipitating factors, such as alcohol and drugs taken by perpetrators in association with violent episodes, as well as stress.

These considerations are followed by the results of a study on 2,316 complaints of batterings filed at fifty police precincts in São Paulo in 1981, thus before the first Police Station for the Protection of Women was created. The statistical breakdown is similar to that from research (Feiguin et al, 1987) on complaints filed at the Police Station for the Protection of Women. Analysis of these data served to establish a profile of the aggressors, their victims, and the alleged motives in complaints of batterings.

The interesting point to be analyzed in Azevedo's book is the way in which the data are interpreted. The overall tone is one of denouncement, and the author frequently cites horrible cases, providing photographs of women with bruises and burns. Another recourse used in the book is to quote folk sayings, the content of which denigrates the female image and justifies the use of violence. One chapter is particularly illustrative: "Give Us This Day Our Daily Violence: Reviewing Some Myths". The author contrasts folk sayings and myths with reality. In other words, as a counterpoint to the myths, she presents results from the data and more general positions regarding abuse of women's physical integrity and violation of their rights. The author's purpose is to describe both the world of relations in which batterings occur and their deeper explanations (or "roots", as she would have it).

Such explanations blame either the "conditioning factors" or the actual behavior of men in their relations with their partners. The author is categorical: while violence should be understood in view of its multiple determinants, it in fact expresses the conflict of interests between genders. There can be no mistake that violence expresses conflict.

The problem is in the notion of conflicting interests. On the one hand are the interests of the dominator: the desire to command and the building of a system that allows this command to become effective and perpetual. On the other hand are the interests of women, which are not clearly defined, since women are submitted to a symbolic violence which eliminates the possibility of their defining their destiny and interests. Symbolic violence, in the author's view, is the equivalent of male chauvinist ideology: a world view formulated by the dominator in order to produce mystification and ensure complacency in the dominated.

"For the dominated, ideology counts more as mystification than as a world view." (Azevedo, 1985:47)

For men, therefore, male chauvinist ideology constitutes a world view; for women, it is pure mystification. That is, when one states that women do not take this ideology as a world view, one gives the idea that they are complacent, not because they agree with or believe in this world view, but because any act or acceptance by the dominated is the result of a powerful cover-up.

Such an approach reveals an attempt to give men exclusive blame for acts of violence. The passage from the ideological system to concrete acts by agents is immediate and transparent when one attributes to this system the cover-up aimed at maintaining command. The underpinnings of this argument, stressing the existence of conditioning and precipitating factors to help explain why not all women are battered, end up falling apart and giving way to an all-encompassing explanation which is incapable of providing answers to questions raised by the author herself.

Another tendency in many feminist statements, studies, and writings is to describe violent relations by constructing a typical relationship (Oliveira, Barsted, and Paiva 1984). Such a relationship is a typically violent marriage.

an example culled from research. The point of departure is the majority data in the profile of agents and relationships. No distinction is made between relationships from different social or ethnic strata or age brackets; nor does the approach consider the variable of whether the couple has children, or whether the children are already grown. The typical characters are as follows: the woman is a housewife, does housework, and has small children; the husband is a worker. The family's social extraction is not clearly defined.

In the typical relationship, all gestures that are considered violent are present: disrespect, humiliation, lack of sexual pleasure, battering, and homicide. The narrative construction of a violent marriage not only embodies all of these elements, it fits them together in such a way as to show that homicide, for example, is the final act in an escalating series of manifestations of disrespect and aggression. There is a kind of evolution of events leading inevitably to murder. In this narrative, the woman is someone who sees her dreams being destroyed day by day, with a mounting fear of her husband and the shame of exposing her domestic situation to relatives and friends. The unavoidable conclusion is that she was incapable of choosing the right man to live with. If she beats the children, it is because violence is "contagious": survival of the fittest is established as an "admissible rule".

The authors clearly intend to use the book as a tool for consciousness-raising. They use language that is easily accessible to the public and resort to exposing and describing the problem in the form of a typical story of a violent marriage. In fact, the aim of exposing such a story using a cross-section in the evolution of events is to alert the public that little daily quarrels and gestures of disrespect can lead a marriage to an extreme situation, the martyrization and/or annihilation of one member of the couple by murder.

The book's aim is not so much to seek out different subtleties in the world of violent marriages as to expose the dangers inherent to behavior and actions that it considers universal. There is a clear perspective of attributing to all violent marriages a set of gestures, expectations, and moral standards for the parties involved. In addition, a distinction is made between the forms of behavior associated with men and women. Men humiliate and attack, while women feel afraid, ashamed, and guilty. Men act, while women feel.

The problem of domestic violence is described and explained by Oliveira, Barsted, and Paiva according to a dualistic, contrasting logic. The family is inscribed in a domain that is isolated from the social sphere. Its code of conduct, which not the same as that of society, follows a series of specific behaviors, reduced to an opposition between men and women. By establishing very rigid limits between domestic and public spheres (and men and women), the authors lose sight of something I consider important for this type of analysis: to capture the ambiguities and tensions in the relations between gender roles. To incorporate the latter perspective helps one understand how the distinct behavioral standards instituted for men and women are expressed in interpersonal relations, that is, that they undergo a specific combinatorial operation in each case of violence considered. In this sense, it is important to show how this combination is carried out, to use a richer perspective to help reveal the variations that violence takes on in different relations: sado-masochism in some couples' sexuality; playful fighting between children; passionate fighting among women in the dispute for a man; punitive battering, etc. In my view, this approach's major contribution is to consider these relationships without establishing a hangman/victim kind of reductive duality, with its implications: that the aggressor is active and

the victim of aggression is passive. My perspective helps understand the relationship between more general standards that orient conduct and behavior per se as a movement, a passage that requires combinations, ambiguities, and therefore diversity. In this movement, there is no place for immediate, mechanical determination leading from the level of standards to that of conduct.

Marilena Chauí would not agree with the descriptions in Azevedo and Oliveira, Barsted, and Paiva. According to the premises in her analysis, there is no place for the victim/hangman duality, or more specifically, for the opposition between passive victim and active hangman. In Chauí's view, to stress victimism in approaching the phenomenon of violence means to ignore that women in family relations act, condemn, demand, and even *aggress*, even when they are in a subordinate condition. To consider such gestures mere reactions or reproductions could help maintain the basic "structure" that allows violence to operate, rather than to stimulate change. In Marilena Chauí's analysis, the concept of violence is a broad one, similar to the feminist idea of oppression. She does not take violence as a transgression of norms and laws. On the contrary, it is an expression of social "normalcy" that turns differences into hierarchical relations for the purpose of domination, exploitation, and oppression. It is also an act that considers the individual a thing, characterizing her/him by inertia, passivity, and silence (Chauí, 1985:35). In order to arrive at this definition, the author draws distinctions between the concepts of violence and relations of force, on the one hand, and between these and the concept of power on the other. Violence is one kind of relationship of force. Both concepts imply the desire to command and the oppression of one social segment by another. The difference lies in the fact that a relationship of force, in its pure state, "is

aimed at its own annihilation as a relationship, by destroying one of the parts" (Chauí, 1985:35). Violence maintains a relationship of command and subjection, through the dominated party's internalization of the dominator's wills and actions.

Chauí considers power "the collective capacity to make decisions concerning the public existence of a collectivity in such a way as to be an expression of justice, a space for recognition of rights, and a guarantee of justice by the law, without coercion" (Chauí, 1985:34). It is not to be confused with specific class interests or levels of command and their occupants. It is important to note that Chauí does not identify power with government, sovereignty, or the state in the Marxist or Weberian sense. The concept is not clear at first glance, but it becomes intelligible when the author stresses that it is "the expression of rights for that part of society which does not wish to be commanded or oppressed" (1985:34). Violence and force are the absence of power. In this sense, they are concepts in which autonomy, and above all the expression of desire for autonomy, are absent. The domain in which they operate is that of heteronomy, the proper place for the relationship between the individual that subjects and the one that is subjected.

Chauí's hypothesis is that women have been constituted heteronomously as subjects. This means taking them as a subjectivity in which there is something essential lacking for the category of subject, namely, autonomy in speaking, thinking, and acting (1985:46):

"Their condition as subjects therefore has the peculiarity of creating them under heteronomy, since they are what they are both **because of** the others (who have defined their 'attributes') and **for** the others (to whom their 'attributes' are addressed)." (Chauí, 1985:48)

A woman's fate is tied to **being for the other** as a function of motherhood. The

author does not consider biological specificity the essence of the female condition. Yet this condition is defined in light of ideological constructs that consider the female body according to her biological attributes and naturalize everything that refers to women. The point of departure for her analysis is thus the notion that the female image was constructed over time, assigning women's place to the private, domestic sphere. The impossibility of acting in the world is defined in terms of an ideology which places women closer to nature: instincts, love, abnegation, and frailty towards others. Due to the socially conformist power of such constructs, women have a peculiar, dramatic "subjectivity": they live for others and desire the same fate for other women. Here lies the key to the argument on violence committed by women against other women: they consent to and reproduce the same standard of dependency for other women. The merit of this article is to show that while women are dependent subjects, without autonomy, this does not result in passive behavior toward others. It is the omniscience (the term is mine) of the meaning of "feminine nature" for women - to care for others as if they were incapable - that makes them agents of violence against themselves as well as against others. Still, there is a problem in the article: there is no indication of how it may be possible for women to free themselves. The duality between autonomy and heteronomy and the distinction between power, violence, and force are elaborated in such a way as to leave no opportunity to conceive of change. Autonomy, as well as Chauí's peculiar concept of power, are ideals that seem to float in space: there are no links between them and the social universe or ideological constructs. They are thus loosely developed ideals. They may or may not serve as references; they may or may not encourage liberation. It is thus not clear in this analysis whether women may some day be

able to free themselves from their situation.

Another problem is that Chauí's broad definition of violence does not allow one to distinguish it from oppression or domination. There are couples which are not violent, but which do not respect each other's autonomy. It is necessary to elaborate a new conceptual framework to deal with the fact that violent relations are special cases of conjugal ones. Domination and discrimination of women also exist in "normal" relations. To provide a more sophisticated understanding of violence should allow one to capture the various ways in which gender relations are currently expressed.

It has been no coincidence that I have concentrated on an analysis of these approaches to violence against women. I seek another understanding to this phenomenon and a more critical perspective as to the political efficacy that the studies by Azevedo and Oliveira (et al) may have. Their resources are insufficient for both analytical and political purposes. And exactly what resources are these? On the one hand, a broad definition of violence as a way of providing for an overall explanation - as if all violent relationships were "essentially" similar. On the other hand, the construction of dualities, like the culpable "macho" versus the female "victim" - to facilitate denouncement and indignation, overlooking the fact that conjugal relationships are partnerships, and that violence can also be a form of communication, albeit a perverse one, between partners.

Recourse to the construction of dualities lays bare the opposition of pairs that includes definition of violence and case description. Autonomy/heteronomy, passivity/activity, male chauvinism/feminism, and man/woman. The opposing pairs include not only contrast, but also conflict; what unites them, explains their coexistence, and makes the perpetuation of domination comprehensi-

ble is the notion of ideology as falsification. The terms cover-up and mystification and the dual contraposition between ideology and reality, all widely used in the books and articles I am analyzing, are catches that allow for the coexistence of the opposing terms. Even Marilena Chauí, who no doubt presents a more sophisticated analysis, goes overboard in her use of the notion of ideology as a mystification, as a instrument for the domination of one pole of society by another. Even without intending to inculpate concrete agents, she reduces domination to a set of falsifying ideas and standards by the dominator to subjugate the dominated and to lead her/him into self-delusion: to think and to feel that she/he is free.

As long as feminist policy continues to resort to a search for universalness and generality in women and their condition and dualities in which the terms relate to each other through an ideological catch, such policy will be incapable of dealing with differences, with plurality. I am increasingly convinced that there is something that cuts across the issue of violence against women and that is being overlooked. In the research I developed on this phenomenon (Gregori, 1988), it became clear that the scenes involving husbands and wives and culminating in aggression are subject to numerous motivations - conflicts in terms of roles that are not fulfilled according to expectations, erotic games, etc. Women take an active part in such scenes. They reveal that aggression functions as a kind of act of communication in which the partners attempt new ways of relating, yet failing to use resources that lead to an agreement, an understanding, or a negotiation of decisions. Yet they launch into such scenes in search of something: pleasure, victimization, or even the recomposition of male and female images and behaviors that have been disrupted in conjugal situations. It is necessary to understand the context in which

violence occurs and the meaning it assumes. It would be inappropriate to state, "You can just bet she did something that irritated him," in the sense of justifying acts of aggression. Such a procedure is the opposite side of the coin, in that it maintains the opposition between aggressor and victim, and devictimizes in order to authorize the use of force. Yet to say, "She asked for it, she didn't avoid it," is to realize the meaning of this. One should inquire to what extent such an understanding allows one to identify this situation, which reoccurs daily, and which keeps women dependent, submissive, and exposed to acts of aggression.

It is necessary to inquire and to counterpose violence. Yet we should not be misled that the best path to follow is that of feeding the duality between the victim and the executioner, in which the former is associated with passivity (or absence of action) and the latter with destructive, dominating activity in the Manichean sense.

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WOMEN'S MANIFESTO AGAINST VIOLENCE

Proposal for Changes in the Brazilian Penal Code

At a moment when the Executive Branch in Brazil is making a series of proposals to change the country's Penal Code, the Brazilian Women's Movement has united in an effort to adjust national legislation to the world's present-day values and needs and the principles written into our 1988 Constitution. After in-depth study and discussion, the Women's Movement hereby proposes the following changes in the Penal Code

1. To legalize abortion.
2. To consider sexual crimes as "crimes against individuals".
3. To broaden the definition of intercourse in rape to include oral and anal intercourse.
4. To create the legal concept of "sexual abuse".
5. To eliminate the following crimes: sexual possession by fraud; lewd behavior using seductive fraud; violent abduction or abduction through fraud; statutory abduction.
6. To eliminate the crime of adultery.
7. To create the legal concept of "family violence".
8. To create the legal concept of "sexual harassment".
9. To regulate reproductive technologies.

Proposals for Changes in the Penal Code

1. Legalization of abortion.

Current Brazilian legislation only allows for abortion in case of rape or if there is no other way to save the woman's life. Nevertheless, we know that some 3 to 4 million illegal abortions are practiced every year in Brazil, resulting in approximately 400 thousand deaths of pregnant women yearly. Middle- and upper-class women have safe, clean abortions in clandestine clinics, and as a result are not exposed to health risks. Meanwhile, poor women risk their very lives, delivering their bodies over to "abortionists", who have no health-care training and do not use proper aseptic techniques. Many poor women even perform abortions on themselves, either by using sharp objects that destroy their uteruses or by taking drugs with ominous side effects. We are aware that INAMPS, the Brazilian Federal health-care system, does thousands of curettages a year following improperly-performed abortions and spends millions of dollars on such surgical interventions. This proves that legal prohibition does not avoid abortions. Abortion must be seen as a public health issue and a right which must be ensured for women. Legalization of abortion has long been demanded by the Women's Movement, and its prohibition should thus be eliminated from the new Penal Code.

2. To consider sexual crimes as "crimes against individuals".

Under the prevailing Penal Code, sexual crimes are included in the chapter concerning "crimes against customs", which means that Brazilian legislation gets moral and religious aspects of sex mixed up with those related to freedom. Women and men are considered less important than social morals. Protection always focuses on society and the family and not on the individual/victim. Therefore, it is essential to transfer such acts to the chapter on "crimes against individuals", since we know that in rape or sexual abuse the victim is a person, a human being - whether a woman or man - and not society or the family.

3. To broaden the definition of intercourse in rape to include oral and anal intercourse (Article 213).

The proposal is to merge the crime of "rape" with that of "violent lewd behavior" and to broaden its meaning. According to the Penal Code at present, rape is "to force a woman into carnal conjugation through fraud or serious threat" and violent lewd behavior is "to use violence or serious threat to force someone to practice or permit to be practiced with him/her a libidinous act other than carnal conjugation." If the feminist proposal is approved, the article will read: "To force a person to have sexual intercourse, using violence or serious threat. Sentence: 6 to 10 years' imprisonment. Proviso: sexual intercourse includes vaginal, anal, and oral intercourse." This broadening of the concept of sexual intercourse is highly important and necessary, since in anal or oral coitus through violence, the victim is just as abused and humiliated as in vaginal coitus. Another innovation is to replace the word "woman" with "person". It is notoriously common for young boys and teenagers and even adult males to be raped anally or orally, and that it is now impossible to convict the perpetrator for such a crime, since prevailing legislation only considers it rape when practiced against women.

4. To create the legal concept of "sexual abuse".

The feminist proposal is to create a new concept for a crime called "sexual abuse", with the following wording: "To force someone to submit to an act of a libidinous nature, other than sexual intercourse. Sentence: one to six years' imprisonment." "The sentence will be increased by one-fourth if the crime has been committed jointly by two or more persons and by one-half if the

person convicted is an ancestor, adoptive father or mother, stepfather or stepmother, uncle or aunt, brother or sister, tutor, guardian, or employer of the victim or has any type of authority over her/him." This means to use force on any person, whether female or male, to practice an act for the purpose of pleasure related to sex without including sexual intercourse per se.

5. Elimination of the following crimes: sexual possession through fraud (Article 215), lewd behavior using fraud (Article 216); seduction (Article 217); violent abduction or abduction through fraud (Article 219); statutory abduction (Articles 220, 221, and 222).

These five crimes should be stricken from our Penal Code, since they are no longer in tune with modern morals in the world.

6. Elimination of adultery as a crime.

Adultery: betrayal, conjugal infidelity. In addition to being very difficult to prove, this accusation is now used very little, and even then it is usually against the woman, as an argument for "defense of honor" (the man's, that is). It should be considered an obsolete concept in our Legal Code. Therefore, the proposal is to eliminate it as a crime and foster mutual respect and consideration as the couple's duty.

7. To create the legal concept of "family violence".

According to Paragraph 8, Article 226, of the 1988 Constitution, "The state will ensure aid for individual members of families and establish measures to discourage violence in internal family relations." Based on this paragraph, a group of Congresswomen with advice from the CFEMEA and feminist attorneys submitted a bill (no. 3381/92) which acknowledges this kind of crime and establishes the respective penalties according to the following definitions:

Family violence: "A standard of conduct associated with abuse of power manifested by the use of physical force, psychological violence, sexual violence, intimidation, or persecution of a member of one's own family." In most cases this type of violence affects powerless members of the family, like women and weaker family members such as children, the elderly, and the sick, but there are also cases of violence against adult men.

Psychological violence: "Any conduct producing serious emotional damage and which is manifested in the following ways: threat, disgrace, discredit, or belittlement of personal value, unreasonable restriction of access to and use of common goods, blackmail, constant surveillance, restrictions of family emotional ties, destruction of objects valued by a family member, or any act intended to restrict personal freedom or development."

Psychological injury or damage: "Any assault on an individual's mental life, including her/his thoughts, feelings, desires, aspirations, achievements, and social conviviality, manifested in the form of paralyzing fear, a feeling of abandonment or despair, feelings of frustration and failure, insecurity and emotional dependency, precariousness, worthlessness, isolation, undermined self-esteem, or similar symptoms."

The proposal includes:

7.1 Rape by spouse or partner: It is common for the husband or partner to force a woman to have sexual intercourse against her will, alleging that he "has the right" and she "the obligation". This is a fallacy. Any sexual act against one's will can be considered violence, and thus crime. The proposal includes sexual intercourse using violence or serious threat - not just vaginal intercourse, but also anal and oral intercourse.

7.2 Incestuous rape: This is rape using authority deriving from family ties.

7.3 Incestuous sexual abuse: Use of authority to abuse a family member by acts aimed at sexual pleasure, other than sexual intercourse per se.

8 Establishment of the legal concept of "sexual harassment".

Sexual harassment can occur in any kind of environment, but it is most common in the workplace. Sexual harassment by employers is well-known. For centuries, bosses have been "making passes" at employees, especially adolescents and young women.

9. Regulation of reproductive technologies.

"Regulation of human reproduction in the laboratory", "surrogate motherhood", "in vitro fertilization", and "test-tube babies" are terms used to designate the legal concept of "regulation of reproductive technology". This area should be included in the future Penal Code, since it is a current reality in the world of medicine, and there has been little discussion about it in psychosocial and legal terms. It deserves reflection by the Women's Movement, since it concerns our intimacy and our bodies as women.

In addition to the above proposals, there are others referring to "battering", "corruption of minors", "trafficking of individuals", "Inducement to sterilization", and the elimination of the term "honest woman" as the only concept of womanhood ensuring the right to certain protective measures from the state. It is essential for such changes to be approved in order for women to achieve full citizenship in Brazil.

SANDRA HARDING

The Instability of Analytical Categories in Feminist Theory

Sandra Harding proposes a critical analysis of the feminist interpretation of History and social relations based on traditional analytical categories such as Marxism and psychoanalysis. With the same critical rigor, the author goes on to expound on two lines of feminist thought: alternative feminism, based on differences between labor and male and female ego and feminism linked to the post-modern idea. In Harding's opinion, these two categories are insufficient to trace a feminist theory of History; as a solution, she points to the peaceful coexistence of feminism with the instability of analytical models.

L'Instabilité des Catégories Analytiques dans la Théorie Féministe

Sandra Harding développe une analyse critique de l'interprétation féministe de l'Histoire et des rapports sociaux, à partir des catégories du marxisme et de la Psychanalyse. Avec la même rigueur scientifique, l'auteur expose deux tendances de la pensée féministe: le féminisme alternatif, fondé sur la différence entre le travail et le moi masculin et féminin, et le féminisme lié à la post-modernité. Pour Harding, ces deux tendances sont insuffisantes pour permettre l'émergence d'une théorie féministe de l'Histoire. Elle suggère, alors, la cohabitation tranquille entre le féminisme et l'instabilité des catégories et modèles d'analyse.

SUSANA BORNÉO FUNCK

Feminism and Utopia

Working with the representation of inter-gender relations in the literature produced by women, Susana Funck analyzes English-language feminist fiction works, including those by Ursula LeGuin, Dorothy Bryant, Joanna Russ, Marge Piercy, and Sally Miller Gearhart. Motherhood, marriage, sexuality, and child care are some of the themes present in the constituent utopias of these narratives, allowing one to foresee a truly new future world for men and women, free from the dictates of patriarchy.

Féminisme et Utopie

En se servant des représentations sur les rapports de sexes présents dans la littérature produite par les femmes, Susana Funck analyse des ouvrages de fiction féministe en langue anglaise, dont ceux de Ursula LeGuin, Dorothy Bryant, Joanna Russ, Marge Piercy et Sally Miller Gearhart. La maternité, le mariage, la sexualité, l'éducation des enfants sont quelques aspects traités par les utopies constitutives de ces récits, pierre de touche d'un monde futur véritablement nouveau pour les hommes et pour les femmes, monde étranger aux règles du patriarcat.

MARIA LUIZA HEILBORN

Gender and Hierarchy, or Adam's Rib Revisited

The author identifies in Louis Dumont's theory of hierarchy the premisses for the symbolic matrix of asymmetry that orders gender relations. The symbolic properties that are peculiar to the constitution of masculin and feminin are phenomena from the hierarchical relationship between genders. Maria Luiza Heilborn then seeks to interpretate how gender asymmetry operates or how sexual difference is reestablished in a social context that denies hierarchy and affirms an egalitarian ideology, as in the case for a serie of heterosexual, gay and lesbian couples, the objet of her study.

Genre et Hiérarchie ou la Côte d'Adam Revisitée

L'auteur identifie dans la théorie de la hiérarchie de Louis Dumont les présupposés de la matrice symbolique de l'asymétrie constitutive des rapports de genre. Les propriétés symboliques particulières du féminin et du masculin sont le résultat des rapports hiérarchiques entre les sexes. Maria Luiza Heilborn cherche, ainsi, à comprendre comment fonctionne l'asymétrie de genre, autrement dit, comment se re-produit la différence sexuelle, dans des contextes qui mettent en cause la hiérarchie au profit d'une approche égalitaire des rapports entre les sexes, comme c'est le cas de quelques couples hétérosexuels et homosexuels masculins et féminins, objet de son étude de cas.

MIRIAM L. MOREIRA LEITE

Historical Sources and Academic Style

Miriam Moreira Leite presents a series of academic works written during the 1980s on the History of Sexuality in Colonial Brazil. Based on this material, consisting mainly of master's dissertations and doctoral theses, many of which have been published in book form, the author analyzes how historical sources were used without a view towards gender in reconstructing practices and representations pertaining to sexuality in colonial Brazil.

Sources Historiques et Style Académique

Miriam Moreira Leite présente une série d'ouvrages académiques, rédigés dans les années 80, autour du thème Histoire et Sexualité au Brésil du temps de la colonie. Il s'agit, pour la plupart, de thèses de maîtrise et doctorat, qui ont fait l'objet de publications. L'auteur se penche sur l'usage qui est fait des sources historiques et qui ne tient pas compte des rapports de genre dans la reconstitution des pratiques et des représentations sur la sexualité dans le Brésil colonial.

TERESA DE LAURETIS

Through the Looking-Glass: Woman, Cinema and Language

Taking as her metaphor the narrative on the building of Zobeide, the city constructed after the image of the dreamed-of woman in *Invisible Cities*, by Italo Calvino, Teresa Lauretis does a critical analysis of the position and representation of women in cinema and language, taking the classical perspectives of Lévi-Strauss' Structural Anthropology, Semiology, traditional Linguistics, and Lacanian Psychoanalysis. In the author's view, this essay goes against the grain of feminist discourse itself.

A Travers le Miroir: femme, cinéma et langage

La métaphore du récit de la construction de Zobeide, ville bâtie sur l'image de la femme rêvée, citée dans *Les Villes Invisibles* de Italo Calvino, sert de prétexte à Teresa Lauretis pour analyser la position et la représentation des femmes dans le cinéma et dans le langage. Pour ce faire, elle se sert de l'approche classique de l'Anthropologie structuraliste de Lévi-Strauss, de la Sémiologie, de la Linguistique traditionnelle et de la Psychanalyse lacanienne. Pour l'auteur, cet essai avance dans le sens contraire du discours féministe.

REBECA DE SOUZA E SILVA

Unwanted Storks: Induced Abortions

In an unusual approach to the theme of induced abortion, Rebeca de Souza e Silva identifies the groups of women that are most prone to taking recourse to this practice, often because pregnancy has resulted from adultery, incest, or rape. She then reports briefly on induced abortions in the world and Brazil, from the perspective of population studies. The author goes on to present a novel interviewing method, the Random Response Technique, providing more realistic results for evaluating incidences of induced abortion, a practice that is frequently omitted under previous interviewing methods. The case study was carried out in Vila Madalena, São Paulo.

Maternité Indésirée: avortement provoqué

Dans une approche peu fréquente du thème de l'avortement provoqué, Rebeca de Souza e Silva identifie les groupes de femmes les plus susceptibles de recourir à cette pratique, notamment lorsque la grossesse est le produit d'adultère, incêste ou viol. Elle présente, tout d'abord, des données concernant la situation de l'avortement dans le monde et au Brésil, puis une nouvelle méthode d'enquête, dont les résultats s'avèrent plus réalistes pour évaluer l'ampleur de l'avortement provoqué, souvent omis dans les réponses. Il s'agit de la TRA (Technique de Réponse au Hasard). L'étude de cas s'est déroulée à Vila Madalena, São Paulo.

ARTICLES

- 7 The Instability of Analytical Categories in Feminist Theory
L'Instabilité des Catégories Analytiques dans la Théorie Féministe
SANDRA HARDING
- 33 Feminism and Utopia
Féminisme et Utopie
SUSANA BORNÉO FUNCK
- 50 Gender and Hierarchy, or Adam's Rib Revisited
Genre et Hiérarchie ou la Côté d'Adam Revisitée
MARIA LUIZA HEILBORN
- 83 Historical Sources and Academic Style
Sources Historiques et Style Académique
MIRIAM L. MOREIRA LEITE
- 96 Through the Looking-Glass: woman, cinema and language
A Travers le Miroir: Femme, cinéma et langage
TERESA DE LAURETIS
- 123 Unwanted Storks: induced abortions
Maternité Indésirée: avortements provoqués
REBECA DE SOUZA E SILVA

DOSSIER ON WOMEN AND VIOLENCE DOSSIER FEMME ET VIOLENCE

- 135 Women of Gangsters: chronicle of a less-than-musical city
Femmes de Bandits: chronique d'une ville moins musicale
ALBA ZALUAR
- 143 The Misfortunes of Victimism
Les Mésaventures de la Victimisation
MARIA FILOMENA GREGORI
- 150 An American Study on Violence in Brazil
Une Etude Américaine sur la Violence au Brésil
JACQUELINE PITANGUY
- 152 The Dishonor of a Patriarchal Society
Le Déshonneur d'une Société Patriarcale
VALERIA LAMEGO
- 155 "Said and Unsaid": reflections on untold narratives in families
"Le Dit et le Non Dit": réflexions sur les récits que les familles ne racontent pas
E. JEAN LANGDON
- 159 Women's Manifesto Against Violence
Manifeste des Femmes Contre la Violence
- 162 Conjugal Violence During Pregnancy
Violence Conjugale Pendant la Grossesse
ELEONORA MENICUCCI DE OLIVEIRA
LUCILA AMARAL CARNEIRO VIANNA
- 166 From Angela Diniz to Daniela Perez: the Pathway of Impunity
De Angela Diniz à Daniela Perez: la trajectoire de l'impunité
MIRIAM PILLAR GROSSI

- 169 Bill Against Family Violence
Proposition de Loi Contre la Violence Familiale
SÍLVIA PIMENTEL
MARIA INÉS VALENTE PIERRO

FEATURES/SPÉCIAL

- 177 Women of Gangsters: chronicle of a less-than-musical city
ALBA ZALUAR
- 184 The Misfortunes of Victimism
MARIA FILOMENA GREGORI
- 190 Women's Manifesto Against Violence
- 192 Abstracts/Résumés
- 195 Contents/Sommaire

BOOK REVIEWS/CRITIQUES DE LIVRES

- 197 Nine Days' Wonder
Feu de Paille
MARIA LYGIA QUARTIM DE MORAES
- 199 Solidarity More Than Sisterhood: the new goal of feminism
Davantage Solidaires que Communautaires: le nouvel objectif du
Féminisme
SANDRA AZERÊDO
- 203 E. Badinter and the Art of Conciliation
E. Badinter ou l'Art de la Conciliation
JOSETTE TRAT
- 206 Ambivalences of Desire
L'Ambivalence du Désir
LENA LAVINAS
- 208 Gender and Planning
Genre et Planification
HELENA BOCAUYVA CUNHA
- 210 Iara, History and Daily Life
Iara, histoire et quotidien
MARCO AURÉLIO GARCIA
- 213 What Makes One a Native of São Paulo?
Qu'est-ce Qui Fait Devenir Paulista?
RITA LAURA SEGATO
- 215 Approaches to Gender in Social History
Approches de Genre dans l'Histoire Sociale
MIRIAM PILLAR GROSSI
- 217 On the Borders of Identities
A la Frontière des Identités
SÓCRATES NOLASCO
- 219 Discourses of Women
Paroles de Femmes
CELI REGINA JARDIM PINTO
- 222 The Bothersome Paradigm of Social Equality
Le Paradigme Gênant de l'Égalité Sociale
SUELY KOFES

227 AGENDA

235 CONTRIBUTORS/COLLABORATEURS