

On women: words and actions

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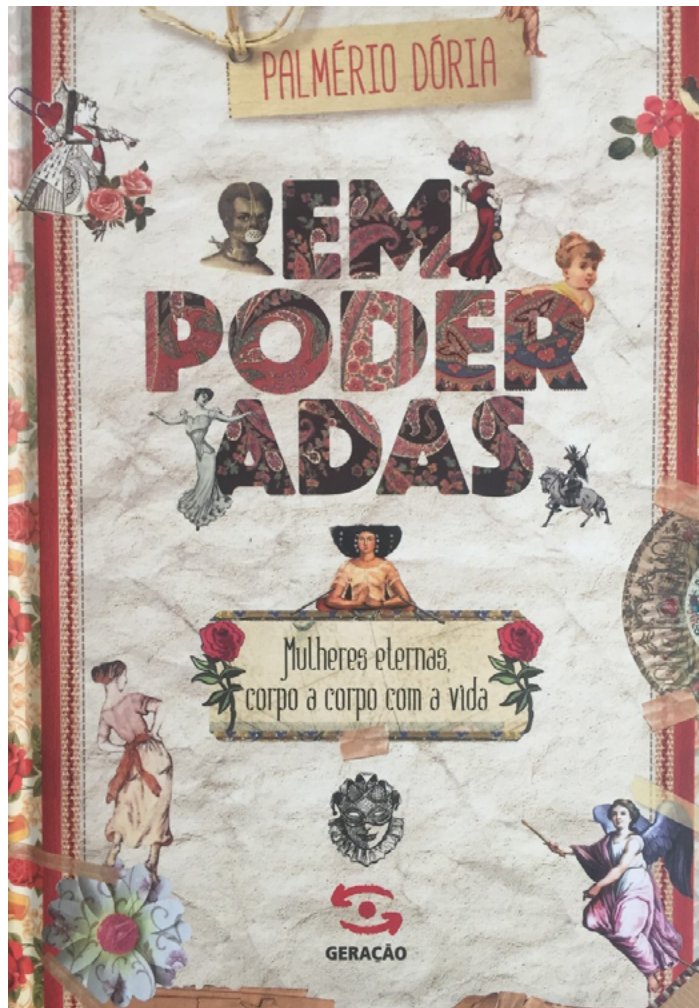
Abstract: This review presents an analysis of the work *Empoderadas – mulheres eternas corpo a corpo*, by Palmério Dória. This book had a key power – women's empire. The result is a smooth flowing and interesting text, which contributed to explain the significance of women's political activism in different social fields. There is a dialogical dynamic that allows the reader to know the interaction of women with the same objectives regardless of the geographical borders separating them.

Keywords: societies; women; activism; politics; discourse.

Resumo: Esta resenha apresenta uma análise da obra *Empoderadas – mulheres eternas corpo a corpo*, de Palmério Dória. O livro possui um poder capital: o império das mulheres. O resultado é um texto fluido e interessante que contribui para explicar a importância do ativismo político feminino nos diferentes campos sociais. Há uma dinâmica dialógica que possibilita conhecer a interação de mulheres com os mesmos objetivos independentemente das fronteiras geográficas que as distanciam.

Palavras-chave: sociedades; mulher; ativismo; política; discurso.

There is a challenging dialogical dynamic in these fields, in the sense of pioneering, knowing, understanding, interpreting it, and, moreover, of enabling the interaction of women with the same objectives regardless of the geographical borders separating them. In this sense, the semantic area of feminism is widened and re-signified considering the historical time, daily lives, common sense, what is real and what is imaginary, creating a kind of network embracing human relations.



1. DÓRIA, Palmério. **Empoderadas: mulheres eternas, corpo a corpo com a vida.** São Paulo: Geração Editorial, 2018.

The graphic project and formatting, developed by Alan Maia (Figure 1), follow the narrative's purpose. The artistical creation is intertwined to the feminine aesthetic and the positions taken by the author to set this universe that is so discussed in interpersonal relations. Women's clothing, lace, portraits, mythological and religious illustrations, flowers, magazine covers, newspaper photographs, posters, ads, cars and posts parade through the pages to complement the thematic sense and to dialogue to the text and readers.

All this textual and illustrative work is materialized and legitimized by the insertion of an excerpt of the Declaration of Human Rights in the book's initial pages, which instigates one to read it.

Em 1789, a Assembleia Constituinte proclamou na Declaração dos Direitos do Homem que todos os homens nascem livres e se mantêm iguais em seus direitos – todavia, o documento não compreendia o status dos judeus, nem dos escravos nas colônias, nem das mulheres em qualquer lugar².

In this historical narrative view, Palmério divides the text into four chapters, which confers more ease to the reading, more plurality of information and knowledge, besides granting a polyphonic character to the construction of women's discourses in the historical context.

In the preface, the journalist uses a fact involving Francisco de Orellana and friar Gaspar Carvajal – a chromist of an expedition at the end of 1539. The author presents the moment when the expeditioners arrive at a women-only indigenous tribe, the *icamiabas* – “women without husbands” in the indigenous language. After that, it makes the reader desperately willing to dive into the unmeasurable level of indigenous culture, its religion, geography... But none of these immersions are themselves an end: there is a concern in identifying the past/present relationship regarding the treatment given to indigenous women and to the struggle they fight to guarantee the fulfillment of rights in the midst of political conflicts.

From indigenous women living close to the Nhamundá River to the warrior Joan of Arc, in France, the book portrays cases of sacred ceremonies, of production of luck charms, of witchcraft, among others, to compose the scenario of women's conditions of life in a paradoxical process, in which, frequently, voices, masculinities and virginity were just smoke screen. The issue was eminently political³. The French military commander Joan of Arc ended up as just one more victim of the Hundred Years' War and of the dominant patriarchalism. Four centuries later, canonized by the pope Benedict XV, she became the patroness of France. There are other feminist mentions that are relevant in the preface: the position taken by Simone de Beauvoir; the content of the Kinsey Reports, by the biologist Alfred Kinsey; biblical passages referring to Eve and Adam, Clare of Assisi, Rita of Cascia, and Virgin Mary.

All this indicators evince the author's perspicacity and observation capacity, such as the use of a discourse backed by information, history, argumentation, and using linguistic resources, such as irony, metaphors, among others. The

2. Ibidem, s/p. Translation: “In 1789, the Constituent Assembly proclaimed in the Declaration of the Rights of Men that all men are born free and equal in their rights – however, the document did not include the status of Jews, or of the slaves in the colonies nor of women anywhere”.

3. Ibidem, s/p.

approximation and integration among literary genres surpasses the possibilities of detailing this theme. There is, in all texts, consistency and cohesion, which allow for the historical-political and religious interpretation exempted of any discursive fragmentation.

The horizon outlined in this perspective places empowered women of those periods in a position that bothers and surprises societies, as a way of aggression to the *status quo*. In the following chapters, the journalist uses a significant resource to set his analytical narrative on feminism: he makes two outlines, one referring to the 1900-1990s, and the other after the 2000s. In the first period, related to the 1900s, Dória elects emblematic female figures. “Ó abre alas” is the theme for presenting one of them, the composer, pianist and conductor Chiquinha Gonzaga.

Em qualquer época dos seus trepidantes 87 anos, entre o Segundo Reinado escravocrata e a República Velha da tardia *belle époque*, nostálgica da escravidão, a compositora, pianista e maestrina Chiquinha Gonzaga (1847-1935) estava fazendo uma revolução⁴.

The social and historical preparation of this fragment provides a meaningful dimension of Chiquinha, ahead of her time and with aspects shaking the foundations of the “holy family”. The presence of this revolutionary reality contributes to the intertextual resource used by the journalist when highlighting the writer Machado de Assis. For him, Machado’s Capitu, in *Dom Casmurro*, emerges as Brazil’s sweetheart: Capitu’s undertow eyes are still booming today⁵. The book, published in the context of Realism, echoes nowadays as a way of reflecting on skilled women, which aim to achieve their goals through confronting strategies of political and ideological oppositions.

For the 1910s, Dória bases himself on the title “*Ave, Palavra!*” (Ave, Word!), of the homonymous work by Guimarães Rosa⁶, and refers to the anarcho-unionist Juana Rouco Buela, an international feminist speaker. It is observed, at this moment, the power of verbal languages and discourses as an arena for interpellation, negotiation, and denunciation at times of repression, back in 1917. Banners, flags, flyers, texts published in journals and books compose the scope of the heterogenous process of ideological voices in the decisive role of breaking with social and economic unfairness, without falling for the pamphleteering discourse, in the midst of police violence. In this sense, the semantic field is widened and favors the reflection on human actions related to women’s rights. Despite the anarchist and revolutionary content, the narrative acquires lightness with analogies to the fashion, film, music fields and to the good strokes of the pair Leolinda Daltro and Bertha Lutz.

Regarding the chapter “*Planeta Pagu*” (Pagu Planet), it exalts the writer Patrícia Galvão (Pagu), who was engaged in the so-called identity causes, which bloom nowadays around the world, in the great political battles⁷. There is a touristic report on this female intellectual who is placed in Brazilian reality as a leading role in the struggle against social prejudices. Here are also highlighted

4. Ibidem, s./p. Translation: “At any moment of her frantic 87 years, between the slavery Brazilian Second Reign and the late belle époque Old Republic, which felt nostalgic of slavery, the composer, pianist and conductor Chiquinha Gonzaga (1847-1935) was performing a revolution”.

5. Ibidem.

6. ROSA, João Guimarães. *Ave, palavra*. São Paulo: José Olympio, 1970.

7. Ibidem, s./p.

Tarsila do Amaral, Anita Malfatti, other names in literature and arts, besides the singer and dancer Louise Smith, and Josephine Baker.

In this same sense, as a “revolutionary model”, the Italian-American Tina Modotti appears – a textile worker, actress in popular theatre, photographer and *femme fatale* of the silent films in the 1920s Hollywood. Using a format based on posts, photographs and many illustrations in the biographical, literary and historical texts, the author lists activist figures, such as Olga Benário, Eros Volúcia, Cecília Meireles, Carlota Queirós, Bidu Sayão, Carmen Miranda, Gilka Machado, Maria Bonita, and Djanira, each of them having their discursive specificities, which involve what is personal and what is social in a continuous movement supported by words and language to keep their notions, ideas, and interlocutions.

Regarding the 1940s, there is a “parade” of actresses, and Dória grants them higher self-esteem, as if transforming them in actresses of their own lives and of the whole society, which goes far beyond reality. The Alagoas doctor Nise da Silveira is highlighted with the characteristics of a creative and visionary woman. Dória reproduces a declaration by the activist regarding herself:

“Não se cura além da conta. Gente curada demais é gente chata. Todo o mundo tem um pouco de loucura. Vou lhes fazer um pedido, vivam a imaginação, pois ela é a nossa realidade mais profunda. Felizmente, eu nunca convivi com pessoas muito ajuizadas”⁸.

Besides the doctor, there are also brave aviator women from the USSR who participated in the Second World War. Closing this 1940s scenario, the journalist indicates Ms. Leocádia (Carlos Prestes’s mother), Clarice Lispector, Lina Bo Bardi, and, in music, Marlene, Emilinha, etc.

It is in the 1950s, in “*Samba-canção do amor demais*”, that one can see Dolores Duran, a singer and song writer who played a major role in music. The author’s tribute is the construction of a text mixing information and poetic verses from songs exalting love, as in “*O negócio é amar*”: “*Tem gente que ama, que vive brigando/ E depois que briga acaba voltando...*” (there are people who love, who are always fighting/ And after fighting they make up...), lyrics that were turned into song by Carlinhos Lyra⁹.

This informative-poetic text receives, at some points, a humoristic effect constructed by Palmério at a subjective sphere, which involves ethical values in attitudes confronting the time’s conservatism and hardships. Dalva and Elizeth Cardoso are seen in radio; Virgínia Lane in theaters; the North-American writer Elizabeth Bishop; as well as Vanja Orico chanting “*Mulher rendeira*”, Bibi Ferreira rising on the stages; Martha Rocha at the beauty podium; and the radio still present with the voice of Ângela Maria; besides the television and newspapers promoting Maria Esther Bueno, Maysa, and Elizeth.

The author’s artistical reach, by announcing a chronological artistical planning, legitimates the use of words in action, moving themselves, in ambiguous function, for the construction of a more effective bond between writer and reader to present the gallery of strong women in worldwide society.

8. Ibidem, s./p. Translation: One cannot heal too much. People that are too much healed are boring people. Everyone has a bit of insanity. I am going to ask you all, experience imagination, for it is our most deep reality. Fortunately, I have never lived with much reasonable people”.

9. Ibidem, s./p.



Figure 2: Leila Diniz faces powerful ones: the emancipation of the female body

In “À prova de escândalos” (Scandal proof), the unfolding of Leila Diniz’s survival to episodes published in the media, echoing on politics related to family, censorship, and coup d’état. *Dário* analyzes Diniz’s case extensively and, in this perspective, the aspects of rebelliousness and courage are extended to Rita Lee, Valentina Tereshkova, and Luz Del Fuego; while, in 1967, the society lives with the persecution to teachers in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, due to discourse dealing with sex in the schools, and with the denounce by Ligia Doutel of an environmental project. These facts are enounced in posts with short and informative texts, and there is concern in warning the reader about problems that are perpetuated in most societies but are combated by audacious women committed to the political cause. In the same linguistic path, other figures are highlighted, such as Thereza Goulart, Carmen da Silva, Maura Cançado, Elis Regina, Niomar Sodré, and Hilda Hilst, in order to construct one more informative page.

Using a historical and factual sequence, the journalist exposes one more resounding social portrait: “*Os anos de 1970*” (The 1970s). The pages dedicated to this period bring, once more, short text, in objective language with shifts in the voices of the author himself, in order to argue, narrate, inform, and corroborate to the ambiguous socio-political scenario of dictatorship times. Guerrilla women, who are strong, hard-workers, and activists once again take on the leading role in the narrative. One can observe, here, Dina da Conceição, Rachel de Queiroz, Zuzu Angel, Arethusa Silve, Lucélia Santos, Mãe Menininha, Jane Fonda, Katharine Graham, Inês Romeu, among others.

The inspiring reportage by Carlos Azevedo, in the *Doçura* magazine, on the murder of the entrepreneur from Minas Gerais Eloísa Ballesteros is the theme for the chapter “*Fera Ferida*” (Wounded Beast), referring to the 1980s political moment. The journalist aims to catalyze the perception of the burst of different male

tempers in cases of feminicide. He strongly criticizes the fact that the magazine *Doçura* was not published in Minas Gerais due to nepotism. After emphasizing feminicide, he goes back to music, with Cláudia; to the TV, with Rose Nogueira and Marta Suplicy; and to politics, with Luiza Erundina, who surprisingly defeats, in her activist path, the movements supporting Paulo Maluf, Orestes Quêrcia, and Jânio Quadros. Moreover, the *caiapó* Indian Tuíra takes the front scene in the narrative: Dória closes the chapter retelling the undisputable historical value of this woman, whose action triggered the 1st Meeting of Indigenous Peoples of Xingu, and, consequently, reinforced this people's fight for the legitimacy of their claim to the land. Joênia Wapichana is also highlighted, the first Brazilian of indigenous origins to graduate in Law and to practice the profession.

Thus, we come, in this empowered female discourse, to “*Os anos 1990*” (The 1990s). With slightly more dense texts, but light in their language, the historical narrative about Getúlio Vargas emerges. The author denounces the significant participation of Alzira Vargas as actress in the political scene. In a subsequent report, in the same analytical-historical line, Rigoberta Menchú is revealed, a Guatemalan indigenous woman, veteran in the fight for human rights. Marina Silva, Marisa Monte, Gisele Bündchen, and Fernanda Montenegro are also inserted in this space, with such care and fond that they captivate readers with different views.

The phrase “*A paz invade o coração de Zilda Arns*” (Peace invaded Zilda Arns's heart) indicates the second outline of the analysis of women in Palmério Dória's book, after the 2000s. The reflections carried out until then reinforce the successfulness of female action on societies, which means that there is a look towards the present in the perspective of internalizing social conflicts involving public policies based on the subjectivity/objectivity dialectical pair.

Between 2000 and 2018, the journalist legitimates the text's biographical-historical content. A paraphrasis is used to maintain a common thematic sense among the various fields explored, but there is also concern in indicating a new meaning, in a polysemic process, aiming for the concatenation of the activists' strategies – as the ones by Zilda Arns in solidary practices, the tenacity of the football player Marta, Maria da Penha confronting the violence against women, Anna Nery's heroism, the militance of the Argentinean Estela de Carlotto, the performances of the actress and teacher Maria Alice Vergueiro on YouTube, as well as the work of Ausonia Donato in the field of health and education.

The author dedicates a significant space, also in the polysemic and paraphrasis rhythm, to talk about ex-president Dilma Rousseff. One can note, at this moment, a verbal concatenation that prioritizes this activist's significant participation in politics and in the democratic process. Dória highlights all the representation of feminine figures in dissonance with the neglect of authorities in relation to rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the opportunity of the Brazilian people to get to know the history of the first women elected president of Brazil.

The winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1972, the Liberian Leymah Gbowee, and the queen of Ndong and Matamba, Njinga a Mbande have also been highlighted by the writer due to their political participation in their respective societies.



Figure 3: Marielle Franco: murdering the body cannot kill ideas: other women will come for them

Throughout the enunciations, Palmério demonstrates analytical mastership, which guarantees one's continuity in reading, being always concerned in keeping the interaction with the reader and the critical tone. The lexical-semantic choices reveal the sense of indignation and exaltation of female strength in the socio-economic scenario.

Regarding more recent facts, there are new posts highlighting Amy Winehouse, Clara Charf, the occupation of schools in Paraná, the death of the Russian hero Major Nadezhda, the prize of the photographer Elvira Alegre, the death of the North-American Naomi Parker, icon of worker women during the 2nd World War, the transsexual Brazilian activist Linn da Quebrada, the athletes Jacqueline Silva and Sandra Pires, the activist Sandra Davis, the episode of racism involving William Waack and the consequent revolt of specially women, and Madonna's reaction to Trump's victory.

In the final chapter, Marielle Franco emerges as a global symbol.

Marielle era negra, pobre, favelada. Neta de um retirante da Paraíba, gostava de se dizer cria da Maré. Foi ali, no bairro com a segunda maior taxa de analfabetismo do Rio, que ela começou a lutar para não virar esteticista¹⁰.

The activist fought firmly against injustice, inequality, and the veiled actions of the public power for the maintenance of the *status quo*. Dória highlights the significant participation of the 38-year sociologist in Brazilian politics, using secure argumentation in the text, with realist particularities and the history of the condition of black people in Brazil. The author adds the opinion of other journalists, of Friar Betto, of the National Brazilian Bishop Conference (CNBB) and, to close the book, verses of the poem "*Memória*" (Memory), by Carlos Drummond de Andrade: "*As coisas lindas,/ muito mais que lindas,/ essas ficarão*"¹¹.

10. Ibidem, s./p. Translation: "Marielle was black, poor, and came from the *favela*. Granddaughter to an immigrant from Paraíba, she liked to say she was the daughter of Maré. It was there, in the neighborhood with the second highest illiteracy rate in Rio de Janeiro, that she started fighting in order not to become a beautician".

11. Ibidem, s./p. Translation: "Things that end,/ more than beautiful things,/ those shall stay".

From *icamiaba* indigenous women to Marielle, the book reveals profiles that set the possibility of eradicating problems regarding women in the Brazilian and global socio-historical arena. Palmério Dória and Alan Maria, in a verbal and aesthetic journey, show the reader the romanticism and the essence of these activists' work, in a design ending on the performance of social struggles. The forceful power of words is revealed in the book throughout information, poetry, journalistic mews, argumentation, and many discursive genres, with the ability to construct meanings capable of masking reality, but also of denouncing and revealing social hardships.

Empoderadas is a book to be read and to enable the recognition of historical traps that can be combated.

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