

## IRENE LISBOA AND LITERARY JOURNALISM ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. SOCIOPOLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN THE PORTUGUESE MAGAZINES *SEARA NOVA* AND *PRESENÇA* (1929–1955)

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### ABSTRACT

Irene Lisboa (1892–1958) was a chronicler or literary journalist who used the voices of real characters or source characters and her own to expose and critique the sociopolitical landscape, drawing from her immersive observations. As anti-regime publications, the magazines *Seara Nova* and *presença, folha de arte e crítica*, sought ways to resist and denounce the idealised portrayal of the country, its people, and, consequently, its women. This study aims to explore the representation of violence against women during the Portuguese dictatorship from a discursive and narrative perspective, using Irene Lisboa's chronicles published in *Seara Nova* and *presença, folha de arte e crítica*, between 1929 and 1955. The findings highlight the author's depiction of a woman victim of violence from the State, her family, and society. The figure Lisboa represents embodies a dual identity. On one hand, she is the bourgeois woman shaped by prejudice and subservience. On the other, she embodies the working-class woman, also grappling with gender and power dynamics that dehumanise her both personally and as a woman. This contrasts sharply with the idealisation promoted by the regime.

### KEYWORDS

Irene Lisboa, Estado Novo, gender violence, literary journalism, chronicle

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## IRENE LISBOA E O JORNALISMO LITERÁRIO NA VIOLÊNCIA CONTRA A MULHER. REPRESENTAÇÃO SOCIOPOLÍTICA NAS REVISTAS PORTUGUESAS *SEARA NOVA* E *PRESENÇA* (1929–1955)

### RESUMO

Irene Lisboa (1892–1958) foi uma cronista, ou jornalista literária, que, a partir da voz de personagens reais ou personagens-fonte e da sua própria voz, apresenta um discurso de denúncia do cenário sociopolítico, resultado da sua posição imersiva nos locais de observação. Como revistas antirregime, e por isso censuradas, a *Seara Nova* e a *presença, folha de arte e crítica*, através dos seus autores, tentaram encontrar meios de resistir e, ao mesmo tempo, denunciar um país, um povo e, conseqüentemente, uma mulher idealizados. Assim, neste estudo, pretende-se compreender a representação da violência contra a mulher durante a ditadura portuguesa, numa perspectiva discursiva e narrativa, a partir do *corpus* cronístico de Irene Lisboa, publicado nas revistas *Seara Nova* e *presença, folha de arte e crítica*, no período entre 1929 e 1955. As conclusões

apontam no sentido de que a autora deixa representada uma mulher vítima de violência exercida pelo Estado, pela família e pela sociedade. A mulher representada por Lisboa é um ser dual. Por um lado, a mulher burguesa que é formada pelo preconceito e pelo servilismo; por outro lado, a mulher do povo, também sujeita às questões de género e de poder que a desumanizam enquanto pessoa e mulher; e ambas longe da mulher idealizada pelo regime.

#### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Irene Lisboa, Estado Novo, violência de género, jornalismo literário, crónica

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The magazines *Seara Nova* and *presença, folha de arte e crítica*<sup>1</sup> (henceforth *presença*) were two crucial resources for communication and opposition to the ideology of the 20th-century Portuguese dictatorship, as platforms for cultural dissemination, markedly different from the situationist periodicals in Portugal (Marques et al., 2019). They were targets of censorship but managed to find alternative means to disclose the non-fictional reality of a country idealised by the regime (Barros, 2022). They conveyed a type of message that contrasted sharply with the anodyne entertainment promoted by the political narrative.

While a large part of the national press either participated in disseminating an unrealistic image of Portuguese women or remained neutral, a few publications resisted, finding ways to circumvent censorship (Tengarrinha, 2016). Marques (1981) notes that in 1933, 33% of periodicals were oppositionist, but by 1945, this number had dwindled to only 1.7%, highlighting the intense pressure exerted by the State on the press.

It was within this context that Irene Lisboa (1892–1958) started publishing. She was a woman writer, teacher, pedagogue, poet, and literary journalist. Seeking to carve out her own voice, Lisboa turned to the chronicle as a means to break free from the stereotypes and ideation imposed on women writers of her time: the notion of the woman confined to the home, as advocated by Salazar (Barros, 2022; Ferro, 2007; Tavares, 2011), or, as Lisboa (1986) ironically noted, relegated to crocheting; Lisboa's writing also delved into the lives of ordinary women, those to whom Maria Lamas (1973) described “life weighs brutally” (p. 50). Lisboa's chronicles, published in independent press outlets, depict this real woman, and it is this portrayal that we aim to explore in this article. It is important to note, as highlighted by Trindade and Soares (2018), that the chronicle “should be understood as a form of literary journalism” (p. 209).

It is still important to address the various dimensions of women's role throughout the lengthy repressive period of the 19th century, shedding light on enduring issues that persist over time. The situation gains further significance when the analysis is based on the sociopolitical representations left by a literary journalist who immerses herself in the social context of her time and exposes the facts that should not be exposed, highlighting the daily lives of anonymous people and their hardships surviving in a country humiliated

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<sup>1</sup> The magazine *presença* is spelt in lowercase to honour the the publication's original title.

by the regime's oppressive policies. This analysis becomes complex because productions and life are surrounded by the subjectivity of emotions, interpretations and language, making them meaningful within a framework of references for both producers and observers (Hall, 1997). This experience is significant due to the multiple layers of meaning used to explain what things represent and to encode, organise, and regulate human conduct, enabling the interpretation of others' actions and the communication of meanings, thereby transforming social experiences into practices of meaning (Hall, 1997). In this context, language (whether written, spoken, or otherwise) plays a crucial role, as it provides meaning to facts by reporting, integrating, and forming systems of representation. Therefore, it is through representations, as a symbolic and referential form, that meaning and everyday usage are attributed to what exists in the outside world. Representation is thus a process that establishes connections between facts, concepts, and signs, integrating them into a coherent whole. It results from a complex interplay of relationships, where thought gathers, organises, orders, integrates, attributes meaning, and reports what it has been given to observe at a particular historical moment (Hall, 1997).

Based on the concept of "representation" and the historical context (social and political), we will analyse the physical, psychological and economic/labour dimensions of violence against women in Lisboa's journalistic work during the Portuguese dictatorship. To do this, we intend to answer the following research question: how is violence against women represented in Lisboa's chronicles, published in the magazines *Seara Nova* and *presença* (1929–1955)? It is therefore important to examine how these representations contribute to the objective of this study: to characterise Lisboa's discourse and narratives concerning violence against women.

This article is structurally divided into four sections, in addition to the introduction and conclusion. The first and second sections present the theoretical framework: the contextualisation of the theme of violence against women, based on the definition of the "chronicle" as part of the *corpus* of literary journalism, the historical context, and an introduction to the civic movements to which Lisboa has been linked. The third section outlines the methodological options deemed most appropriate to this type of study. The fourth section presents the outcomes and their discussion.

## 2. LITERARY JOURNALISM: THE CHRONICLE AS A SOCIOPOLITICAL REPRESENTATION

In the second half of the 19th century, alongside the realism current, a type of approach emerged that, in 1887, Matthew Arnold called "new journalism" (Brake, 1994). We have notable examples of this approach, even in this century, including in Portugal. Such is the case of Queirós, with *Cartas de Inglaterra* (Letters from England) and *Crónicas de Londres* (Chronicles From London), and Ortigão, with *John Bull*, but also Batalha Reis, with *Revista Inglesa* (English Magazine), and Oliveira Martins, with *Inglaterra d'Hoje* (England Today; Rosa, 2019; Santos, 2007; Trindade & Soares, 2018). These authors were inspired by the new forms of journalism produced in England by Stead, Mearns and Booth (Soares, 2011). This trend continued into the 20th century with Irene Lisboa, Maria

Lamas and, earlier, Raul Brandão, whose influence on Lisboa's chronicle work is evident (Carmo, 2020; Morão, 1997). It is not easy to fit Lisboa into a 20th-century artistic current. Her preference for the mundane, the quotidian, and the insignificant aspects of the working classes brings her closer to neo-realism, which, as Cachofel (1964) describes, is a kind of "voluntary realism, a realism of intention" (p. 216).

The path of literary journalism, a form of journalism that asserts itself with the status of literature (journalism as literature), continued throughout the 20th century. The authors presented texts and methods of uncovering facts that aligned with a different approach to journalism. It is from these writer-journalists that the theoretical foundation of literary journalism began to take shape. However, this development has been subject to controversy on an international level, particularly regarding its designation. The Anglo-Portuguese-American current refers to it as "literary journalism" (Sims & Kramer, 1995; Trindade & Soares, 2018), while the Hispanic current prefers the term "narrative journalism" (Galindo & Naranjo, 2016; Herrscher, 2021). In this respect, we concur with Kramer (2005, as cited in Cardoso, 2012) when he argues that there are no differences between the various names. They describe the same thing: a form of journalism that eschews haste, superficiality or strictly journalistic techniques. It is still journalism, but it adopts literary techniques. It is journalism because it is not fictional; it is grounded in research. Journalists immerse themselves in the subject matter and demographics, and they never forget the truth of the facts, as well as their substantiation (Trindade & Soares, 2018); it is literature because it constructs scenes and descriptions, uses and describes characters, uses dialogue and direct speech (Trindade & Soares, 2018), indirect speech and sometimes free indirect speech to narrate its stories. It adopts a point of view that is not constrained by objectivity, provided it never crosses into non-fiction (Trindade & Soares, 2018). As Herrscher (2016) notes, and as Trindade and Soares (2018) affirm, it is journalism that merges the techniques of fiction with the truthfulness of journalism. As Sims and Kramer (1995) point out, literary journalism combines specific facts and events with the author's human presence, which makes all the difference. This approach imbues journalism with an emotional dimension, closeness, and freedom that traditional journalism cannot achieve, yet it has characterised reportage and chronicles since the mid-19th century (Soares, 2021).

The chronicle emerges from the Portuguese and Spanish languages (Galindo & Naranjo, 2016; Soares, 2021; Trindade & Soares, 2018), though its form may have antecedents in what Rotker (1992) identifies as "the French periodical *chronique* of the mid-19th century, especially the *fait divers* of *Le Figaro* from Paris" (p. 106). However, its earliest influence dates back to the historiographical, hybridised texts narrated in the first person by Portuguese humanists such as Fernão Lopes, Pero Vaz de Caminha, and Fernão Mendes Pinto (Morão, 1998; Polónia & Capelão, 2019; Sá, 2005). These early chroniclers were already producing chronicles that recounted the daily lives of others after being internalised and transformed into a narrative by an observer-narrator (Carmo, 2020). However, the intense experience of this narrator is not without emotion, that is, subjectivity. As Guerreiro (1992) and Sá (2005) point out, truth was already understood

at this time as multiple and subjective, just as the chronicles of the 19th century, the chronicles of Irene Lisboa, and contemporary chronicles are multiple and subjective.

Galindo and Naranjo (2016) note that a chronicle is a text narrated in the first person about a current event whose interest extends over time, based on the journalist's investigative immersion in the location, seeking out contentious issues to convey them with emotion. When we talk about a chronicle (e.g., Caparrós, 2012; Galindo & Naranjo, 2016; Herrscher, 2021; Soares, 2021; Trindade & Soares, 2018), we refer to a journalistic text that does not relinquish the truth of the events, characters and scenarios, nor the characteristics of the geographies where it is conceived — Portuguese, Hispanic and African Portuguese-speaking countries (Trindade, 2021). It is a text written with the aim of presenting the chronicler's vision or interpretation of everyday reality, different from news journalism, for example, in the depth of its approach to the subject and, at the same time, its ability to provoke emotions. The chronicle is thus a text that assumes multiple forms, abundant characteristics, varied influences and its own style, yet it retains the ever-present and opinionated voice of the narrator-author and is unconcerned with fragmentation and incompleteness (Caparrós, 2012; Carmo, 2022). Consequently, it is a journalistic text with literary status. In defining a chronicle, what prevails is not so much the content but the journalistic principle, the literary form, and the representation of the everyday world. For Caparrós (2012), for example, "the chronicle tries to show everyone's life (...). It is a way of confronting the information and politics of the world: a way of saying that the world can also be different" (pp. 7, 10).

Lisboa's immersive research on the ground leaves a body of work marked by humanised stories, geographically and demographically defined, based on real and current events subjectivised by the narrator, whose interest extends over time. This is evident in her treatment of physical, psychological, and economic/labour violence against women during the period under analysis. These are first-person narratives featuring non-fictionalised characters with whom the author constructs scenes using dialogue, direct, indirect, and free indirect speech, as well as opinions and criticism, often in an ironic tone, aiming to evoke emotions by denouncing the issues faced by socially disadvantaged individuals, portraying them as worthy heroes despite their suffering.

That is the context of literary journalism. That is also the context of Lisboa's chronicle: a hybrid and diverse text (Herrscher, 2021) that blends journalism and literature (e.g., Sims & Kramer, 1995; Trindade & Soares, 2018) to inform and move the reader within a specific sociopolitical framework.

### **3. IRENE LISBOA: HISTORICAL MOMENT AND CIVIC MOVEMENTS**

Irene Lisboa (1892–1958) was born in rural Arruda dos Vinhos to a troubled relationship between a bourgeois father and a peasant mother. She moved to Lisbon for her studies, initially training as a primary school teacher and later specialising as a nursery school teacher at the Escola Normal in the Portuguese capital. In 1929, she travelled abroad to pursue studies in psychology and pedagogy, studying under Piaget and

Claparède. Even before her international experience, Lisboa was a passionate advocate and theorist of progressive education methods in Portugal. She began her writing career in newspapers and magazines in 1926. However, it was from 1929 onwards that her contributions to periodicals increased significantly, notably to *Seara Nova* from 1929 to 1955 and to *presença* from 1931 to 1935, where she became the first woman to publish. Although her “new literature” did not find widespread readership among the public, it gained significant appreciation from the intellectual elite opposed to the regime. This recognition opened doors for her to certain newspaper and magazine editorial offices. However, her progressive ideas and actions eventually led to her dismissal from the Portuguese education system in 1940. Subsequently, she dedicated herself exclusively to observing the lives of people in both urban and rural settings and to her writing.

Examining the condition of women through the lens of social, political, and communicational realities depicted in periodicals of the time, as Irene Lisboa does, remains a pertinent exercise. This approach considers the voices of lived experiences (Barros, 2022) during an autocratic and anti-liberal period characterised by authoritarianism that resulted in the isolation, censorship, imprisonment, and oppressive control of the press for opposition figures (Tavares, 2011).

The instability of the First Republic (1910–1926) culminated in the coup d'état of 1926, ushering in a period of military dictatorship. The year 1929 marked a turning point for Salazar's image. Through the stabilisation of public finances, he consolidated his power. He initiated a regime of internal propaganda and censorship of newspapers and magazines, ultimately leading to his absolute control (the Portuguese Estado Novo) in 1933, following the approval of the Constitution (Marques, 1981).

Significant opposition struggles marked the 1930s and 1940s. Despite effective censorship, especially before Salazar's election, the regime faced challenges in terms of civic movements and press freedom (Barros, 2022). Civic movements and the general population experienced the repressive measures of an elitist and despotic State, resulting in the deterioration of fundamental social structures, some of which had been previously achieved or were under discussion in earlier decades (Lamas, 1960; Tavares, 2011).

Besides the restriction on freedom of expression, other essential rights, such as the right to vote freely, particularly for women, and the right to divorce and female independence from their husbands, remained unattained (Tavares, 2011). The stagnation, or even regression, regarding women's independence, is reflected in Lisboa's chronicles. Consider, for instance, the following excerpt: “the old liberal spirit, which two good decades ago ( ... ) simplified the lives of many families and changed their mindsets, has already lost its influence” (*Seara Nova*, 1943, Number 808, p. 188).

The development of journalism in Portugal has been a complex process over the decades. As Baptista and Camponez (2022) highlight, “first, we had to imagine journalism” (p. 7). However, during the years of the Portuguese dictatorship, progress in defining a professional career was hindered (Camponez & Oliveira, 2022). Autocratic policies both suppressed and controlled journalism. Simultaneously, they established editorial services and projects aimed at promoting the principles and ideology of the Portuguese

Estado Novo (Serra et al., 2019). Despite these challenges, they also inadvertently encouraged “pockets of resistance” (Baptista & Camponez, 2022, p. 7), allowing for continued struggles, demands, and organisational efforts toward the attainment of rights. From a legal perspective, these rights were only fully realised a few years after the regime fell (Camponez & Oliveira, 2022). In this political climate, certain newspapers and magazines persevered and continued to publish despite censorship, notable among them being *Seara Nova* and *presença*.

With the end of World War II and the victory of the Allies, despite the challenges, opposition activity intensified or underwent reorganisation. Democratic movements began to emerge, advocating for freedom of assembly, association, press, and democratic voting rights (Tavares, 2011). One of the organisations emerging in response to the need to overturn censorship was the Movement of Democratic Unity in 1945, bringing some unrest to the regime and contributing, in 1948, to the great popular mobilisation to support the candidacy of General Norton de Matos (Marques, 1981; Tengarrinha, 2016). Several notable figures stood out in this confrontation, including women who were already engaged in the fight for democracy. Cesina Bermudes, Maria Lamas, Irene Lisboa, Manuela Porto, and Maria Isabel Aboim Inglez are among the women who advocated for the end of prostitution regulation, equal pay for equal work, social assistance, legal equality for all, and universal suffrage (Barradas, 2004, as cited in Tavares, 2011). Their activism led to imprisonment, dismissal from public office, and increased surveillance (Marques, 1981).

Irene Lisboa actively participated in the Movement of Democratic Unity’s struggle for democracy in Portugal during the 1940s. Her involvement is evidenced by her signature on two documents in the Mário Soares Foundation archive (1945, folder 02969.052.001; 1948, folder 10258.009.021) and her contributions to two issues of *Seara Nova* (1945, Numbers 948, 950). Alongside Lisboa, Maria Lamas also emerged as a proficient journalist advocating for women’s rights and documenting their daily lives (Tavares, 2011).

Lisboa’s activism in defending freedom and opposing censorship did not lead to her imprisonment. Still, it did lead to the deprivation of her freedom of expression, which is one of the primary objectives of censorship (Barros, 2022). Additionally, she endured home visits and defamation and was ultimately expelled from the Portuguese education system in 1940. Regarding how Lisboa is portrayed, consider the testimony of Gomes Ferreira (1978/1991):

they didn’t hesitate to accuse her of defying all established orders ( ... ), as well as other unspeakable shameless acts. Certain police or parallel circles even chose her as a symbol. And I read ( ... ) a pamphlet stuck on a street corner, calling her Irene Moscow and blaming her for a thousand and one aggravations of all kinds of mud. (p. 25)

As gleaned from the words of Gomes Ferreira (1978/1991), by challenging “the established orders” (p. 25), Lisboa pleads for the right to have a voice in society, politics,

and literature — a voice that, because it was a woman's, was seen as transgressive and a symbol of “unspeakable shameless acts”. It was the author herself who, disappointed, said, “to resign myself to silence, I think, was my duty” (Lisboa, 1974/1999, p. 201).

The 1950s marked the strengthening of Salazar's autocratic regime's repressive apparatus. Many individuals were sent to prison or into exile (Tavares, 2011), but ordinary people also endured the suffering inflicted by the policies of the Estado Novo. Reflecting on the sociopolitical context of the era, the chronicler remarks, “the persecuted climbed over that railing! But we had to beat them up and let them get away ( ... ). Cleaning up the square was what was needed. And the policemen took pleasure in their feats, as was to be expected” (Lisboa, 1941, pp. 37–38).

Lisboa thus portrays situations of persecution and violence through the use of irony, particularly when addressing the regime and bourgeois prejudices. Through this ironic tone, the reader is invited to share, in a bitter way (Morão, 1983), the observed situations covertly denouncing persecution, violence, and injustice. Lisboa hoped that censorship would not interfere with the text through this resource, a common strategy at the time (Tengarrinha, 2016). Lisboa defines irony in a poem published in *Seara Nova* in 1936, saying: “this graceful thing/that makes us laugh/at what makes us want to cry” (Number 487, p. 103).

Violence (physical, psychological, and economic/labour) against women is seen as the outcome of power relations between men, the State, and women (Tavares, 2011). These relationships are rooted in inequalities, reinforced by the ideology of a patriarchal and sexist regime, promoted by a press hostage to this regime and ingrained in the cultural mindset. It is violence perpetuated in the silence of the family, the same family that the regime abstractly idealises as the natural model of society. However, as Freire (1978) emphasises, “the human person is something tangible and not an abstraction” (p. 39). Hence, Lisboa aims to depict this “life-world” (Schutz, 1970/2012), rejecting the notion that injustice is an inevitable fate, impervious to change, and using communication as a catalyst for this change. Her progressive world view precludes her from passively accepting the prejudice, discrimination, and violence inflicted upon women, conceived and perpetuated by sexist discourses and manifested in real actions (Freire, 1992), which contradict her sense of justice. This stance is also reflected in Lamas's views (1960). The journalist asserts that women are considered inferior to men and burdened with humiliation, sacrifice, and injustice, both as mothers and as workers. This challenges the slogan “women for the home”, which was common in the 1940s magazines. The women of the people, those whom Lisboa (1939/1992) described in 1939 as “women who shape destinies” (p. 75), are involved in everything, with no time or opportunity to be “homemakers”.

This reality is evident in Lisboa's hybrid texts, presented in a manner that opposes the traditional canon or, as the author expresses it in a 1937 poem, through a “new, new, new, new” (Lisboa, 1937/1991, p. 296) mode of writing, which the author cannot precisely label, but which studies designate as literary journalism (e.g., Galindo & Naranjo, 2016; Soares, 2021; Trindade & Soares, 2018).



#### 4. METHODOLOGICAL OPTIONS

This article adopts a longitudinal case study design (Stake, 2007) with a qualitative/inductive approach. The selection of this approach is based on the exploratory nature and non-conclusive intention of the study, which seeks to understand and interpret violence against women in a specific historical period through the sociopolitical representation provided by the author in her chronicles (Table 1).

ELEMENTS OF THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CONDITION OF WOMEN IN IRENE LISBOA'S CHRONICLES			
Bourgeois woman from the city	Controlled by father, husband, State.	Prejudiced; servile; homemaker; frivolous; compliant.	Psychological violence.
Woman of the people from the city and the countryside	Controlled by father, husband, State.	Brutalised; physically marked; exhausted; exploited; stigmatised by fear and shame.	Physical violence; psychological violence; economic/labour violence.

Table 1. The interplay of gender, social class, and power concerning violence against women in Irene Lisboa's chronicles

This approach was deemed to offer insights into addressing the question: how is violence against women portrayed in Irene Lisboa's chronicles, published in the magazines *Seara Nova* and *presença* (1929–1955)? Thus, it fulfils the defined objective: to characterise the author's discourse regarding violence against women.

Critical discourse and narrative analysis techniques were employed to analyse the corpus representing gender violence and support the selected approach. Critical discourse analysis contributes to (a) understanding the political and social conditions in which the author wrote her chronicles and their connection to critical thinking and (b) identifying the ideology prevailing in the analysed texts and how Lisboa challenges established power through the critical tone of discursive strategies: linguistic and rhetorical choices, use of metaphors, irony, among others, to influence the reader's perception of the subject (Neuendorf, 2002; van Dijk, 2014; 2017; Wodak, 2001). Narrative analysis, in turn, enables the identification of characters and understanding of their stories in a social context (Gunter, 2000; Hijman, 1996), based on the principle that *ethos* manifests in argumentative and narrative discourses and all verbal exchanges (Amossy, 1999/2005). Both approaches make it possible to understand the implicit meanings in the discourses and narratives that give significance to the violent daily lives of the women represented by the author in the social, historical, and cultural context in which the stories are told and how these contexts influence the form of storytelling.

To accomplish this, we mapped the chronicler's work published in the two magazines, totalling 261 texts (this number corroborates Morão's study in 1983 regarding *Seara Nova* and the studies by Azevedo in 2010 and Barbosa in 2018a regarding *presença*). We identified a corpus of 103 texts in *Seara Nova* and 18 in *presença*, totalling 121 texts that exhibit the characteristics of a chronicle. We then selected and analysed the chronicles that addressed the subject, supplemented by others published in books (Table 2).

	YEAR	TITLE	JOURNAL	MAGAZINE NUMBER	BOOK
1	1933	“Mulheres” (Women)	<i>presença</i>	39	-
2	1935	“Três Trechos do Livro <i>Solidão</i> ” (Three Extracts From the Book Solitude)	<i>presença</i>	53–54	-
3	1937	“Jogo de Disparates” (Game of Nonsense)	<i>Seara Nova</i>	537	-
4	1938	“Momentos” (Moments)	<i>Seara Nova</i>	552	-
5	1939	“Elevador do Lavra” (Lavra Funicular)	<i>Seara Nova</i>	627	-
6	1941	“Pelas Estradas” (On the Roads)	<i>Seara Nova</i>	700	-
7	1941	“Mulher-a-Dias” (Cleaning Lady)	<i>Seara Nova</i>	720	-
8	1942	“Notas” (Notes)	<i>Seara Nova</i>	799	-
9	1942	“Um Dito” (A Saying)	-	-	<i>Esta Cidade!</i> (This City!)
10	1960	“O Forno” (The Oven)	-	-	<i>Crónicas da Serra</i> (Chronicles of the Mountains; posthumous work; Lisboa, 1960/1997)
11	(from the late 1940s and early 1950s)	“Justiça de Aldeia” (Village Justice)	-	-	
12		“De Volta à Serra” (Back to the Mountains)	-	-	
13		“Dia de Santa Cruz” (Santa Cruz Day)	-	-	

Table 2. Chronicles examined regarding violence against women

For this paper, we examined eight chronicles (see Table 2) from the magazines *Seara Nova* and *presença*, as they distinctly illustrate physical, psychological, and economic/labour violence against women. The five chronicles selected and published in the books *Esta Cidade!* (This City!), and *Crónicas da Serra* (Chronicles of the Mountains), as referenced in Table 2, provide a structure and elements on the theme that, on the one hand, complement the analysis regarding violence against women in the city (Chronicle 9) and allow for additional examination of the representation of violence against women in the countryside (Chronicles 10–13). The chronicles, also listed in Table 2, referenced from the 1960 work, were written in the late 1940s and early 1950s, coinciding with Lisboa’s time spent in Serra da Estrela (Ferreira, 1978). However, they were only published posthumously. Additionally, two documents from the Mário Soares Foundation and two notes from *Seara Nova* about her involvement in the Movement of Democratic Unity were consulted to provide context for the author’s civic engagement.

## 5. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Introducing the perspective of a writer and literary journalist who openly discusses, during a dictatorship, the actual issues faced by Portuguese women that are typically concealed (Barros, 2022) can contribute to dismantling the feminine ideal promoted by the regime. The notion of women confined to the home while men engage in public life (Ferro, 2007), advocated by Salazar, is a deceptive construct imposed rather than freely chosen (Fuentes, 2008). Lisboa seeks to counter this fictitious portrayal, constructed around the notion of a liberated and content woman, sanctioned by the regime and

perpetuated by the press aligned with the Estado Novo. In her chronicles for *Seara Nova* and *presença*, she portrays a woman with a contrasting identity, condemned by the State, her father, and her husband. A woman who rejects the role of being the “homemaker” confined within the comforts of a house she often does not even own, with real-life stories that the author collects from and within everyday reality (Schutz, 1970/2012) and then transforms into representation (Hall, 1997).

The most persistent themes in Lisboa’s work are poverty, harsh working conditions, and lack of freedom (Carmo, 2020, 2022). As early as 1937, before her dismissal from her job, Lisboa highlights the distinction between being a woman of the people and a woman of the bourgeoisie in a narrative where the voices of the narrator and the character intertwine. The author recounts: “of poor Luísa, who worked herself to death at the *washbasin*, as she used to say, washing clothes until late at night, clothes of shabby, penniless, and inhumane women” (*Seara Nova*, 1937, Number 537, p. 200). We observe the weight of the adjective “poor” and the verbal expression “worked herself to death”, as well as the expression “until late at night”, which indicate the inhumanity faced by the working-class woman. Also, note the use of free indirect speech in the expression “clothes of shabby, penniless, and inhumane women”, which not only brings the narrator closer to the character but also highlights the exploited woman and the woman who exploits, ironically referring to the gap between social classes. In addition to depicting the harsh labour and social conditions faced by women both inside and outside the home, in urban and rural areas, Lisboa portrays the brutality inflicted upon working-class women within the family and the lack of conditions that the regime insists on concealing, contrasting it with the superficiality and prejudice of bourgeois women who conform to the regime.

The narrator’s voice, a characteristic feature of Lisboa’s chronicles, intentionally guides her to manipulate history (Lubbock, 1936/2006), not to falsify it, but to represent reality directly and *realistically* (Lisboa, 1974/1999). On the other hand, in some fragments, the narrator distances herself, almost disappearing (Lubbock, 1936/2006), leaving the characters apparently in control of the narrative. Only apparently, because vigilance remains to ensure that emotions and empathy, authorial tools of literary journalism (Trindade & Soares, 2018), do not create fiction and respect the truth. When emotions arise strongly, the narrator finds a way to interrupt or even cancel them out, using descriptions of the surrounding nature or other literary resources. This vigilant and self-reflexive approach, grounded in immersion in reality, and the hybrid format encompassing elements of the chronicle, reportage, diary entry, and short story, often fragmented and subject to constant revision, are defining features of Lisboa’s periodic work (Carmo, 2022) and, as we have observed, of literary journalism in general. The narrator-author sometimes relies on characters to critique or expose reality. This choice to give voice to the characters is a defining feature of Lisboa’s chronicles and literary journalism. While it is less pronounced in *presença*, it is more prominently displayed in *Seara Nova* and in the chronicles compiled in books, many of which were originally published in the latter magazine.

The representation of poverty and misery, never romanticised (Carmo, 2022), becomes more pragmatic when the chronicler addresses very sensitive topics such as child

labour, physical, psychological and economic/labour violence against women or when this violence is associated with a lack of basic care. Take this extract from 1941: “I kept quiet. That petty creature was about to give birth even more miserably than an animal. That unknown and resigned woman epitomised the sense of helpless motherhood even more darkly than the Christian Virgin” (*Seara Nova*, 1941, Number 700, p. 59). The apparent neutrality of the verb used at the beginning, “I kept quiet”, invites the reader to share the narrator’s resentment, as seen in what follows with the use of the adjective “resigned” and the adverbs “miserably” and “darkly”. These convey a negative idea of the conditions of motherhood, which we can associate with women’s resignation and the precariousness of the regime’s health system. This representation is emphasised when the narrator compares the motherhood of the unknown woman to the biblical scene of the birth of Christ, thus highlighting the physical and psychological violence caused by a failed ideological system.

Similarly, in this passage from a chronicle of the same year, Lisboa depicts the circumstances of two cleaning ladies:

Arminda was there. She was a poor young woman who, to her misfortune, had been sick for days. She had such fine features that they belied the rudeness of her job (...). Adelaide, another woman who spent at least two years in my house, was also an interesting woman. During the week, she cleaned two offices for Caminhos de Ferro and my house, tended to the laundry of a family, ran errands for her godmother, and kept her husband and daughter clean and tidy. (*Seara Nova*, 1941, Number 720, pp. 55–56)

The chronicler here depicts how women from the working class, contrary to the ideal propagated by the regime, spend their entire days working outside their homes. Additionally, there is a negative tone in the discourse, which can easily be linked to the policies of the regime (Barbosa, 2023), evident in the terms used to describe the condition of women: “poor”, “to her misfortune”, and in the final list illustrating the violence of women’s work both inside and outside the house. However, there is also a contrasting tone in the expressions of appreciation for the characters: “such fine features” and “interesting woman”, which establish the contrast between being a woman (positive) and the role that women play (negative).

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Lisboa (1974/1999) once again addresses the miserable condition of the woman of the people: “a well-spoken saleswoman, fleeing from the police like all the others at the market door, one hand offering, the other already swimming in the air, like a desperate saviour’s fin or wing feather, aiding her escape” (p. 185). In this excerpt, too, we see a woman forced by poverty to leave her home and seek a clandestine livelihood, facing the designs of fate with constant vigilance: she has to attract the attention of customers and be ready to evade the police. The narrator introduces the character with a positive adjective, describing her as “well-spoken”, once again creating a contrast between the woman and her life.

When dealing with violence against the most vulnerable groups, Lisboa does not use the same ironic tone she uses when dealing with political power or the bourgeoisie.

Based on the account of Adelina, one of the most important female characters in her work, the chronicle “Um Dito” (“A Saying”) and the 1942 book *Esta Cidade!* expose the theme of physical violence against women and the ineffectiveness of the system. For example:

the girl was beaten, beaten and never responded ( ... ). The guest hit the girl again and again, but she did not scream... If only she had screamed... One could call the police! But it seems that the police only respond to the most desperate cries for help ( ... ). He then punched her in the nose, leaving her covered in blood. She immediately turned her face away, but he hit her so many times, so many times... in the ears, in the head... that she turned black! Now, she covers it with her hair. (Lisboa, 1942/1995, pp. 234–237)

Note the discourse, once again interspersed between narrator and character. Firstly, the physical violence exerted against the woman through the expressions “punched in the nose”, “covered in blood”, and “she turned black”; then, the repetitions of the phrases “beaten, beaten” and “again and again” which indicate the repetition of this same violence; then, the passivity, culturally accepted, and the shame of the victimised woman: “she never responded”, “she did not scream” and “she covers it with her hair”; finally, the narrator’s wish for justice, expressed in the character’s voice, when she says “if only she had screamed”, but then comes the realisation that the victim would only be helped in an extreme situation. There is a clear intention to criticise the authorities’ inaction in the face of violence against women by men, who, after all, are regarded by the regime as the head of the family, responsible for educating at home.

These circumstances of violence against women, as seen in the previous passage, are realistically represented. Lisboa often removes herself as the narrator to let the characters speak. Once again, the emotionally vigilant I-narrator reveals the suffering of these women, contrasting it with the superficiality of the idealised woman constructed by the State.

The author had already addressed the theme of physical violence against women in two chronicles published in *Seara Nova*. In the first, from 1939, Lisboa records the conversation of a woman, with her child on her lap, beaten by her partner.

Explaining: and he hit me more here (on a hip), and on the head, and all over the place. If they didn’t take the child out of my arms, he’d kill him. And he’s his father. ( ... ) He broke a stick on my back, and wasn’t he going to get another one? If he’s already beaten his mother to death. (*Seara Nova*, 1939, Number 627, p. 169)

The woman exposes the marks of her husband’s violence. It is worth noting that male violence, once again, exhibits a repetitive pattern, crossing generations and becoming an inherited behaviour, making it a common practice against women and children. This allows sons, observing their fathers, to mimic their behaviour and consider female submission as natural.

In the second chronicle, dated 1941, Lisboa portrays the life of a saleswoman named Rosália, who roams the streets, described by the chronicler as “always bearing the signs

of her husband's drunkenness" (*Seara Nova*, 1941, Number 720, p. 56). However, despite her misery, the narrative juxtaposes moments of suffering: "one eye knocked out, her arms scratched" (p. 56), with more positive aspects: "but her aprons and narrow skirt showed off her beautiful body, which the brute man appreciated so little!" (p. 56). This woman is also resigned, but it is not the resignation of the "housewife". It is a suffering that the woman cannot avoid, the result of male violence accepted by the standards of the time and camouflaged or lessened by the authorities. Note how the chronicler describes the situation:

the feats of that wine were extraordinary. There were nights when the entire family had to escape to the street because the man, with the knife in his hand, would set his wife and children on the rampage. One day, he set fire to the shack ( ... ); another day, he tore the bed sheets into strips; another day, he locked himself inside and would not let anyone in, either lying down to sleep or turning the shards upside down. (*Seara Nova*, 1941, Number 720, p. 56)

Once again, the extreme violence of the head of the family is depicted: "knife in his hand", "tore into strips", "set fire to", and "turning the shards upside down", here attributed to the effect of the wine, presented by the narrator in a personified and ironic manner with the expression: "the feats of that wine were extraordinary", which underscores the misery of everyday life portrayed by the terms "shack" and "shards".

The plight of oppressed women of the city during the Portuguese dictatorship is also mirrored in the rural areas experienced by Lisboa. In *Crónicas da Serra* (1960/1997), documents penned at the close of the 1940s and the onset of the 1950s, some of which were published in *Seara Nova* between 1952 and 1953, this theme pervades nearly the entire collection. In the chronicle "O Forno" (The Oven), the author makes the following observation: "she is mistreated like all the women here, but she is pretty" (p. 42), once again highlighting the contrast between the woman and her feminine condition. In "Justiça de Aldeia" (Village Justice), referring to one of her informants from Serra da Estrela, Carma, the narrator points out the man's role in educating: "the teaching given by Carma's man extended to the whole family: with a punch or a stick he would put her out of the house at any time of the day or night" (p. 61). Likewise, in "De Volta à Serra" (Back to the Mountains), but in a more general way, the author ironically shows that women are subjugated on various fronts: "it is the woman who must feel weak before the man, the dark, the unknown, justice, the priest, the spirits" (p. 89). Finally, in the chronicle "Dia de Santa Cruz" (Santa Cruz Day), with Maurício as the informant-narrator, Lisboa criticises the way his friend treats women. However, here, perhaps due to the author's close relationship with the informant and friend from the mountains, the criticism is milder, focusing on a few details of the discourse. Take the following passage: "Maurício, who does not like to be interrupted and pays little attention to his wife's words, grew impatient: That's it! ( ... ). *That one* already had *my* [emphasis added] older girl and *Joaquim* [emphasis added]" (pp. 95–96). Note the last sentence. The demonstrative "that one" is used impersonally and with a hint of disdain towards Patrocínia, Maurício's wife, and the

possessive “my” is linked to the couple’s daughter (female). Both instances reflect the condition of women dominated by men in the patriarchal society of the time, in this case, in a rural area. Women, whether wives or daughters, were regarded as possessions of their husbands/fathers. This is evident in the way the (male) son is referred to by his first name (“Joaquim”), contrasting with the treatment of the female figures in the narrative.

The theme of physical and economic/labour violence against women is not addressed in the texts published in *presença*. However, there is a noticeable focus on the subordinate position of women to men and the entrenched prejudices associated with the female role in the society of that era. In a chronicle titled “Mulheres” (Women; *presença*, 1933, Number 39), the narrator addresses the prejudice faced by women who choose not to marry: “oh! So strong is the need for love and domination” (p. 4), concludes the chronicler after her interlocutors decide that they have to find her a husband. Lisboa’s last chronicle in *presença* was in 1935, with three chronicles under the title “Três Trechos do Livro *Solidão*” (Three Extracts From the Book *Solidão*). Here, we see a profound, although disguised, critique of the condition of women under the Estado Novo regime and, once again, her detachment from this idealised feminine universe. Note once again the ironic tone that Lisboa uses to establish the contrast between the violence endured by working-class women and the frivolity of bourgeois women who conformed to the regime’s idealised image of womanhood: “I even found them worthy of a frieze, representatives of the eternal feminine: sitting in a circle, rested, eyes downcast, sometimes talking about socks, sometimes about men” (*presença*, 1935, Numbers 53–54, p. 7).

The author’s disconnection from this woman is evident not only in her approach to the bourgeois female universe but also in her critical perspective on the realm of male symbolic power, as Barbosa (2018b) points out. Lisboa’s confrontation between men and women is not meant to establish a division between the female and male elements. As Carmo (2020) highlights, she aims to depict the real life of human beings, demonstrating that thought and action belong to both men and women. Carmo (2020) suggests that the category of gender alone is insufficient without considering class to analyse Lisboa’s work, as her critical eye extends to various factors. The author also notes the “silent and daily violence perpetrated against the most vulnerable groups, including the writer” (Carmo, 2020, p. 310), who was also subjected to societal and State violence, as evidenced by Gomes Ferreira’s words and her dismissal from the education system.

Her restlessness as an author and citizen prompted her, in 1938, to ask — as Beauvoir (1949/1976) did 11 years later — “what is a woman?” and to answer: “a ship without a route, a lost being” (*Seara Nova*, 1938, Number 552, p. 138). In both the public and private spheres, women, whether intellectual or not, are deprived of their condition as free human beings. The author makes this clear when, in 1942, she writes: “it is mainly among men that opinions are formulated ( ... ) where there are men, women are very little heard” (*Seara Nova*, 1942, Number 799, p. 36).

## 6. CONCLUSION

In this article, we have illustrated how Lisboa reveals, through her chronicles, the violent treatment of women at home, in the workplace, and by the State. She highlights the widespread submission of women under a patriarchal regime (Tavares, 2011) that views the citizen as an abstract entity (Barros, 2022; Freire, 1978). Lisboa denounces this situational narrative, extending her criticism to family, professional, social, and intellectual circles. Through her chronicles, she highlights the various dimensions of violence against women, reflecting a social conscience that aligns with literary journalism's engagement with issues of gender violence (Alexander & McDonald, 2022).

The woman portrayed by Lisboa is a dual figure. On the one hand, she is depicted ironically — a common feature of literary journalism — as the bourgeois woman shaped by prejudice and servility to her father/husband and the State. This woman is idealised as the “homemaker” and is stereotyped by the regime as the quintessential Portuguese woman (Tavares, 2011). The exploration of the frivolities and prejudices of bourgeois women is evident in *Seara Nova* and extends to *presença*. However, in this magazine, the chronicles tend to be more intimate and contemplative and less interventionist than in *Seara Nova*. On another note, it portrays a woman of the people also trapped in gender and power dynamics that strip away her humanity as an individual and as a woman, a reality that, as the chronicler proves, defies the regime's idealised portrayal. Lisboa depicts a brutalised woman, physically marked by cuts, scratches, knocked out eyes, bruises and blood; psychologically stigmatised by fear, shame, hiding the violence she suffers from her family and society, and exhaustion; a woman economically condemned for being poor and unable to achieve financial independence, thus subjecting herself to the petty and exhausting jobs assigned to women outside the home, as well as family life tasks, which are also no less exhausting and violent. Lisboa conveyed this representation during the dictatorship in magazines that opposed the regime.

The comfort of the bourgeoisie is juxtaposed with the unromanticised depiction of the hardships, prejudices, degradation, and social exclusion experienced by the working class, especially concerning physical, psychological, and economic/labour violence against women. As noted by Sapega (1996) and Carmo (2020), Lisboa's writings are critical, occasionally subtle, revealing the lives of the oppressed in contrast to the optimistic propaganda of the Estado Novo. The chronicler portrays violence against women through this exposure and confrontation.

This focus on marginalised geographies (Trindade & Soares, 2018) as a means of raising awareness of the challenges faced by those whose daily lives are marred by injustices is a recurring theme in the history of literary journalism, exemplified in Irene Lisboa's chronicles. There is an informative, critical, and emotional dimension to her texts (Trindade & Soares, 2018), thus a hybrid dimension that blends elements of both journalism and literature. This scenario is evident in the chronicler's portrayal of violence against women. She adopts a writing style that is as dispassionate as if she were crafting literature, presenting objective information while navigating the inherent subjectivity involved in representing the world.



We also encounter this scenario in the 21st century. The approaches of figures such as Miguel Sousa Tavares, Pedro Coelho, Raquel Ochoa, Isabel Nery, and Susana Moreira Marques confirm that the problems Lisboa addressed in her chronicles (1929 to 1955) remain relevant today and are on the agenda of national and international organisations and the social sciences.

Expanding and replicating this study could thus contribute significantly to enhancing our understanding of the history of violence in Portugal, particularly the persistent issue of violence against women, as documented by an author who left behind an important human document.

Nevertheless, this research has constraints. It focuses solely on excerpts about violence against women, isolating this aspect from the broader context presented by the chronicler. This approach hinders the interpretation of the selected theme and its broader communicative scope. Despite this fact, it is worth considering future approaches that analyse violence against women, not only associated with violence against children but also within the context of job insecurity affecting both men and women. This broader perspective could help elucidate the author's representation of violence within the context of dictatorship.

**Translation: Anabela Delgado**

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