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***The Evolution of Feminism (1923-1945):* epistolary, sociability and feminist education in Mariana Coelho**

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Abstract: This article analyzes the intellectual construction processes that culminated in *The Evolution of Feminism* (1933), by Mariana Coelho, considered one of the main expressions of first-wave feminist thought in Brazil. Based on the analysis of letters exchanged between the author and feminist Bertha Lutz, we investigate how the writing of this work constituted a unique path of self-education, developed outside the bounds of formal education. Anchored in Cultural History, the study approaches writing as a social practice and letters as formative and political instruments. Methodologically, it is a qualitative historical research that draws on epistolary and journalistic sources consulted in digital repositories. The analysis highlights writing as an ethical and political act, tied to feminist militancy and networks of intellectual sociability. Mariana Coelho's trajectory reveals alternative forms of women's intellectual production in early twentieth-century Brazil, offering relevant insights into the history of women and education.

Keywords: feminism; history of education; Mariana Coelho; ego-documents; intellectual self-education.

1 Introduction

In this article, we delve into the processes of intellectual construction that culminated in the work *The Evolution of Feminism (A Evolução do Feminismo)*, by Mariana Coelho, published in 1933 and today considered one of the main expressions of first-wave feminist thought in Brazil. Based on the analysis of correspondence exchanged between the author and contemporary intellectuals, especially Bertha Lutz, we seek to understand how writing this work constituted, to Mariana Coelho, a singular trajectory of self-formation, built on the margin of formal and institutionalized education.

Written over the course of more than two decades, many times during the weak moonlight of post-work nights, the work was sewn by this teacher and intellectual in-between silences and resistances, as a political gesture of affirmation and a project of legacy to the feminist cause. Born in 1857, in *Trás-os-Montes*, Portugal, Mariana Coelho moved to Brazil in 1892, living in Curitiba, where she acted as a teacher, school

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principal and feminist militant until her death, in 1954. Despite not having formal education, university education or degrees, she built a dense intellectual path, anchored in a network of literate sociabilities and informal educational practices, rooted in what Bourdieu (1989) regards as cultural capital, inherited and nurtured.

The research¹ bases itself in the Cultural History (Chartier, 1988), understanding writing as a social practice. The letters are understood as egodocuments (Viñao Frago, 2000; Cunha, 2019), which allows them to be comprehended as practices of subjectivation and insertion of oneself in the world, as proposed by Foucault (2004) when discussing writing as an ethical and formative exercise. In these epistolary writings we observe spaces for the production of meaning and for the documentation of a formative trajectory. We also considered the studies of Ginzburg (1989), based on the reading of traces in the sources, as we did with the reflection of Arlette Farge (2009) on the experiences of different means of archival, pondering the controversy of the “flavor” lost and of the accessibility gained in the digitalization of the sources – reality analyzed critically with the basis of Inés Dussel (2019). To discuss the trajectory of Mariana Coelho as an educator, feminist and intellectual, we base ourselves on recent research that focuses on her life and work, like the ones by Bueno (2024), Kamita (2005), Tomé (2020) and Silva (2024).

It is based in this theoretical-methodological framing that the article is guided by some central questions: How was *The Evolution of Feminism* constructed within networks of feminist sociability mediated by epistolary forms of education; how the letters worked simultaneously as a source of information, space of intellectual formation and instrument of political intervention; and in what way does the dialogue between Mariana Coelho and Bertha Lutz reveal processes of collaboration, negotiation and affirmation of intellectual autonomy. When connecting the documental analysis of the letters with the published work and historical context, we sought to understand not only the final result of the book, but the very process of its elaboration, your choices, tensions and strategies of legitimization in the intellectual and feminist field of the early 20th century.

Methodologically, it is a qualitative investigation in the History of Education, whose main sources are located in the *Sistema de Informações do Arquivo Nacional*

¹ This article is derived from research for a master's thesis defended in 2025 in the Post-graduation in Education program of UFPR, History and Historiography of Education Section.

(SIAN), the System of Informations of the National Archive, besides journalistic publications verified obtained through the Digital Newspaper Library of the National Library. This analysis tries to understand the limits and the potential of digital repositories, understood here not only as a means to access sources, but as spaces that impose new mediations to the reading and interpretation of documents – mediations that, although involve sensorial losses, also promote an important democratization of the access to historical collections (Van Ruyskensvelde, 2014).

The paper is organized in three parts: it begins the discussion through the methodological path with the letters – political and formational instruments – attached to a debate on the challenges and possibilities of using digitalized sources in historical research; afterwards, it presents, in the trajectory of the writings of Mariana Coelho, her search for support towards the publishing of the work in an environment favorable to the network of intellectual feminist sociability of the time; and lastly, it analyses the writing of the work *The Evolution of Feminism*, demonstrating how epistolary exchanges influenced its elaboration over the course of more than two decades.

2 The methodologic and investigative path through the epistolary lines of Mariana Coelho

Writing a book is an arduous task, that demands time, research, dedication, criticism and self-critique. Writing a historical book, with the commitment to make it into a reference to the most important cause of the author's life in the context of the early 20th century in a town in the periphery like Curitiba in the years 1920-1930 makes it a much more challenging task. The search for sources, for newspapers, for analysis of the content and indications about the editorial world became part of the process of elaboration of the work *The Evolution of Feminism*, revealed in the epistolary exchanges of Mariana Coelho with other intellectuals, especially with Bertha Lutz, scientist, suffragist and one of the leaders of Brazilian feminism at the time, and whose letters constitute our central sources.

Mariana Coelho was born on the 10th of September 1857, in *Trás-os-Montes*, Portugal. Daughter of Maria do Carmo Teixeira Coelho and Manoel Antônio Ribeiro Coelho, pharmacist, she joined a numerous family, among whom stands out Carlos Alberto Teixeira Coelho (1866-1924), pharmacist, teacher and philologist, whose influence was significative in her intellectual upbringing. Naturalized Brazilian in 1939,

she lived in Curitiba until her passing in 1954, at 97 years old. She acted as a secretary, teacher and principal of the *Escola Profissional Feminina*, the Women's Professional School, retiring in 1941. She was a member of Paraná's Letter Center, of the Paraná's Red Cross and of Paraná's Center of Feminine Culture, besides being patron of the 28th chair in Paraná's Women's Letter Academy and of the 30th chair in Paraná's Poetry Academy. Her intellectual works include *Discurso* (1902), *O Paraná mental* (1908) e *The Evolution of Feminism: subsídios para sua história* (1933), among other titles published in the following decades, including posthumously.

Bertha Lutz, the main correspondent of the analyzed letters, was born in São Paulo in 1894. Daughter of the English nurse Amy Fowler and the scientist Adolfo Lutz, she got a degree in Sciences through the University of Paris, where she had contact with the English suffragist movement. Back to Brazil, she acted in the Zoology Museum of Oswaldo Cruz Institute and, in 1919, joined the National Museum after a public contest, making her the second woman to join federal public service. In the same year she founded the League for the Intellectual Emancipation of Women, which in 1922 led to the development of the Brazilian Federation for Women's Progress, of which she was the president. Still in 1922, she represented Brazil in the 1st Interamerican Conference of Women, in Baltimore, amplifying her network of intellectual, diplomatic and scientific sociability (Lôbo, 2010).

The intellectual and educational performance of Mariana Coelho, although built outside of the great cultural centers of the country, was not developed in isolation. Her trajectory attached and connected itself to feminist and intellectual networks of national and international reach, among which began her dialogue with Bertha Lutz, whose projection granted political and intellectual density to the epistolary exchanges analyzed in this study.

Epistolary writing is categorized as an egodocument, a term coined by Jacob Presser in 1958 and posteriorly debated under various theoretical perspectives (Cunha, 2019). To Viñao Frago (2000, p. 11, independent translation), they're "[...] texts in which the subject talks about or refers to themselves, in which the 'I' finds refuge and converts itself into an element of reference." Cunha (2019, p.12) defines them as writings that "resisted the fire and/or the thrash bin" and conserve personal experiences with the intent to archive oneself. They're records of feelings, thoughts, wishes and personal experiences. The term "ego" – understood in psychoanalysis as

an instance of the “self” – relates to the consciousness, personality and singularity of each individual. In historical research, personal letters reveal close bonds and the time's social relations just as much as the common practices of writing and dialogue in distinct times (Cunha, 2013).

Mariana Coelho's letters blend intellectual debates with personal experiences, almost always written by hand, which grants them an intimate and singular aspect. Through communication, she reestablishes her own self, in a gesture defined by Foucault (2004) as the *writing of the self*: “The letters sent act, through the very gesture of writing, upon the sender, just as, through reading and rereading, it acts upon the receiver”. With her words, Mariana acted not only upon her correspondents, but also upon herself, through testing hypotheses and elaborating complex, moving ideas. As defended by Foucault (2004, p. 156):

The reciprocity that correspondence establishes is not only that of advice and help, but of observation and examination. The letter that, as an exercise, works towards the subjectification of true speech, for its assimilation and elaboration as “property of the self!, also constitutes, at the same time, an objectivization of the soul.

Although having existed for millennia, it was in the 19th century that letters established themselves as “[...] practices and cultural functions of writing in literate society” (Cunha, 2013, p. 119), especially among the elites. They were the main link between distant people in a time of restricted communication. In the correspondences between Mariana Coelho and Bertha Lutz, personal aspects – griefs, health, work, travels – were interwoven with reflections on intellectual production, the feminist movement and writing. Our attention is mainly focused on the advice Mariana asked from Bertha and that directly contributed to her education and to the elaboration of the book *The Evolution of Feminism*. Although she was younger, Bertha Lutz was more established in feminist action, and Mariana relied on her as a constant correspondent, using her answers as a means to sustain and enrich the work's content.

Accessing these letters required intense search and selection efforts in the digital archives of the National Library, where we located 72 correspondences. Transcribing and organizing them – many in unordered manuscripts, mixed up with other documents – demanded technical and critical efforts, in what Michel de Certeau (2208, p. 65) called a “historian's gesture”. After the documents were properly organized, we stumbled into another challenge, the materiality of the letters revealed

in their digitalization. We had access to them solely through digital means, where they were scanned in black and white, and therefore we could not feel the texture of the paper, nor identify with precision what types of paper were utilized. But we could notice that Mariana Coelho wrote, mostly by hand, in lined paper, with few letters typewritten on white paper, and that in some letters she utilized letterheads from Argentina Republic Professional School.

Although the discussions about the use of digital repositories in historical research are quite recent, we cannot disregard the discussions about “losses” in the analysis of digitalized sources. Such critiques draw attention to liabilities in regards to interpretation and to what Farge (2009) referred to as the “file's flavour”, experienced through the senses, textures and smells, where as the traces of the past, in the case of digitalized collections, are erased by the screen. There are also many flaws in keyword searches, which are not always accurate.

Dussel (2019) alerts about the risk that digitized documents made available for research in the absence of their original material forms may be interpreted in isolation from their contexts of origin and production, thus heightening the danger of decontextualization amid the vast flow of digital data. Attentive to these risks, we sought to situate the letters within a broader documentary corpus, interweaving their analysis with that of the books themselves and with texts written by and about Mariana Coelho in contemporary journals. This approach aimed to more precisely identify the epistolary interactions that shaped the author's writings and contributed to her feminist intellectual formation.

On the utilization of this type of archive in research, Van Ruyskensveld (2014, p. 867 *apud* Santos, 2021, p.13, independent translation) notes that:

Besides the fact that it has the potential to make our life considerably simpler and make the reading and analysis of great ensembles of historical sources, it can also help us connect concepts from different texts, which, in turn, offers us the possibility to distinguish patterns in the speech and educational practices from different times and spaces.

Still with Dussel (2019), we believe that it is valuable to analyse these documents with special care towards the conditions of their production and preservation. In this sense, the digital archive was of immense importance, functioning as a tool of academic inclusion, providing a democratization of these collections, especially to researchers that live outside of major centers and do not have great

financial resources to access sources presentially in distinct places, sources that even without textures and smells, provide the flavour of the findings, even if through a screen, solely with the eyes.

Although they have reduced social function nowadays, letters are still classified in Portuguese Language curriculums as a textual genre, with specific rules that, until the beginning of the 20th century, were followed even in intimate correspondences. In Mariana Coelho's letters, the formal structure and ways that she addresses her correspondent reveals a gradual tightening of her bond with Bertha Lutz: the ceremonious tone gives way to a more personal form of writing. The calligraphy also changes, from carefully drawn, elaborate letters (Figure 1) to more fluid and hurried strokes, revealing the communicative urgency. There are notations outside of the habitual order and transversal observations (Figures 2 and 3), signs of growing intimacy. The formula of salutations that accompany this process: from "Mrs D." become more personal, "My dear friend" and "partner", indicating the construction of a progressively stronger affective and political bond.

Figure 1 – Excerpt of Letter written by Mariana Coelho to Bertha Lutz²

² Written on December 6th 1924, with noticeably careful handwriting.

CO. ADM. COR. 1924.50, p. 32

Curitiba, 6/12/1924

Prezadíssima D. Bertha Lutz

Deus V. Ex. ter recebido uma carta minha de 17 de novembro p. findo.

Hoje preciso dizer-lhe que a Livraria Mundial, de Curitiba, sempre recebeu - habitualmente, o "Perfil da Mulher Brasileira".

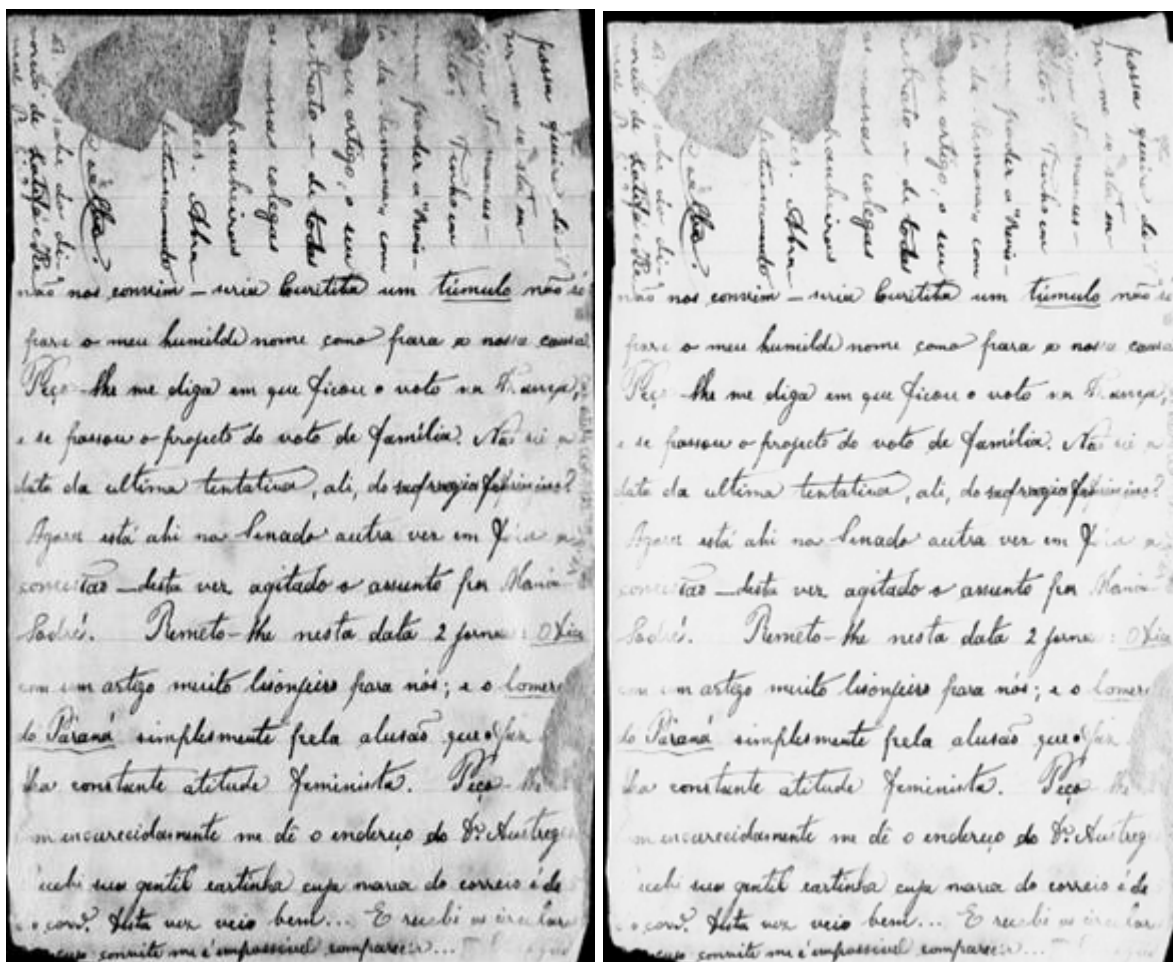
Fica, por consequencia, um effeito, o pedido que lhe fiz a respeito de brasileiras notáveis em artes plasticas. Aguardo apenas a resposta de V. Ex. relativa ás outras minhas perguntas.

O "Perfil" apenas foi novo para mim o posto referente as artes acima indicadas, e alguns nomes femininos dos tempos coloniaes - a maior parte dos quaes talvez nao tenham oportunamente

Source: National Archive.

Figure 2 / Figure 3 - Excerpts of letters written by Mariana Coelho to Bertha Lutz³

³ Written on 15/09/1925, with noticeable notations above the main text.



Source: National Archive.

Another relevant aspect is the letters' materiality. Many were written with quill and ink, in papers of varying grammage, which compromises their legibility – especially in digitized handwritten letters, where writing from the reverse side of the paper shows through and overlaps with the writing on the front. There are also abbreviated words, hard to comprehend terms, and ripped, blurred or darkened patches. Despite the challenges, the effort to read, understand and analyse these documents revealed itself to be a source of great satisfaction in the historiographic exercise, in which we transcribed all the documental mass.

While reading the letters, we noticed that a singular correspondence could discuss many topics, which made a chronological organization quite difficult. Therefore, we opted to categorize them into the following themes: a) historical details of conquests or losses of women's rights in various parts of the world; b) details on the content of the book *The Evolution of Feminism*; c) suggestions of sources and references; d) news about feminism in various countries; e) searches for an editor; f)

about the Brazilian Federation for Women's Progress; g) familial drama and personal matters.

The 72 located letters (1909-1945) were selected, organized chronologically and transcribed to a chart, which allowed us to map out the correspondents and themes discussed in each correspondence. Of these 72 letters, 57 were written by Mariana Coelho, with 47 of them being destined to Bertha Lutz, her main correspondent. Of the 14 letters she received, eight were from Bertha Lutz; the rest being sent by names such as Rocha Pombo, Dario Velloso, and institutions like the Education and Health Statistic Service.

The disproportionality between letters sent and received can be explained through what means they were kept: a major part of the found letters belonged to Bertha Lutz's personal collection, preserved by the Brazilian Federation for Women's Progress, digitalized in the SIAN portal. In this same repository, we also found correspondences aimed towards Paraná's Center of Feminine Culture and other senders, like Rocha Pombo and Fábio Luz.

Mariana Coelho's correspondences demonstrate her insertion in intellectual networks formed by people of high literacy and social notoriety, generally aligned with feminist ideals. These connections amplified her repertoire, opened doors and worked as a form of self-tuition and intellectual improvement.

As noted by Camargo (2011, p.19), the letters, due to being dated, delimit specific spaces and moments in the history of the individuals and of culture. Therefore, Mariana Coelho's writings, when tackling themes like feminism, anarchism and the influence of the Catholic Church, reveal a perspective deeply rooted in its temporal, social and cultural context. The exchanges with Bertha Lutz show both their adherence to a feminism with maternalist and moralist matrix, characterized by the worry to avoid interpretations that could compromise women's reputation.

3 The publishing of *The Evolution of Feminism*: traces of conquest through epistolary threads

The work *The Evolution of Feminism: Subsidies to its History* gathers historical and cultural feminist narratives, addressing women's roles in fields like religion, war, politics, administration, sciences, arts, literature, the press and love. Split into seven chapters, it seeks to demonstrate the feminine struggles and competence. In a letter to Bertha Lutz, Mariana summarizes the work's intention: "I want to prove that in all fields of human knowledge we have incredible specimens of our sex" (Coelho, 21st of Jan. 1925, independent translation). In 1936, she affirmed that the book was "where I registered, throughout the centuries, the moral and intellectual capacity of our sex" (Coelho, 12th of Sep. 1936, independent translation).

The book's title reveals the author's dialogue with the intellectual ideals of the times. In the 1930s, the term "evolution" was charged by positivism and by ideas of progress inherited from the 19th century, being understood as a linear and ascendant process of social, institutional and civilizational improvement. This notion, derived from natural sciences – mainly from the social readings of Darwinism and Comte's evolutionism – was widely appropriated by Brazilian intellectuals as a lens through which to think about the country's modernization and, in Mariana Coelho's case, to rethink the social papers attributed to women. Through utilizing the term in the title of the work *The Evolution of Feminism*, Mariana Coelho inserted the feminist movement in a historical horizon that assumes inevitable progress towards feminine emancipation, joining it to an ideal of rationality and moral improvement of society.

Although nowadays criticized for its linearity and eurocentrism, the progressist view of history was central to intellectual and pedagogical projects of the early 20th century. Among the reformists, the idea of "evolution" included science, morality and politics, being a recurring topic in scientific and social speeches (Sevcenko, 1983). In Mariana Coelho's work, this language legitimates feminism as a modern and necessary movement, anchored in an imagery of civilization and order. Her historical narrative of feminism sees itself as a continuous project of rational and moral improvement, associating women's progress to education, culture and the advancement of the "civilized" nations. Terms like "ascension" and "emancipation" appear in an evolutionist context. When dealing with figures like Olympe de Gouges

and Mary Wollstonecraft,⁴ Mariana inserts them in a line of progress towards equal rights, composing a theological narrative of feminism.

To weave her book, Mariana Coelho researched about the roles and participations of women in different fields of social life, consulting various books and newspapers. In a time and space where the circulation of printed materials wasn't smooth, she relied on the help of collaborators, who sent information by mail and debated facts that were of interest to her, besides suggesting and providing copies of sources and references about the theme.

The main collaborator in this process was Bertha Lutz. In their first letter, from January 2nd of 1923, Mariana Coelho reports to her fellow feminist that she is writing a work about the evolution of feminism and asks for help with the newspapers, fearing that she might not mention something important:

Although I have handled many varied newspapers in regards to the development that our cause has recently had in our Brazil, it is possible that something of great importance has escaped my grasp and therefore I have decided to directly ask for Your Highness' assistance" (Coelho, 2nd of Jan. 1923, independent translation)

Part of the debates about the advancements and setbacks towards feminist emancipation were accompanied first-hand by Mariana Coelho, who was a militant and witnessed many victories of women, like Bertha Lutz's approval as a secretary of Rio de Janeiro's National Museum through contest. In a letter written on January 21, 1925, Mariana Coelho communicates to Bertha Lutz that she has been made aware of her colleague's achievement: "I've known for long – and registered it in the book, that my illustrious friend achieved through contest the position of the Museum's Secretary." (Coelho, 21st of Jan. 1925).

In a letter written on the 1st of November of 1925, Bertha Lutz explained her personal trajectory as requested by Mariana Coelho, who wanted to further complete the information already present in her book about her colleague. She discussed her approval on the contest, mentioning new facts that were not present on any anterior

⁴ Gouges, french, "writer, abolitionist, suffragist and, mainly, feminist militant" (Tavaresm 2023, p. 2-3) and Wollstonecraft, english, liberal intellectual, activist of the causes of the oppressed and anti-slavery militant (Moraes, 2025), "wrote, in an almost simultaneous manner, very significative documents towards the history of the feminist movement: the *Declaration of Women and Citizen's Rights*, written by Olympe de Gouges in 1791, and the work *Reclaiming of the rights of women*, written by Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792." (Tavares, 2023, p. 2-3)

sources, like the number of competing candidates and of tests taken, further amplifying the feminist's merit:

I was educated in S. Paulo and in Paris, being a graduate in Natural Sciences through the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Paris. I first occupied a spot in the Oswaldo Cruz Institute. Subsequently I was, after a contest with 10 men, in 7 subjects and 14 tests, classified in first place and named secretary of the National Museum. I currently have a lab there, dedicating myself to Botany. (Lutz, 1st of Nov. 1925, independent translation)

According to Tomé (2020), *The Evolution of Feminism* took between 15 and 20 years to be completed and had its first edition published in 1933 by *Imprensa Moderna S.A.*, in Rio de Janeiro, as a paperback, 14cm wide by 19cm tall and having 611 pages, with no available information about its circulation. As stated in a note by the very author, the work was finished since 1926, without Mariana Coelho explaining the reasons behind the delay, solely attributed to reasons opposite to her will. However, Bueno (2010, p.22) clarifies that, when travelling to Rio de Janeiro with the original copy, the author had one of the chapters stolen, which led her to redo the work, finished only in 1933.

Between the finalization of the work and its publication, one of the most important accomplishments of the Brazilian feminist movement was achieved: the right to vote, recognized on the 24th of February of 1932, by the Decree number 21.076, which established the Electoral Code and guaranteed suffrage to any citizen over 21 years old, with no distinguishments between sexes (Brazil, 1932), posteriorly incorporated into the Constitution of 1934. Despite the importance of this accomplishment to Mariana Coelho's life, the legalization of women's right to vote was not included in the book, possibly due to the proximity of the fact to the book's publishing date.

In regards to the choice of editor, we can infer that it is related to the discussion with Bertha Lutz during the work's writings. In the letters, among the various subjects related to the feminist cause and details about writing, was the search for an editor. In a letter sent to Bertha Lutz on the 15th of September, 1925, Mariana Coelho emphasises:

I'm very split: I intended to edit the book with *Casa Monteiro Lobato*, in S. Paulo, but, with the great number of bankruptcies required nowadays in the mentioned town, his one stands out with about 3.000 bucks. I want to edit it in S. Paulo or in Rio – editing it here would not be convenient to us – Curitiba

would not only be a grave to my humble name but to our cause. (Coelho, 15th of Sep. 1925)

She referred to the editor property of writer Monteiro Lobato, that had bought, in 1918, *A Revista do Brasil* (Brazil's Magazine), founded in 1916 by Júlio de Mesquita⁵, and besides writing and editing his own works, which sold thousands of copies, he started editing books by other authors. Posteriorly, he began to use the professional name "*Monteiro Lobato e Cia. Editores*". Through the editor, works by authors such as Oliveira Vianna, Martins Fontes and Lima Barreto, among various well-known names of Brazilian literature were published (Monteiro [...], 2024).

We believe that Mariana Coelho considered that Curitiba would be a "grave" to her name and cause, especially because of the absence of well-established editors and predominant conservatism in town, which made the reception of feminist ideas incredibly difficult. This adverse environment is visible in the conflicts that Mariana faced in regards to the local press. Feminism in Curitiba, in the early 20th century, still relied on few favorable voices – like Elvira Paraná, Leonor Castelhana and Pamphilo d'Assumpção – and many influential opposers, like Nestor de Castro, Gastão Faria, Flávio Suplicy de Lacerda and Georgina Mongruel (Trinidade, 1996). The publishing of her work, therefore, required a more receptive and comprehensive environment.

Mariana Coelho's wish to publish her work in Rio de Janeiro or in São Paulo was not fortuitous. Rio de Janeiro, during the 19th century, was the country's main editorial center. São Paulo, meanwhile, propelled forwards by the crisis of World War I and by the subsequent substitution of imports, saw rapid industrial growth: between 1914 and 1920, its industry grew at around 25% every year.

In the 1920s, São Paulo consolidated itself as an important geographic pole, with twenty editors producing around 200 titles annually and a total circulation of 1,9 million copies (Paixão, 1998). Publishing in this scenario greatly boosted the chances of the work's reach, as Mariana Coelho wished, to which she wrote to Bertha Lutz on the September 17 1925, resuming the topic of the book's editing: "A Dr. friend of mine, who lives in Rio, but is currently here, told me yesterday that there in Rio there are two editorial houses like São Paulo's Monteiro Lobato; do you know anything about this?" (Coelho, 17th of Sep. 1925)

⁵ Lawyer, politician, journalist and businessman, also owner of the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* (The State of S. Paulo), founded in 1875. (Ribeiro, 2024)

On November 1st 1925, Bertha Lutz answered Mariana Coelho, saying, among other things: “In regards to the publication there are many editorial houses here. If you desire any information in regards [to them], warn, and I will be very happy to obtain it in what is within my reach” (Lutz, 1st of Nov. 1925). On the 22nd of November of 1925, Mariana Coelho answered:

In regards to the publication, all that I have told you about publishing, stems from this principle: I cannot edit it with my own money. As *Casa Monteiro Lobato*, in S. Paulo, edited all their works with their own money; I considered sending them my book for this purpose. But it declared bankruptcy, then moved to Rio. I was told that there in Rio there were two editors on the same conditions as M. Lobato. So I deposit, tranquil, the case, on your hands and on your good trades. (Coelho, 22nd of Nov. 1925)

On the 20th of May, 1926, Bertha Lutz, after spending many months ill, answered Mariana Coelho's letter and continued dealing with the work's publication:

Do you already have any plans in regards to the publication? Notify me, yes? I have been considering many options, but for now, I have nothing definitive to propose. If thou wishes I shall question various newspapers if they wish to truly publish it, which would not stop posterior publication and would give it much further reach in this country where the everyday newspaper is far more read than any other genre of publication. We have the idea of publishing a women's magazine where it could be published, but I wish not to deceive you with empty promises, before I have the conditions to grant them, for that constitutes a deplorable practice, does it not? How many pages will the book have? It is with knowledge of this information that I may judge what would be the most beneficial option for us. There is a great deal of difficulty with editing in Rio, because they want it to be done on account, but we shall not lose hope. I await your suggestions. (Lutz, 20th of May 1926)

On the 5th of June, 1926, Mariana Coelho wrote back to Bertha Lutz, admitting that she didn't think publishing parts of the book early was a good idea, fearing that it could damage the editors' reception to the publication of the work and suggests that: “After it is published, we the feminists, shall make it be spread by the press” (Coelho, 5th of Jun. 1926). On the 8th of September, 1926, in a new correspondence to Bertha Lutz, she mentions receiving assistance from the owner of *Livraria Mundial* in finding an editor for Mariana Coelho's work:

Around this August the owner of *Livraria Mundial* wrote to the *Porto* (Portugal) to the Editorial House Lelo and Brother – following the agreement made with the two, in my absence, I sent him not only a more or less accurate explanation of my work as Lelo requested, but also a copy of Dario Velloso's letter. We shall see if the answer will be flattering, for the moment is immensely timely, is it not? If we are fortunate enough to have the *Porto's* Editorial House to publish my book – and seeing how it will not be published in Rio – I shall see if I can send you any excerpts in due time to be published. (Coelho, 8th of Sep. 1926)

The publishing seems to have faced many roadblocks, including some driven by Bertha Lutz's long periods of silence and sluggishness in her answers, due to her travels, personal works and health conditions. In the sequence of letters exchanged between the feminists, the topic of the works publication and of the search for an editor is incredibly frequent, with discussions of possibilities and useful contacts.

Mariana Coelho was very aware of opportunities and appropriate moments for the book's publishing, as noted in numerous letters: "I despise having to wait; for the current moment, for the publishing of the book, is immensely opportune" (Coelho, 21st of Jan. 1925); "What a great moment this is for the publishing of the book!" (Coelho, 17th of Sep. 1925); "We shall see if the answer will be flattering, for the moment is immensely timely, is it not?" (Coelho, 8th of Sep. 1926) This anxiety stems from the historical moment lived by these women, deeply related to feminism, like votes for bills related to women's rights and interests.

The letters exchanged between Mariana Coelho and Bertha Lutz reveal not only the author's effort in fulfilling her work, but also her keen notion of the socio-political context that eased its spread. Attentive to the events of her time, Mariana sought out the "timeliest" moment for the book's release, in hopes that it would reach greater repercussions within the current feminist movements and legislative debates. However, the obstacles faced by Mariana Coelho reflect the many hurdles faced by women in intellectual fields, even among their peers. Still, Mariana's persistence in building a network of intellectuals, seeking out support and identifying opportunities reveals the true strength of her political-pedagogical projects and the awareness that the publication of this book was not only a personal accomplishment, but a strategic intervention in favour of the feminist movement.

4 Epistolary dialogues with Bertha Lutz in the genesis of Mariana Coelho's work

The epistolary exchange between Mariana Coelho and Bertha Lutz went much further than simple discussions about editors, involving discussions about the content and structure of *The Evolution of Feminism*. In 1925, Mariana shared the preliminary division of the chapters, that dealt with themes like women in religion, in war, in politics, in sciences and in love. Bertha suggested certain adjustments, mainly in the chapters related to religion and to women's affections, deemed delicate or potentially polemic, considerations that Mariana accepted. In subsequent letters, Bertha also suggested

tweaks in the vocabulary utilized, like the substitution of “burocracy” for “administration”.

The version published in 1933 incorporates changes that demonstrate the impact of these conversations, like the reformulation of titles, the inclusion of new themes – such as women’s roles in the press – and changes in the vocabulary, indicating that the work was partially constructed through dialogue between feminists concerned with the public reception of the book.

The letters also reveal central aspects of the writing process, especially about its sources. Since 1923, Mariana sought out precise information about national and international feminist events, like the first Conference for Women’s Progress (1922, Rio de Janeiro) and the Pan-American Baltimore Convention (1922), openly referenced in the work (Coelho, 1933, 2002a). In this context, Bertha Lutz acted as an incredibly crucial collaborator, providing data, documents and news, in a movement conceptualized by Alexandra Bueno (2019) as “Feminist Pedagogy”, understood as a formative experience between women in the field of culture, education, politics and public life, in a sort of construction of ideal models of women.

Mariana’s work, an intellectual that developed herself in the margins of formal educational spaces, was produced through this dense network of mutual formations of women. Lutz, with her ample insertion in feminist spaces in Brazil and in other countries, became a strategic source of information, unaffected by the many limitations of local newspapers in Curitiba. Her tardiness to answer certain letters was justified by absences in diplomatic travels and international representations – which only serves to further reinforce her privileged position to give Mariana the information she needed. Besides the feminist events, Bertha also collaborated with suggestions about the organization of the book’s contents.

Mariana also relied on other intellectuals in Latin America, like Paulina Luisi, an Uruguayan feminist, with whom she kept in contact with through letters. The exchanges with Luisi allowed Mariana to gather data about feminism in Uruguay, including the names of women who occupied public positions and acted in the arts, sciences and politics. This data was incorporated especially in the fourth and fifth chapters of the book.

This correspondence also shows Mariana’s continuous effort to keep her work up-to-date. In 1925, with the chapter about women in politics nearly concluded, she

mentioned including new data obtained by Bertha or by the press. Mariana also complained, in a letter sent on the 29th of December 1924, about the difficulty of finding trust-worthy sources, pointing out various mistakes in foreign works about women's suffrage in Brazil. This reinforces the importance of her support network – composed of well-informed activists – to grant historical accuracy to her work.

Therefore, *The Evolution of Feminism* is not only the result of an individual effort, but of a collective process, supported by women who shared information, documents and experiences. The book reflects this collaborative and international nature of the time's feminism, anchored in a network of international feminist sociability.

The letters not only explain *The Evolution of Feminism's* writing process, but also complete the work. In the very first pages of the 1933 edition of the book, Mariana Coelho included two letters – one from Rocha Pombo and the other from Dario Vellozo – as forewords, conceptualized as strategies of political and intellectual legitimization. Both highlight the work's importance, its documental density, the long research efforts and the author's relevance on the feminist context. Unlike the letters exchanged during the writing process, these were meant to be published from their conception, working as the book's flattering introduction. As pointed out by Tomé and Campos (2023), the foreword was engineered by Mariana as a means of insertion and recognition in the intellectual field, especially among male peers.

However, Mariana initially desired that the foreword were written by Bertha Lutz, a choice she deemed more appropriate to the purposes of the work. The invitation was reiterated between 1925 and 1928, with great emphasis placed on the symbolic and strategic worth of this text being signed by a figure of national and international proportions on feminism. Although Bertha did answer positively in 1926, the foreword was not delivered, nor are there any indications that it was ever finished. The tone of Mariana's last letters suggest strong frustration in regards to the tardiness, which may have motivated the substitution for more available names.

Still, when publishing Rocha Pombo and Vellozo's letters, Mariana reinforced the authority of her work, beckoning for her network of recognized intellectuals to amplify its circulation and acceptance.

As Your Honor knows, it is quite frequent for the same news published by telegraph or in chronicles, to bring different dates. And as Your Honor's name is incredibly noticeable in feminism and intellect, I have long decided to write

to you for help in this for me arduous task, seeing as Curitiba's press rarely preoccupies themselves with these purposes. (Coelho, 23rd of Mar. 1924)

The extensive letter sent by Bertha Lutz to Mariana Coelho on the January 9th 1925, typewritten in two whole pages, brings information about the election of the board of directors of the Brazilian Federation for Women's Progress, as it also provides other important information, that Mariana Coelho included in her book. The first of which was about a project sent by deputy Basílio de Magalhães about the necessity of the authorization of a husband to allow a married woman to vote, defending that "[...] it goes without saying that this is a restriction with which we cannot and should not agree with. It is preferable to keep the preexistent Lamartine Project because it grants the right to vote on the terms of the Constitution, the only viable criteria" (Lutz, 9th of Jan. 1925).

This information was inserted by Mariana on the pages 163 and 164 of *The Evolution of Feminism*, when she discusses political rights in Brazil. Mariana Coelho, sharing the same opinion, writes: "We characterize such a concession – of a gagged freedom... a consequence, perhaps, of the influence that reinforces the habitual obedience to the husband." (Coelho, 2002, p. 164).

During the book, Mariana Coelho included, in its entirety, the contents of the letter sent by the Brazilian Federation for Women's Progress, referred hereafter by its Portuguese acronym FBPF (*Federação Brasileira pelo Progresso Feminino*), to the author of the project, Basilio Magalhães. Mariana Coelho named said letter a "memorial", (Coelho, 2002, p. 164 to 167). The document explains FBPF's opinion, sustaining it with other convergent opinions, like that of Mr. Lauro Müller⁶ and of the Brazilian's Lawyers Institute (*Instituto dos Advogados Brasileiros*), also mentioning foreign representatives' favorable opinions for women's right to vote, and highlighting the conditions of women's rights to vote in various countries. The FBPF defended in their memorial that "A woman shall orient her political conduct by herself, guiding herself with her own brain, being aware of her duties in relation to her country" (Coelho, 2002, p. 166).

⁶ Lauro Severiano Müller, born in Itajaí, in the state of Santa Catarina, in 1863, and dying in Rio de Janeiro, in the state of the same name, in 1926, was an engineer, serviceman, governor/president of Santa Catarina, federal deputy, senator, Minister of Foreign Relations, Minister of Industry, Road Transport and Public Works and member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters (*Academia Brasileira de Letras*) (*Memória Política de Santa Catarina*, 2023).

In the same January 9th letter, Bertha Lutz informed Mariana Coelho about the situation of women's suffrage in countries like Spain, Italy and Greece. In relation to France, facing uncertainty in relation to the information available to her, directed Mariana to seek out the important feminist activist and lawyer Suzanne Grinberg, also sending Mariana her address. Bertha also shared information about the leadership of the Interamerican Union, at the time led by Esther Neira de Calvo, from Panama, alongside data about the Counsel's Congress and the indication and contact of renowned English feminist Elsie Zimmern as a complementary source (Lutz, 9th of Jan. 1925). The excerpt demonstrates Bertha Lutz's ample knowledge about international feminist movements and her insertion in transnational networks that gave Mariana Coelho access to data crucial to her writings.

The same happens to the Annex 1 attached to the letter written on the 1st of November 1925 by Bertha Lutz to Mariana Coelho, where there is a long list of the names and respective addresses of people relevant to her book, like Katherine Bompas, in London, and of Lady Aberdeen Cromar, in Scotland (Lutz, 1st of Nov. 1925). The excerpts of the letters sent by Mariana Coelho to Bertha Lutz in the 17th of November 1924 and in January of 1925 demonstrate that Bertha's indications were followed by Mariana Coelho.

The letters contain comments like: "I received, conveniently, your gentle little letter and pointers from newspapers and for all I immensely thank you." (Coelho, 17th of Nov. 1924, p. 1) "I greatly enjoyed it, for, various topics of representation, various news were new to me." (Coelho, 28th of Jan. 1925).

In a letter from the 21st of January 1925, Mariana Coelho commented on news pushed by the press about the stepping back in regards to women's rights to vote in Italy and demonstrated great distrust in relation to the promises made by Mussolini. Returning the debate to the demand for a husband's consent to allow a woman to vote, she positioned herself forcefully: "[...] don't allow it, Ms. Bertha, because, if this is approved, women would be, in the middle of the 20th century, trapped to the humiliation of Napoleon's Code – of horrific memory" (Coelho, 21st of Jan. 1925). In the same letter, she also discussed women's eligibility and the matter of a married woman's nationality, defending their right to choose between their own country or their husband's, and reaffirming her commitment to all women, despite being single.

The letters from December 6th 1924 and from January 21st 1925 were answered by Bertha Lutz on the 12th of February 1925, where she demonstrated equal abhorrence towards Mussolini and agreement about the arbitrariness of the demand for marital authorization for a woman's vote: "I am very glad to know that you agree with me in regards to the arbitrariness of the requirement of a husband's authorization to allow a woman to vote. We need to nullify this part of the project [...]" (Lutz, 12th of Feb. 1925).

Bertha Lutz also indicated books that could help Mariana Coelho in writing, as we can see on the letter from the 17th of November 1924, sent by Mariana, where she mentions the suggestion of books. The same letter also deals with a request of clarification on Bertha's part of news from the press about women's rights to vote in Spain, Italy and in North America, alongside the request for information about the latest advancements of feminism, so that she could finish her work. She also asks for suggestions of people to whom she could send her book to, saying that it would be successful if it was through Bertha, who, according to her, was of "great, justified competency" and who she considered "the *leader* of women in Brazil" (Coelho, 17th of Nov. 1924).

Mariana Coelho not only manifests personal admiration for Bertha Lutz through calling her a *leader*, but refers to the position of prestige occupied by her in the national feminist scenario. Her familiar and professional position on the National Museum gathered credentials that granted her intellectual and political authority. Her residence in Rio de Janeiro – the country's capital at the time and the center of institutional joints – added to the constant international travels she performed for the sake of the feminist movement, representing Brazil in official congresses and missions.

In this context, her figure worked as a central node in the networks of feminist sociability, bridging distinct social spaces and contributing to the circulation of ideas, books and practices – in the sense proposed by Chartier (1991), to whom the circulation implied in differential appropriations, with variants originating from multiple conditions of reception. These elements not only put her in a place of notoriety in international feminist networks, but made her a strategic reference to women like Mariana Coelho, who, from other regions of the country, sought out in her a qualified medium to spread their ideas and publications.

The long letter also contains other relevant notes. In one excerpt, Mariana reveals her friendship with Bertha Lutz granted her access to spaces in Rio de Janeiro's press: "I received near the end of December a letter from *Vanguard's* writer, asking my opinion on women's suffrage and a picture of me – explaining that who gave him my name was "miss Bertha Lutz" (Coelho, 21st of Jan. 1925). The episode demonstrates how the feminist networks were mobilized to legitimate and spread intellectual production among women, allowing authors situated outside of great urban centers, like Mariana in Curitiba, to reach circles of greater visibility in the country's capital. Through giving Mariana's name to the press in Rio de Janeiro, Bertha Lutz acted like a mediator between local, national and international scales of the feminist movement, exerting a role of leadership that directly contributed to the amplification of women's presence in public spaces. Said role can be understood as an expression of a "social capital" (Bourdieu, 1989), capable of facilitating the insertion of other women in debates and publications of greater reach.

Mariana Coelho and Bertha Lutz relationship was not purely vertical, despite the admiration manifested by Mariana. In a letter from the 21st of October 1925, for example, Mariana demanded an answer in a courteous, but firm manner, demonstrating worry about the possible loss of some previous correspondence that contained parts of her manuscripts. Bertha Lutz answered on November 1st 1925 and, as a form of compensation for her silence, typewrote a four-page long letter, in which she apologized for her tardiness, attributed to health conditions, and returned with added commentary the manuscript of the "Chapter about Feminism in Politics and Bureaucracy" (Lutz, 1st of Nov. 1925). The long letter focuses mainly on Bertha's impressions on the chapter, revealing a significant change of tone. If in previous correspondences Bertha's encouragement seemed contained, after reading the fourth chapter she demonstrates great surprise towards the sheer quality of the work, indicating a more in-depth recognition of the intellectual density of Mariana Coelho's writings.

Represents a notable work and I cannot contain my admiration and surprise towards how rich the documentation is. This must represent long and tenacious research, alongside patient but incredibly varied readings. The result is marvelous work that I had the honor of reading. I await with the utmost interest for the opportunity to read the completed work. (Lutz, 1st of Nov. 1925).

In a following excerpt, Bertha Lutz (1st of Nov. 1925) proposed the addition of various other excerpts she found pertinent to the book:

In regards to the United States, the currently most interesting association is the League of Women Voters, formed as a substitute for the National American Woman Suffrage Association, that gained the suffragist and organized campaign after the vote to educate the voting women. They have millions of members and exert healthy and beneficial influence upon the country.

We noticed that Mariana Coelho accepted the indication, completing the preexistent excerpt with Bertha Lutz information and with more details that probably emerged from independent research, which we can verify in the third paragraph of the 122nd page of *The Evolution of Feminism* (1933, 2002). Bertha Lutz continues her commentary on the same letter:

The *Woman's Party* is similar to Mrs. Fankhusst's party in England, using violent tactics and causing scandals. It is seen in a bad light by moderates. Pleading for absolute equality will result in the abolition of the legislation that protects working-class women. Greatly harmful, is it not? (Lutz, 1st of Nov. 1925).

Mariana Coelho inserts this excerpt in the book, in a paragraph preceding the one mentioned above. Bertha Lutz's extensive letter and her annexes still proposed other additions, some of which were welcomed and incorporated and others that were ignored by Coelho, which reinforces the thesis that she had autonomy, possessed and sustained her own opinions. Reaching out to Bertha Lutz, a reference in Brazilian feminism, did not put her in a place of inferiority and, despite always portraying herself humbly in letters, she, at the same time that she sought out interlocution, was not intimidated out of showing certain points of view that differed from her peer. Bertha Lutz also served as a sort of quality control, considering that the book was already pretty far into the writing process and that Mariana Coelho was sure of what she wanted to include, but she saw Bertha as a good source of knowledge and someone that could point out flaws or mistakes that might've existed in the book.

In a letter from February 12 1925, we see an example Bertha Lutz's questioning of the themes addressed by Mariana Coelho in the book, in specific about chapter 3, "Women in religion – their traditional servitude" and chapter 7, "Women in Love":

Judging by the indicated chapters, the book seems very interesting. Since the illustrious patrician had the kindness to mention the subject, I wish to make some considerations, and ask you to not find them impertinent. In all honesty, do you not find it a bit risky to mention affection in a book about feminism? Is it truly necessary? Because it is incredibly easy to misinterpret. One of the claims that has damaged feminism the most is the erroneous idea that many have that feminism is partial to licentiousness in love. Well, I'm sure that you'll agree with me and with all true leaders of good feminism that women's emancipation shall be had in an environment of elevated morality and inspire itself in the deep respect that men have to women's dignity that doesn't stoop down to sentimental intrigue.

Religion is also an incredibly serious topic. We shall not forget that Brazilian women are deeply religious and attached to the Catholic Church. The church will certainly not be alien to guiding Brazilian women as they try to adapt to modern life. I have the strong conviction that it shall be one of the elements that propel women's emancipation furthest in Brazil.

I'm not sure what your ideas on the topic are exactly, but I'm sure you'll certainly agree you should not offend the church's religious ideals and faith.

I ask for your forgiveness for giving my opinion on this subject, but since we are dealing with such serious topics and have a great deal of responsibility, I judged it my duty to make these considerations. [...] (Lutz, Feb. 12th 1925).

This excerpt reveals Bertha Lutz's feminist stance, shared by many feminists at the time⁷, that wished for the insertion of women in public and political life, giving them the right to vote and be voted on, but simultaneously worried about the morality of their actions. In this case, Bertha Lutz's goal was to avoid any erroneous interpretations that could be thrown against Mariana Coelho's writings that could stain the feminist movement's or their own reputation.

Mariana Coelho answered through a letter sent on March 19, 1925, as we have previously pointed out, with an excerpt that shows her firm and tranquilizing attitude:

The title of some chapters of my book absolutely do not represent what you fear, Mrs. Bertha.

For example, in the last one, "Women in Love", I developed and registered the history of women in maternal, conjugal and platonic love.

Do you really think that with my humble quill I could write anything that could lead to censorship or damages to our righteous cause?

It is just such a beautiful word – love – that I use it for all natural and familiar affections without ever sanctioning what is less serious.

The chapter "Women in religion" is about the roles of women in various religions during the course of history. (Coelho, Mar. 19th 1925)

When comparing what was sent in a letter to Bertha Lutz on January 21st 1925 and the published work in 1933, we notice that Mariana Coelho changed the titles of

⁷ "The feminist movement that begins in the 1910s focuses on the strategic interests of women. It was noticed that their insertion in the public sphere, still in its early days, would need to begin with women's full participation in the political life of the country, as both voters and candidates. They believed that once this first juridic equality was reached, greater participation in formal education and in work would follow suit. Furthermore, they worried about women's political education to stimulate them to be a part of public life with the capacity to critique things by themselves" (Novellino, 2018, p. 3).

some of its chapters, and can affirm that this happened due to Bertha Lutz's comments. Alongside the changes already mentioned for chapters 3 and 5, the last chapter, that had the title "Women in love", began to have the title "Women in the diverse modalities of love". As far as we believe, Mariana Coelho took precautions in regards to the possible misinterpretations pointed out by Bertha Lutz, keeping the topic in the book, but changing the title to make it a bit more objective and difficult to misinterpret.

Mariana Coelho's June 26 1927 letter demonstrates that Bertha Lutz questioned the title change, and Mariana Coelho justified said alterations:

"Women in Love" implies exclusively sexual love; while the diverse modalities develop the moral situation of women in all noble topics of their affection: fraternal, conjugal, maternal and to their fellow humans. Believe me, my dear friend, when I say that my consciousness assures me that I need not change even a single comma in what I wrote.
I have nothing more to tell you today. When I mentioned this chapter to my dear brother – who is not with us anymore – he answered: "You capped it off perfectly". (Coelho, Jul. 26th 1927)

The aforementioned excerpt reinforces the notion that the intellectual relationship between Marina Coelho and Bertha Lutz did not behave under a logic of submission, even if it was affected by deep admiration, alongside mutual dialogue and recognition. When justifying the tweaks in the chapter's title and content, Mariana Coelho shows awareness about the moral and affective reach of her writing, as well as security in relation to the conceptual choices that held up her work. In this sense, it is observable that, despite having considered external ponderings and welcoming those she found coherent, the author kept herself firm in her convictions, refusing to make changes she found unnecessary or incompatible with the meaning of the text. This stance demonstrated not only her intellectual autonomy, but also the consolidation of an author aware of herself, capable of negotiating, debating and publicly sustaining her decisions within a network of feminine and intellectual sociability without giving up her own voice.

5 Final Considerations

The analysis of the correspondence between Mariana Coelho and Bertha Lutz allows us to understand *The Evolution of Feminism* as the result of a long, collective intellectual process, marked by the epistolary practices and by networks of feminist sociability. The letters demonstrate that the writing of the work was not limited to the

gathering of information, but built up in a continuous exercise of intellectual formation, negotiation of meanings and political intervention, in which the exchange of documents and impressions was a decisive factor.

Understood as egodocuments, the letters reveal themselves as privileged spaces of learning, subjectivation and production of meaning. Through them, Mariana Coelho solidified an intellectual trajectory built on the margins of formal education, supported by informal educational practices and in dialogue with other women, especially Bertha Lutz. This interlocution contributed to keeping sources up to date, tweaks in the structure of the work and the definition of strategies of legitimation without becoming a hierarchical relationship.

The letters also demonstrate the central role of feminist networks in the circulation of ideas and documents. The position occupied by Bertha Lutz, with ample institutional insertion and international projection, worked as a strategic medium between different scales of the feminist movement, allowing Mariana Coelho, working from Curitiba, to access ampler circuits of visibility.

Our study demonstrates the limits and obstacles faced by women in the intellectual field in the first half of the 20th century, like epistolary silences, gaps in documentation and editorial difficulties. The tardiness in relation to the work's publication and the strategies adopted for its legitimization showed the gender inequalities that plagued the production and circulation of knowledge. From the point of view of the History of Education, Mariana Coelho's trajectory amplifies the comprehension of the formative processes of feminist pedagogists through demonstrating that education is also built in non-institutionalized spaces.

Through analysing *The Evolution of Feminism* based on its epistolary genesis we reaffirm writing as an educational, political and ethical practice, contributing to the valorization of alternative means of women's intellectual production and towards deeper research about ego documents, intellectual women and education outside of schools. We hope to have contributed to the valorization of her work as an expression of her time's feminism and as a testimony of the political potential of education and women's communication through writing.

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