

THE LEADING ROLE OF GERVASIA NUNÉZIA PIRES DOS SANTOS NEVES IN THE DIRECTION OF THE *JORNAL DAS SENHORAS* (1853-1855)

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Abstract: Among the three editor-in-chiefs who led *Jornal das Senhoras*, Gervasia Nunézia Pires dos Santos Neves (1824-1872) was the one who remained in charge of the women's magazine the longest period—two years and seven months. However, she is also the one who received the least recognition compared to her predecessors, Juana Paula Manso de Noronha (1819-1875) and Violante Atabalipa Ximenes de Bivar e Vellasco (1817-1875). Therefore, this article aims to highlight the role of this literary woman in leading a women's magazine in the mid-19th century, as well as the importance of the publication as a forum for dialogue among women in Rio de Janeiro. To this end, we seek to shed light on the work of this editor before, during and after her time as director of *Jornal das Senhoras*, and then present the role of the women's magazine as a cultural mediation platform that gave women a voice in the public sphere. In this way, it will be possible to demonstrate how this editor-in-chief continued the same claims initiated by her colleagues in the editorial office, sustaining the publication as a political and symbolic tool in favor of gender equity.

Keywords: Gervasia Nunézia Pires dos Santos Neves; *Jornal das Senhoras*; Press; Gender; Women.

O PROTAGONISMO DE GERVASIA NUNÉZIA PIRES DOS SANTOS NEVES NA DIREÇÃO DO *JORNAL DAS SENHORAS* (1853-1855)

Resumo: Dentre as três redatoras-chefes que atuaram na direção do *Jornal das Senhoras*, Gervasia Nunézia Pires dos Santos Neves (1824-1872) foi aquela que permaneceu mais tempo na direção da revista feminina - dois anos e sete meses. No entanto, é também a que recebeu menos destaque em comparação às suas antecessoras, Juana Paula Manso de Noronha (1819-1875) e Violante Atabalipa Ximenes de Bivar e Vellasco (1817-1875). Assim, este artigo pretende destacar o protagonismo dessa mulher de letras na direção de uma revista feminina em meados do século XIX, bem como a importância do periódico enquanto espaço de diálogo entre as mulheres no Rio de Janeiro. Para isso, buscamos dar visibilidade à atuação dessa senhora antes, durante e depois da direção do *Jornal das Senhoras* para, em seguida,

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apresentar o papel da revista feminina como um suporte de mediação cultural que deu voz às mulheres no espaço público. Desse modo, será possível mostrar como essa redatora-chefe deu continuidade às mesmas reivindicações iniciadas por suas colegas de redação, mantendo o impresso como um mecanismo político e simbólico em prol da equidade de gênero.

Palavras-Chave: Gervasia Nunézia Pires dos Santos Neves; Jornal das Senhoras; Imprensa; Gênero; Mulheres.

EL PROTAGONISMO DE GERVASIA NUNÉZIA PIRES DOS SANTOS NEVES EN LA DIRECCIÓN DEL JORNAL DAS SENHORAS (1853-1855)

Resumen: Entre las tres redactoras principales que dirigieron el *Jornal das Senhoras*, Gervasia Nunézia Pires dos Santos Neves (1824-1872) fue quien permaneció más tiempo al frente de la revista femenina: dos años y siete meses. Sin embargo, es también quien recibió menos reconocimiento en comparación con sus predecesoras, Juana Paula Manso de Noronha (1819-1875) y Violante Atabalipa Ximenes de Bivar e Vellasco (1817-1875). Así, este artículo pretende destacar el protagonismo de esta mujer de letras en la dirección de una revista femenina a mediados del siglo XIX, así como la importancia del periódico como un espacio de diálogo entre las mujeres en Río de Janeiro. Para ello, buscaremos dar visibilidad al trabajo de esta señora antes, durante y después de la dirección del *Jornal das Senhoras* para luego presentar el papel de la revista femenina como soporte de mediación cultural que dio voz a las mujeres en el espacio público. De este modo, será posible mostrar cómo esta redactora principal dio continuidad a las mismas reivindicaciones iniciadas por sus colegas de redacción, manteniendo la publicación como un mecanismo político y simbólico a favor de la equidad de género.

Palabras-chaves: Gervasia Nunézia Pires dos Santos Neves; Jornal das Senhoras; Prensa; Género; Mujer.

Introduction

The protagonist of this article is Gervasia Nunézia Pires dos Santos Neves, a Brazilian woman born in 1824 and deceased in 1872 (*Livro de Registro de Membros da Igreja Presbiteriana do Rio de Janeiro*, 1911, p. 2), best known as the third editor-in-chief of *Jornal das Senhoras*, a women's periodical published in Rio de Janeiro from 1852 to 1855. Although this editor held her position for two years and seven months— a longer tenure than her predecessors, Juana² Paula Manso de Noronha (1819-1875), who led for six months, and Violante Atabalipa Ximenes de Bivar e Vellasco (1817-1875), who directed the journal for eleven months— Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves still seems to lack the same visibility or recognition as her editorial colleagues.

² Given the spelling of the Argentine writer's first name - Joanna, Joana, Juana -, we adopted the latter, as used in her native country.

The limited visibility of Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves, in comparison to her fellow editors of the women's periodical—a publication with a predominantly female readership (Buitoni, 1981; Luca, 2012)—may be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the personal history of Juana P. M. de Noronha, an Argentine political exile due to the dictatorship established under Juan Manuel Rosas (1793-1877), emphasizes the political protagonism of an intellectual who faced persecution and was forced to flee and migrate to preserve her life and freedom.

The trajectory of this Argentine editor and her intellectual contributions have been analyzed by numerous researchers in Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay, as well as in academic studies from other countries (Azevedo, 2021; Fletcher, 1994; Lobo, 2009; Souto, 2020; Vasconcelos, 1999; Velazco y Arias, 1937). There is even a dedicated website³ on Juana P. M. de Noronha's life and work, with an extensive list of studies about this intellectual, confirming her prominent role in the fight for women's rights in the nineteenth century.

Secondly, the role of Violante A. X. de B. e Vellasco in leading *Jornal das Senhoras*, her creation of *O Domingo* (1874)—a journal that also addressed women's rights issues—and her contributions as an editor, writer, translator, and member of the Brazilian Dramatic Conservatory are well-documented in various studies that recognize her influence in the literary world and her importance in continuing the legacy initiated by Juana P. M. de Noronha in establishing a periodical that served as a platform for women's advocacy.

Finally, the scarcity of information on the life of Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves, her conversion to evangelical Protestant Christianity in the mid-1860s, and her reserved, conservative stance, combined with the two aspects previously mentioned, may help to explain the relatively limited amount of research focused on this intellectual's life and career, as well as her role in leading *Jornal das Senhoras* and in advancing the ideas and ideals initiated by Juana P. M. de Noronha and continued by Violante A. X. de B. e Vellasco.

For this reason, the present study generally aims to examine Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves's role in directing a women-oriented magazine in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as to highlight the relevance of *Jornal das Senhoras* as a platform within the public sphere during her tenure, giving voice to women and serving as a symbolic and political tool in the struggle for gender equality. The intent is not to elevate one editor over another, but rather to emphasize the unique qualities of each so that she, along with all the others, receives the

³ Check: <https://www.juanamanso.org/>. Accessed: October 15, 2024.

visibility and recognition she deserves for her work in print and for advancing the quest for equal rights between men and women.

To conduct this research, we propose using the cultural history perspective, which “seeks primarily to identify how, in different places and times, a specific social reality is constructed, understood, and communicated” (Chartier, 2002, p. 16, author’s translation). Put differently, this perspective reflects “an interest in symbols and their interpretations” (Burke, 2008, p. 10, author’s translation). In our case, it is essential to understand the context in which nineteenth-century Brazilian society developed, in order to then identify and analyze the role of Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves as editor and of the women’s magazine she led.

The gender perspective, as proposed by Joan Scott (1995, p. 72), allows us to “emphasize the fundamentally social nature of distinctions based on sex” and thus to understand how certain social roles, structures, actions, and ways of perceiving the world were shaped by biological differences between men and women. Once this framework for interpreting the world and its inhabitants is understood, we can then analyze the power relations and struggles that occurred in the mid-nineteenth century, with *Jornal das Senhoras* serving as one of the symbolic and political means used by these women in their demands for greater rights.

The subtleties of a female editor-in-chief

Before taking over as editor-in-chief of *Jornal das Senhoras* in June 1853, Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves was already contributing to the women’s magazine. In the 68th issue, published on April 17, 1853, the *Crônica da Quinzena* (Biweekly Chronicle) section was signed by ‘Gervina P.,’ a pseudonym adopted by the intellectual. Alongside her, Antonio José dos Santos Neves, whom the future editor would marry in May of that same year, also contributed to the magazine, publishing poetry dedicated to his beloved (*Jornal das Senhoras*, n. 54, 01/09/1853, p. 6). Their involvement with the magazine would deepen once Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves assumed its leadership.

Two weeks after her marriage to the poet Antonio J. dos S. Neves, celebrated on May 22, 1853, Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves took over as editor of *Jornal das Senhoras*. This suggests that marriage may have been a prerequisite for a woman to direct a publication in Brazil during the mid-nineteenth century. After all, it is known that the laws of that period prohibited unmarried women or those without their husband’s consent from holding assets and/or property (Hahner, 2012). Thus, her marriage enabled Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves to

take on the role of editor-in-chief, even though, bureaucratically, the enterprise was held in her husband's name.

Her previous contributions to the women's magazine were also crucial in her selection as the new editor-in-chief. First, taking on an editorial role required courage in a patriarchal society where public opinion was largely shaped by men, limiting women's voices and presence in the press. Second, the position demanded some experience in the processes of drafting, editing, and composing a publication, so as to successfully publish and distribute it to subscribers. Therefore, Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves was the contributor chosen to lead the venture begun by Juana P. M. de Noronha and continued by Violante A. X. de B. e Vellasco.

In the week following her installment as editor-in-chief, Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves introduced herself on the magazine's front page, expressing her awareness of the challenging task of managing a periodical:

And I have no idea what calamities may have been suffered by those who, like me, despite the cautious disposition of a misunderstood selfishness, confront all this expectation of a corrupt education with which they degrade our sex, and avenge all these disastrous prejudices with which they intend to sterilize our intellectuality. (Neves, n° 76, 12/06/1853, p. 1, author's translation).

The excerpt above highlights the astuteness of Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves in navigating the patriarchal context in which she lived and the challenges she would face in assuming her new role. At the inception of *Jornal das Senhoras*, the editorial board, under Juana P. M. de Noronha's leadership, had already received anonymous letters criticizing the ideas presented in the women's periodical regarding moral emancipation and the social advancement of women (Costa, 2021).

These themes, championed by the Argentine editor in various articles, would continue under the direction of Violante A. X. de B. e Vellasco but were approached with less vigor during the tenure of Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves. Thus, the absence of articles explicitly advocating for women's moral emancipation and social improvement may be one reason for the relative lack of visibility and research focused on the trajectory and significance of the third editor. Indeed, compared to the terms of her two predecessors, Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves might be seen as adopting a more neutral or conservative stance, potentially overshadowing her contributions in directing and producing a women's magazine as well as her role in the cultural mediation of a political and symbolic medium championing gender equality.

However, the reduced focus on articles openly addressing women's moral emancipation did not diminish Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves' leadership role at *Jornal das Senhoras* nor the significance of the periodical as a communicative space for women to discuss improvements and rights. Through a review and analysis of *Jornal das Senhoras* issues under her leadership, a different type of discourse emerges to reflect on women's presence in public life.

Starting with issue no. 86, the *Mulheres Célebres* (Famous Women) section became part of select issues, aiming to "offer a valuable service to our readers by making known the names of women who have achieved renown in past centuries, whether as artists or writers" (*Jornal das Senhoras*, n. 86, 08/21/1853, p. 4). Beyond providing visibility to diverse women across various times and places, the article had an even more assertive intent:

When we ventured to undertake such a work, our only aim was to dispel the presumptuous slander against the female sex, that it has nothing of its own in the republic of letters and in the reign of the arts; we have compiled here and there the most accurate and dispassionate biographies that have been written, and although we do not present any of our own lucubrations, we nevertheless believe that it is no less worthy of occupying the attention of contemporary women, and in some way capable of serving as an incentive to many geniuses who hide in the darkness of indifference, guided perhaps by a misunderstood fear of tearing off the veil in public.

May it be that in distant times those to come will see recorded in the pages written by the biographers of their day the names that the present, by ignoring them, fails to stamp in the golden book where notables are inscribed! May the future do them justice, and may the centenaries of foreign women, who ennoble past memories, bring together our own countrywomen, whose talents and illustrations no one can doubt. J.P. (J.P., n° 86, 21/08/1853, p. 4-5, author's translation).

The author's nuanced writing reveals significant elements related to the promotion of women's biographies. First, it can be observed that the visibility afforded to these celebrated women also served as an example to inspire other ladies who aspired to engage in similar activities but felt either unrepresented or fearful of public exposure and judgment, they might face for performing certain roles. Second, there is a call for justice, seen in the hope that other biographers would focus on these women and expand the list created by the author to include Brazilian women whose activities could serve as examples to other ladies.

In the case of the justice invoked in the article, it may also be interpreted as a quest for gender equality, given that certain roles remained exclusively attributed to men. These aspirations originated from the article's author, who signed with the pseudonym J. P., or Juana Paula M. de Noronha, the first editor of the women's magazine. Thus, the writing in the *Mulheres Célebres* (Famous Women) section, published in various issues of *Jornal das*

Senhoras during Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves' tenure, reflects this editor's commitment, aligned with the author, in advocating for improved rights for women.

This commitment was also evident in texts authored by Neves herself. Continuing the theme of justice, she published an article with the same title under the pseudonym Gervina in the same issue as her introduction in the magazine. In attempting to define and explain what justice is and its purpose, Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves writes that

Justice concerns all members of society equally, for without it there is not a single one who can for a moment consider himself secure. An unjust man or woman tears apart the social bond that unites them to others, becomes the enemy of all, and gives everyone the right to oppress them. The abuse that man makes of his strength authorizes his fellow citizens to use theirs to repel the obstacle that resists their well-being.

Force can never confer rights that another greater force cannot annihilate, for only justice can confer true and legitimate rights.

Gervina (Gervina, n° 76, 12/06/1853, p. 3, author's translation).

This excerpt reveals a discourse on equality between men and women before the law, condemning the abuse of male power manifested by the patriarchal structure in which Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves and her contemporaries lived. The editor's subtlety in her writing can be seen both as a hallmark of her style and as a narrative strategy to convey her message indirectly, thus avoiding the criticism previously directed at the publication under the first editor's leadership.

Even the articles by Juana P. M. de Noronha, published during Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves's tenure, took on a more measured tone compared to her earlier writings on female emancipation from her own editorial period between January and June 1852. In the article *Pensamentos* (Thoughts), published in the 81st issue (17 July 1853), the Argentine editor discussed how women were regarded as either angels or demons, yet were never seen as embodying a balance between these two profiles. This concept reflects a society structured by binary oppositions—man and woman, good and evil, heaven and hell, etc. This kind of thought, common in the nineteenth century, is subtly critiqued by the Argentine editor in such a way that less discerning readers might interpret it as a mere statement on gender representations rather than the condemnation it actually expresses.

In the same article, when referring to men, Juana P. M. de Noronha remarked, on the one hand, that "Every man's life is a romance, more or less prosaic, more or less poetic—and the ending of this romance is always the same—death!" and, on the other, that "Men's words should be listened to attentively only to compare them with their actions, for that is where one truly discerns the individual" (Noronha, no. 81, 17 July 1853, p. 8, author's translation).

These two statements can be analyzed through the cultural and gender perspectives proposed in this research. First, comparing a man's life to a romance implies that the social reality of being male equated to a story with a beginning, middle, and end. However, by stating that the ending is death, the author breaks from the fictional notion, prompting readers to understand that, as poetic or prosaic as life may seem, it is finite. This invites reflection on how one shapes their own story, suggesting that a man's life is not necessarily a fairytale with a happy ending.

The second statement complements the first, implying that men's words should be weighed against their actions to understand them better and, consequently, to read and interpret their life stories. Juana P. M. de Noronha's reflections aimed to consider men's nature and actions and the narratives they used to construct a social reality from their own perspective within the patriarchal framework that dominated nineteenth-century Brazil.

In a society influenced by the Romantic literary movement, various authors, mostly men, often idealized women in their writings, portraying them sometimes as angels—beautiful, sweet, gentle, and virtuous (Bernardi, 1999)—and at other times as demons—seductive, wicked, cruel, unfaithful, unstable, and powerful enough to persuade men to follow their desires (Costa, 1963). From a gender perspective, this narrative reduces women to two opposing profiles; in the case of the demon, she is seen as needing supervision and control to prevent her from disrupting the “natural order” of a society constructed by the “protagonists” of this romance.

Thus, it becomes evident that the symbolic language employed in literature served as a narrative device in the press, conveying certain messages that readers needed to interpret to understand the world around them and the social representations constructed around men and women. The subtlety with which the article was written aligns with the style of the new editor of *Jornal das Senhoras*, Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves, who aimed to produce and publish texts in a more moderate tone to avoid direct confrontations with those who disagreed with revolutionary ideas on women's moral emancipation and social progress.

The facets of a protagonist inside and outside *Jornal das Senhoras*

With Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves's assumption of the editor-in-chief role at *Jornal das Senhoras*, certain changes and continuities can be observed in the structure and focus of the articles published over the two years and seven months of her leadership. In terms of continuities, subscriptions to the periodical continued to be available at commercial

establishments on Ouvidor Street, specifically: the clothing store of Mr. Wallerstein & Co., no. 70; the beauty salon of Alexandre and Francisco Desmarais, no. 86; and Louis Mongie's bookstore, no. 87.

With the start of Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves's tenure in July 1853, the typography bearing the same name, previously located at Ouvidor Street, no. 36, was moved to Alfândega Street, no. 54, and by late August of that same year, it was relocated again to Cano Street, no. 165, where it remained until the periodical's last issue in December 1855.

The editor retained the magazine's eight-page format, along with a fashion illustration sourced from the French periodical *Le Moniteur de la Mode* (1843–1913), accompanied by descriptions translated and signed by Christina, the pseudonym of the second editor, Violante A. X. de B. e Vellasco. However, this second editor ceased producing fashion descriptions between January and April of 1854, being replaced by another contributor who signed under the pseudonym Ritinha. Christina returned in May of the same year and continued contributing until mid-September 1854. Following this period, the fashion texts and illustration descriptions appeared unsigned, except in issues 157 (31 December 1854) and 159 (14 January 1855), where they were attributed to a contributor under the pseudonym Alina.

Various topics, as well as poetry and poems, remained a fixture throughout Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves's leadership. Different authors, including her husband Antonio José dos Santos Neves, published texts on diverse themes, addressing emotions, social issues, everyday situations, tributes, and other subjects. As for household recipes, which appeared in nine issues during the tenure of Violante A. X. de B. e Vellasco, they were published in 19 issues under Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves, from the second half of 1853 through 1854.

Regarding content on theater, spectacles, and other cultural activities, the *Crônicas da Quinzena* (Fortnightly Chronicles), written by Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves since April 1853, continued until early January 1854, when it was replaced by the *Correio dos Salões* (Salon Mail), which persisted until the periodical's end. Additionally, sections like *Crônicas dos Salões* (Salon Chronicles), *Boletim Musical* (Musical Bulletin), and similar cultural articles were introduced, alternating from the second half of 1853 to the first half of 1855, increasing the pages dedicated to these subjects during that time. Various authors contributed to these articles from 1853 to 1854; however, Alina took over the *Crônicas dos Salões* in October 1854 and continued until the final issue of *Jornal das Senhoras* in December 1855.

A significant increase in the number of riddles, logographs, and puzzles occurred during Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves's management (ninety-nine), compared to Juana P. M. de Noronha's leadership (two) and Violante A. X. de B. e Vellasco's (fifteen). This type of

content may be interpreted as one of the editor's strategies to make the periodical lighter in text and to entertain readers with small puzzles. At the same time, this approach encouraged subscriptions, as the answer to a riddle would only be available in the following issue.

Finally, texts about women became less frequent during Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves's tenure as editor-in-chief. The *Mulheres Célebres* (Famous Women) section, written by Juana P. Manso de Noronha under the pseudonym J. P., appeared in seventeen issues between the second half of 1853 and 1854, along with an article about the meaning of certain feminine names, published without attribution. A letter to the editor was also published, expressing interest in contributing texts and praising the guidance provided by the periodical to women on philosophical matters.

Concerning writings on women and their rights, an important article on *Educação do sexo feminino* (The Education of the Female Sex) was identified, divided across two issues, and written by a contributor under the pseudonym Baroneza de ***. In this article, the author reflects "on the need to demand for our daughters a more varied and serious education than what they currently learn in the schools to which we entrust them" (Baroneza de ***, no. 161, 28 January 1855, p. 7).

The critique of the educational system made by Baroneza de *** did not extend to subjects like the study of philosophy, as proposed by Juana P. M. de Noronha during her tenure at the women's magazine, yet it aligned on the need to reform teaching methods. The author calls for the inclusion of qualified teachers for their respective subjects and greater governmental oversight in the administration of educational institutions, aiming to shape good citizens.

Although the article maintained a more moderate tone on female education, avoiding ideas and terms such as moral emancipation and social betterment of women—championed by the first editor—Baroneza de *** invokes "social morality and purity of customs" (no. 165, 25 February 1855, p. 8, author's translation) as elements in constant development, which could be enhanced if women received better education. While it cannot be said that these ideas were identical to those of Juana P. M. de Noronha, the author's dissatisfaction with the education of that era is evident, to the extent that Baroneza de *** urges government attention, recognizing that a robust educational system was essential for instructing future mothers and, consequently, the citizens of the nation.

Thus, it can be concluded that Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves's editorial approach in *Jornal das Senhoras* was indeed more moderate than her predecessors' regarding themes of

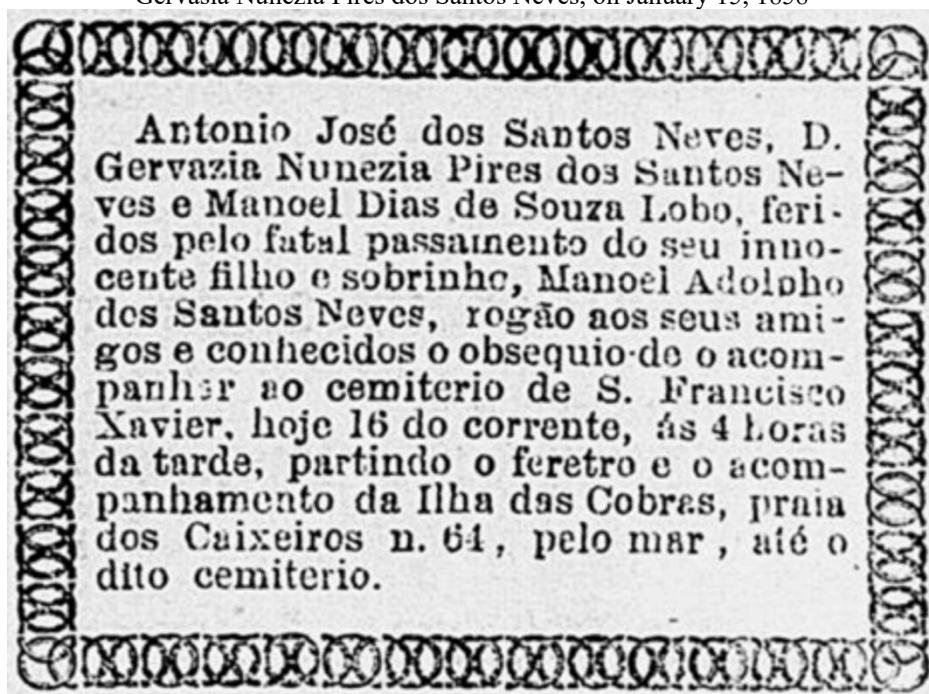
women's social betterment and moral emancipation. Nevertheless, these ideas were still subtly referenced in other texts, as we have presented here.

Most of the texts written by Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves, as identified by Bárbara Figueiredo Souto (2019, pp. 307–309), show that the editor focused on more trivial topics that would not provoke tension or debate, unlike the approach taken by Juana P. M. de Noronha.

Following the publication of Baroneza de ***'s article on the *Educação do sexo feminino* (Education of the Female Sex) in January and February 1855, no further texts on the topic were included in *Jornal das Senhoras*. At the end of that same year, in the 209th issue of the women's magazine, published just before New Year's on 30 December 1855, the editor announced a pause in the periodical's publication for 1856, with the expectation of resuming activities in 1857, which ultimately did not happen.

Although we lack detailed information on the reasons behind this pause and the non-resumption of the magazine, one indication may serve as a basis for a hypothesis explaining these events. In 1858, a similar notice appeared in three different newspapers:

Image 1: Death notice of Manoel Adolpho dos Santos Neves, son of Antonio José dos Santos Neves and Gervasia Nunézia Pires dos Santos Neves, on January 15, 1858



Sources: **Correio Mercantil, e Instrutivo, Político, Universal**. Rio de Janeiro, year XV, nº 14, January 16, 1858, p. 3; **Diário do Rio de Janeiro**. Rio de Janeiro, year XXXVIII, nº 14, January 16, 1858, p. 3; **Jornal dos Typographos**. Rio de Janeiro, year 1, nº 7, January 16, 1858, p. 4 (Digital newspaper library of the National Library of Rio de Janeiro.).

The notice reveals the passing of Manoel Adolpho dos Santos Neves, son of Gervasia Nunézia Pires dos Santos Neves and her husband, Antonio José dos Santos Neves, on 15 January 1858. This leads us to suppose that the intellectual might have been pregnant in 1855, 1856, or 1857, which could explain why she did not resume activities at *Jornal das Senhoras*.

After this date, little information on the editor has been found. Later in 1858, the *Registro do Porto* (Port Registry), published in *Correio Mercantil* (no. 251, 16 September 1858, p. 4), announced that Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves was among the passengers on the steamboat *Imperatriz*, which had returned from Montevideo in scales to Brazil on 15 September 1858. While the exact reasons for her trip remain unknown, possible hypotheses include emigration, a period away from Rio de Janeiro in mourning for her son's death, or a connection with the editor Juana P. M. de Noronha, who would return to live in Argentina in 1859.

In the following decade, Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves and her husband converted to Presbyterianism in 1863 (Lima, 2023, p. 145). That same year, her husband launched a short-lived periodical titled *O Locomotivo Intelectual* (1863)⁴ and, the following year, participated in founding the newspaper *Imprensa Evangélica* (1864–1867).

With the closure of *Jornal das Senhoras*, it is uncertain whether Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves contributed to other periodicals, although it is presumed, she may have worked with the two publications her husband was involved in. However, it is known that, following her conversion, she became the director of a “mixed daily school” with a religious orientation in 1868 (Medeiros, 2014, p. 195, author's translation). She would also become “the church organist, living with her husband, Antonio José dos Santos Neves, and their children on the third floor of the building that housed, in addition to the Presbyterian Church, the Seminary, the Sunday School, and the Parish School” (Kerr, Kerr, 2006, p. 198).

According to the *Livro de Registro de Membros da Igreja Presbiteriana do Rio de Janeiro* (Member Registry Book of the Presbyterian Church of Rio de Janeiro), housed in the Documentation Center (CENDOC) of the Presbyterian Church of Rio de Janeiro, Gervasia Nunézia Pires dos Santos Neves passed away on 25 December 1872, with her husband passing two years later, thus closing the life journey of an important editor and leading figure of *Jornal das Senhoras*.

⁴ We did not have access to this source.

Final Considerations

This brief research aimed to highlight the significance and leadership of Gervasia Nunézia Pires dos Santos Neves as the editor-in-chief of *Jornal das Senhoras*. By reviewing and analyzing the articles published during the two years and seven months of her direction of the women's magazine, it was possible to identify texts that addressed, to some degree, topics discussed by the first editor, Juana Paula Manso de Noronha, and continued by the second editor, Violante Atabalipa Ximenes de Bivar e Vellasco, concerning social improvement and women's moral emancipation.

Although these texts did not use the same terms and presented a more measured and less "controversial" discourse for the time, we consider that they maintained a public channel of communication, allowing female voices dissatisfied with the socially imposed patriarchal structure to continue circulating.

Thus, we understand that the moderate tone and use of a subjective and indirect narrative could, on one hand, regain subscribers who had, hypothetically, canceled their subscriptions due to the dissatisfaction of fathers and husbands with the progressive ideas promoted by the first editor and continued until mid-1853 by Violante A. X. de B. e Vellasco, while also attracting new adherents, and, on the other hand, could ensure the continuity of the women's magazine without attracting severe criticism, as had occurred at the launch of *Jornal das Senhoras*.

Even though the content on female participation in public spaces decreased during the management of Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves, giving way to chronicles on theaters and other less combative texts, the women's periodical continued to be an important communication vehicle, giving voice to women and their claims through other sections, such as *Mulheres Célebres* and articles like *Pensamentos, A Justiça, and Educação do sexo feminino*.

Thus, we can outline a brief profile of Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves, a diplomatic woman who ran a women's magazine distinctively from her predecessors. The longevity of her leadership at *Jornal das Senhoras* underscores the important role, performance, and stance of an intellectual who skillfully navigated the art of publishing a women's periodical in the mid-19th century.

If the measured stance of Gervasia N. P. dos S. Neves in directing *Jornal das Senhoras* contributed to the scarcity of research on her management, and the premature death of her son significantly impacted her personal and professional trajectory, leading to the end of her career as an editor and prompting her religious conversion in search of meaning in her life,

this research sought to recover and highlight the prominence of an intellectual woman who, like her predecessors, also contributed to the social improvement and moral emancipation of women in the 1800s.

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