GRANTA AND THE FEMININE – THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON PUBLISHING OPTIONS

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ABSTRACT
Granta has been, since its inception, an important literature-disseminating vehicle. With this analysis, we intend to understand the role women have been having as collaborators of this literary magazine. For this purpose, the 132 issues of Granta released between the fall of 1979 and the summer of 2015 were qualitatively analyzed. It was concluded that the presence of women as collaborators of Granta is clearly inferior and that the gender of collaborators seems to also have an influence over the theme and the literary genre to be published, but not over the opportunities given to emerging authors. The gender of the editors who select collaborators is also a weighty variable on the final panorama. Finally, the participation of women in Granta has shown a tendency to increase.

KEYWORDS
Granta; gender; publication; literature; inequality.

Introduction: Of Granta and the Objectives of this Analysis

Granta – The Magazine of New Writing is, in its current form, a literary British magazine which has been dedicating itself to the promotion and diffusion both of already consecrated authors, but also of new authors who are still taking their first steps in the world of literature. Granta as we know it today appeared in 1979, with Bill Bufford as editor, with a fixed quadrienal format having been adopted as of 1983. Since 1979, 132 issues of Granta have been published, each with a different theme to which several writers dedicate themselves. All these issues have been analyzed in the context of this research paper, including works of fiction, essays, memoirs, poetry, interviews and artistic pieces hailing from a variety of countries. It is important, however, to keep in mind that, while in terms of the sort of literature they produce, the authors included in the many numbers of Granta don’t seem to work according to the repetitive and comfortable paradigm characteristic of cultural industries which Adorno (2003) theorized, they would eventually insert themselves in the scope of these same cultural industries, since they would start a literary career that would get them involved in the world of publishing.

What this research paper intends is to analyze the participation that women have had as collaborators of Granta in the 36 years of its existence. In what pertains to methodology, a qualitative approach was adopted, based on the analysis of the contents of the summaries of the current 132 issues of Granta. Before the gathering of data and the establishment of conclusions (which brought to light issues that had not been previously considered), it was

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expected that the number of female collaborators of *Granta* would be relatively low when compared to the number of male collaborators. It was also thought, taking into account the theme-oriented character of the publication, that the number of female authors would be higher in themes socially considered feminine (such as the topics of *Home, Children or Love Stories*), and that their participation would be lower in themes socially considered masculine (here topics related to war, politics, sports or economy were included). It was further assumed that women would mostly work with fiction, while men would primordially prefer essays and non-fiction in general. Finally, it was anticipated that there would be a bigger percentage of male collaborators still unknown, as opposed to a number of female collaborators still unacknowledged that was expected to be smaller.

**Theoretical Framework: Of (In)Equality and Gender-Based Stereotype**

Beere, King, Beere and King (1984) defined gender-role equality as the ability to view individuals regardless of their gender. Thereby, no one, either male or female, would be discriminated against based on gender, and the opportunities that a person would be presented with and judgment of his or her true capabilities would not be dependent on any perception made biased by gender. However, a careful evaluation of current reality, even after the strong and demanding feminist movements of the 60s through to the 80s, will showcase the fact that this state of equality still hasn’t been established. There are, in fact, several studies that corroborate this notion on various levels.

Steinpreis, Anders and Ritzke (1999) exposed the way how, in job-searching situations, with equal CVs, men end up being favored. Eigenberg and Whalley (2015) concluded that parity is still nonexistent in academic publishing by analyzing the publication of women in journals on the criminology field. Goldin and Rouse (2000) analyzed the discrimination to which women were submitted during auditions for orchestras, even concluding that the number of hired women would increase when gender-blind auditions were held. Eagly and Karau (2002) dealt with the issue of the *glass ceiling* and the reasons for which women still see themselves prevented from reaching jobs involving great power and responsibility. Ceci, Williams and Barnett (2009) sought to understand the still worryingly low number of women working in fields related to science.

A reason that would explain why this discriminative framework still remains could be the prevalence, even nowadays, of gender stereotypes. Williams, Satterwhite and Best (1999) believed that gender stereotypes would have their roots in the different psychological characteristics attributed to men and women, with these stereotypes being either universal or specific to a given culture. The psychological characteristics we attribute to members of both genders will then influence the way we view their capabilities and, consequently, the way we evaluate their suitability for certain tasks or roles – which would greatly explain the aforementioned situations. The wrongfulness of many of these stereotypes is confirmed by Ross and Geffner (1980), who mention the research of Pheterson, Kiesler and Goldberg (1971) in which it was understood that, while men and women were evaluated in an egalitarian way when their work was already amply recognized, women would still be discriminated against when they were still relatively unknown. Therefore, for women, the problem would be in
reaching notoriety, since, when that status was attained, their capabilities would no longer be questioned.

One of the main problems inherent to the existence of gender stereotypes is how difficult it is to break them. This happens because stereotypes are a product of centuries of misogynistic and gender-biased thinking, which is absorbed and interiorized by society from a very young age. This creates a double-edged sword when it comes to the options that young women make throughout their life, namely in what pertains to the choice of study areas and professional occupations. On the one hand, it is possible that women have interiorized social and cultural notions related to the capabilities they possess and the fields that are available to them, making them consider themselves less apt for fields socially considered masculine or contributing, even if unconsciously, for them not to consider them at all. On the other hand, it is possible that a woman, even while knowing her own capabilities and not carrying these possibly unconscious stereotypes, would be aware that the society that surrounds her possesses those stereotypes, which would equally condition her choices and options, thus contributing to this vicious circle (Correll, 2001; Evans, Schweingruber and Stevenson, 2002; Eccles, 1994).

The question of gender stereotypes and the discrimination to which women have been subjected has already been approached in the scope of other research papers similar to the one here presented, even if having different publications as objects of analysis. Gualtieri (2011) sought to understand the tendencies verified in the choice of works written by women to be included in the eight editions of The Norton Anthology of English Literature (with the first having been published in 1962 and the eighth in 2006). Gualtieri came to the conclusion that the number of women there comprised has been increasing considerably, with six women having been published on the first volume of the anthology and 66 on the eighth. Therefore, the existence of a temporal progression when it comes to the number of women chosen for this publication is clear. However, something very interesting that Gualtieri noticed was the connection between the number of women present in the editorial team and the number of women published. Thus, only in 1986 two women joined this editorial team for the fifth volume of the anthology, and this was followed by an increase from 18 to 26 women published, with this tendency continuing on the next three volumes.

On the other hand, Oggins (2014) studied the presence of female authors on the Best American anthologies and the connection between this and the gender of the editors. As with the previous research, it was concluded that women are still underrepresented, even if the number has been increasing, especially under the watch of female editors. However, Oggins also discovered that, when women comprised bigger percentages of the editorial team, the presence of women in anthologies dedicated to themes or literary genres socially considered masculine would also increase. Therefore, it was concluded that women have a bigger tendency to consider other women competent, regardless of the femininity or masculinity socially inherent to the object of their creation. Another interesting conclusion was the one Jarema, Snycerski, Bagge, Austin and Poling (1999) came to by analyzing the presence of female texts on the Journal of Organizational Behavior Management. Having reached the same conclusions regarding the connection between the gender of editors and authors, they further concluded that, while both male and female authors were repeated throughout the publication’s existence period in a relatively proportional way, male authors would reach amounts of repetition much higher than the female authors considered.
Thus, taking into account these situations, it is possible to observe three tendencies. The first is the tendency for the increase of the number of women present in these publications, even if it remains below that of men. In this context, it seems possible to extrapolate to literature the pipeline theory of Xie and Shauman (2003), who believed that the reason why women were still amply unacknowledged in science was the fact that they had only started to constitute representative quantities of professionals in this area a few decades before. Therefore, it would be a matter of time until a state of equality was reached. However, Lincoln, Pincus, Koster and Leboy (2012) came to the conclusion that such isn’t, in fact, applicable, since the acknowledgment of women in scientific fields continues to be very dependent on the genders present on the award-giving committees and, simultaneously, from the 90s to the 2000s, the number of women scientists to whom awards and other distinctions were awarded diminished. This panorama is not, therefore, very different from the literary panorama of the last decades.

The second tendency that was observed is related to the valorization of male works in detriment of female works. This is not new, but it is interesting to consider the research conducted by Lebuda and Karwowski (2013), who analyzed the impact of the gender deduced from the name of an author on the perception of his or her creativity when it came to scientific works, poetry, music and art. It was concluded that, generally, works signed with a male name were frequently smashingly preferred as opposed to those signed with a female name. In the case of scientific works, even those anonymous were considered superior to those signed by women. The difference is not so considerable in the case of music, but it is still there. The opposite was concluded when it came to art and poetry, where differences tended to diminish considerably.

The third tendency observed was the connection between the increase of the number of women in editorial teams and the increase of the number of women contributing to publications. Ward (1981) mentioned, once more, the tendency to prefer the work of men in detriment of the work of women, with this tendency being exacerbated when the responsibility of evaluation and choice fell on the shoulders of men. On the other hand, Tajfel (1974) theorized, regarding group dynamics, that belonging to a group – for example, the male or female gender – would lead to a tendency to prefer or favor works by members of the group we’re a part of in detriment of the same works by members of a group other than ours. Thus, this could explain the reason why male editors select a smaller number of female works and female editors select a bigger number of female works.

Methodology: Of the Gathering and Systematization of Data

With the purpose of gathering data for this research, we resorted to a qualitative methodology, which can be defined as “(...) the study of the use and collection of a variety of empiric materials – case studies; (...) texts and cultural productions; observational, historic, interactive and visual texts – which describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in the life of individuals.” [our translation]4 (Denzin, Lincoln, et al., 2006, p. 17). From the

4 Original citation: «(...) o estudo do uso e a coleta de uma variedade de materiais empíricos – estudos de caso; (...) textos e produções culturais; textos observacionais, históricos, interativos e visuais – que descrevem momentos e significados roteiros e problemáticos na vida dos indivíduos.»
various methods that can be used in the scope of qualitative research, we selected content analysis, which Minayo (2007, p. 304) presents as a “data-treatment technique, [which] possesses the same logic of the quantitative methodologies, since it seeks the encrypted interpretation of material of a qualitative nature” [our translation].

In this case, the summaries of the 132 issues of Granta that were published between the fall of 1979 and the summer of 2015 were analyzed. These were published at a generalized rate of four issues a year, with certain exceptions for the first years after the establishment of the magazine and issues pertaining to special occasions. The summaries made available at the official Granta website (www.granta.com) were accessed and for all issues the information therein contained was strengthened, whenever possible, with the visualization of the summary page occasionally made available on open access on the Amazon website (www.amazon.com). Regardless of these efforts, it’s possible that some articles were not contemplated on this analysis due to lack of access to data referring to their existence, but it is possible to affirm that the great majority of the articles published in the aforementioned period in the various issues of Granta was analyzed.

To reach conclusions, all issues of Granta, as well as information available regarding themes and periodicity, were taken note of. Besides this, for each issue a table was constructed with the authors published, title and genre of their work (when it was possible to know it with absolute certainty) and, resorting to official government directories, such as British Council Literature, and to the official websites of authors, when these existed, we tried to understand which works the authors contemplated in Granta had already published when they first appeared in the magazine and which awards and distinctions they had already received. This collection of information enabled the elaboration of the results that will be presented in the following section.

Analysis of the Results: Of the Decreasing Inequality in Granta

In total, 1979 articles were analyzed. To produce this number of articles, 2041 contributors were necessary (authors who published in several issues of Granta are included here). Of these 2041 contributors, 571 were women, with this figure corresponding to approximately 28% of the total; 1466 were men, which corresponds to approximately 72% of the total; and in four instances (approximately 0.19%) it was impossible to ascertain the gender of the author. If we consider the real number of collaborators, that is, if we remove from the totals above the repetitions of authors, we get a total of 1224 contributors, 374 (approximately 31%) of which were women and 846 (approximately 69%) of which were men. There is no variation regarding the number of authors whose gender was not ascertained.

It is therefore clear that there is a very slight variation between the number of male and female collaborators when we contemplate repetitions and when we don’t. Invariably, the percentage of male contributors remains higher, corresponding, in both situations, to over two times the number of female contributions. Thus, it is concluded that there has been a discriminatory tendency in the selection of authors on the part of Granta, which is in ac-

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5 Original citation: «técnica de tratamiento de datos, [que] possui a mesma lógica das metodologias quantitativas, uma vez que busca a interpretação cifrada do material de caráter qualitativo.»
cordance with other previously analyzed examples of gender-based discrimination (Steinpreis et al., 1999; Eigenberg et al., 2015; Goldin et al., 2000; Eagly et al., 2002; Ceci et al., 2009).

We should, however, take into account that these numbers reflect data referring to a period comprised between 1979 and 2015. Reality when the publication of *Granta* was instituted was very different from the one we have nowadays, and the truth is that this progression is evident, since in the first issue of *Granta* only 17% of contributions came from women, while in the last one these corresponded to 65% of published texts.

The first circumstance in which the number of female contributors equaled the number of male contributors was on the 66th issue of *Granta*, published in 1999. The first occasion in which female contributors surpassed male contributors was in 2009, on issue 106, on female editor Alex Clark’s watch. From then on, six other instances in which the number of female authors have occurred, but, as is clear, this only happened in an extremely recent past. It is also important to mention that all four issues in which no female contributor has been registered were already published in the 90s. Thus, there is a progression in the number of female contributors, but we are also still far from a situation of parity, and the pipeline theory, as with science and in accordance with other studies already conducted, does not seem to be applicable (Xie et al., 2003; Lincoln et al., 2012).

To understand if there was any connection between the number of female contributors included in the various issues of *Granta* and the themes of those same issues, we separated themes into topics socially considered masculine, feminine or neutral. We considered that socially masculine topics were those that dealt with war, revolution, politics, economy or sports, for example. Socially feminine topics were those related to love, children, home, family or memory. The remaining topics, such as travel, geography, death, cinema or stories, were considered neutral.

If we organize the various issues of *Granta* according to the percentage of female contributors included in each one of them, it’s clear that the most common percentage is that of 15% (not included) and 20% (included) of female contributors. In issues with female contributions below this line, that is, those in which women are underrepresented the most, we find themes almost invariably masculine or neutral, with the exception of the feminine topic *Home*. This tendency is maintained in the window comprised between 15% and 20%, that is, the window of the topics in which the representation of women is most common, with the exception of the female topics *Celebrity* and *Love Stories*. As we advance on the percentage of female contributors, that is, as we find a higher percentage of women writers, we continue to find some masculine themes, but nothing overly relevant. We find, instead, more feminine topics and, mostly, neutral topics.

Therefore, it seems that themes with a tendency to be considered male are those with a bigger propensity to present a smaller number of female contributors. What is odd is that, in a general way, there doesn’t seem to be a tendency for female contributors of *Granta* to deal with feminine topics. However, there is a respectable amount of these themes in which the number of male writers is considerably superior to the one of women writers. Inversely, there is no issue with a masculine topic in which the number of female authors surpasses the number of male authors, since this only happens in feminine or neutral themes. Thus, the question of exclusion here observed is that of the pushing of women away from topics socially considered masculine, for reasons that have already been pinpointed as explanatory
of the perpetuation of stereotypes in relation with the choices women make (Correll, 2001; Evans, Schweingruber and Stevenson, 2002; Eccles, 1994).

There are more occurrences of repetitions of male authors than of women authors, but if we take into account percentages, which allow us to bear in mind the differences in totals of both genders, the difference is from 24% to 28%, which doesn’t seem be significant. For both genders, the majority of repeated authors was repeated two or three times (with men reaching 49% and women 51% in the case of double repetitions). In both situations, the majority of repetitions is focused on these very low figures.

However, men clearly reach higher numbers than women. From four repetitions onward, women are not repeated over five times. The highest number reached is that of ten repetitions, but only in two situations. On the other hand, men still reach very high figures even after four repetitions, such as, for example, ten occurrences of seven repetitions and eight occurrences of nine repetitions. With the maximum figure reached by women being ten repetitions, from this number onward and inclusively, we observed, for the case of men, eleven occurrences more. Besides, the maximum number of repetitions in the case of men is 24, even if this is probably due to the fact that the author in question (Ian Jack) was the editor of *Granta* for many years, which gives rise to regular contributions in the form of introductions. With the removal of this figure, the highest number reached is that of 14 repetitions, which still comes to show that, even if both genders are repeated, men are so the most when it comes to frequency.

In what pertains to genre, the total of 565 texts produced for *Granta* by women in which genre was discernible, 180 corresponded to essays and/or memoirs (32%), 35 to poetry (6%), 221 to fiction (39%), 18 to art and/or photography (3%), 5 to interviews (1%), 32 were uncategorized (6%) and 74 were of an uncertain nature (13%). Therefore, we conclude that women produce mostly fiction, even if the difference between fiction and essays and/or memoirs is of only 7 percentage points.

On the other hand, we analyzed 1454 texts produced by men, of which 643 corresponded to essays and/or memoirs (44%), 39 to poetry (3%), 386 to fiction (27%), 45 to art and/or photography (3%), 14 to interviews (1%), 120 were uncategorized (8%) and 207 were of an uncertain nature (14%). Thus, we conclude that men produce mostly essays and/or memoirs for *Granta*.

When comparing each gender’s percentages, we conclude that men also published a bigger volume of poetry and fiction than women. On the contrary, they published the same volume of interviews and art and/or photography. Finally, women published a bigger amount of uncategorized texts and texts of an uncertain nature. On what pertains to the primordial production of essays and memoirs on the part of men and fiction on the part of women, we can see a perpetuation of what, based on stereotype, is expected of each gender (as Correll, 2001, Evans, Schweingruber and Stevenson, 2002 and Eccles, 1994 explained). The discoveries of Lebuda and Karwowski (2013) were also corroborated, since the majority of the essays published was written by men. However, these authors’ research was also corroborated in the reduced difference between men and women in the publication of poetry and the non-existent difference in the publication of art and photography.

To understand if, amongst the new authors published by *Granta*, more opportunities would be given to new male or female authors, we considered as being emergent authors...
those who still hadn’t received any awards; the receiving of a single award, due to the ac-
nowledgment it stands for, was seen as sufficient for an author to be seen as consecrated
as long as it was accompanied by at least two published works. In cases where no award ex-
stisted, the publication of at least three books was necessary for an author to be considered
non-emergent. We concluded that there are no significant differences between men and
women. Actually, 32% of male authors were new authors, and 33% of female authors were
new authors, which shows that there is equality when it comes to opportunities in *Granta.*
This goes against the conclusions of Pheterson, Kiesler and Goldberg (1971) about gender-
based discrimination when women are still not amply acknowledged.

Finally, it’s important to stress that, in the 36 years of its existence, *Granta* has only had
two female editors: Alex Clark (issues 104 to 106, in 2009) and Sigrid Rausing (from issue 126
in 2014 to the present). Firstly, as is clear, only very recently have women become editors of
*Granta,* which is reminiscent of the paper on the difficulties women feel when attempting
to reach positions involving power and responsibility, related to the matter of the glass ceiling
(Eagly *et al.*, 2002). Secondly, a stabilization of the numbers of female contributors on higher
figures was observed from the moment women started to become editors of *Granta.* As has
been mentioned, the first instance in which the number of women surpassed the number
of men occurred on Alex Clark’s watch, who maintained two of the four issues she worked
in with percentages of female contributors over 40%. The same happened with Sigrid Rausing
in all the issues she’s worked in so far with the exception of one. Thus, the presence of female
editors has definitely been proving an important factor in the increase of the number of fe-
male contributors of *Granta,* echoing the research of Gualtieri (2011), Oggins (2014) and
Jarema, Sncerski, Austin and Poling (1999), which can be explained by the already presented

**Conclusion: Of the Clarification of Assumptions and Perspectives for the Future**

Corroborating in a very interesting manner the research of Gualtieri (2011), Oggins
(2014) and Jarema, Sncerski, Austin and Poling (1999), we conclude that the role women
have been having as contributors of *Granta* has been mostly reduced when compared to
that of men. However, this is a situation that seems to be in the course of developing in a
positive way, even if parity still hasn’t been reached.

Therefore, the first assumption, that the number of male authors would be superior to
the number of female authors, was undeniably proven. The second assumption, on the other
hand, was only partially confirmed. We didn’t observe a predominance of female authors in
themes socially considered feminine; on the contrary, we actually observed that, in many of
these, there was a preponderance of male authors. However, the notion that there would
be less female contributors in more masculine topics was definitely proven. The assumption
related to the preferential genre of the works published by men and women was also ob-
served, with women writing mostly fiction and men writing mostly essays and memoirs. Fi-
nally, what had been anticipated regarding the publication of a higher number of male
unacknowledged authors versus a stronger publication of already recognized female authors
was invalidated. Additionally, we came to the conclusion that there is a connection between
the increase in the number of published women and the gender of the editor that selects works for publication.

It’s impossible to determine an absolutely explanatory reason for this situation in the context of the publication of Granta in a paper such as this. However, it seems to us that it is correct to state that there are two hypotheses to consider: either Granta is a reflection of a potentially discriminatory environment that exists in the field of literature; or the editors of Granta and other collaborators unconsciously share the chain of stereotypes over which we have previously dwelt. Regardless of this, it seems wise to set aside the assumption that, in this case, discrimination is intentional.

Thus, we conclude that, while there is still no parity in the publication of female authors in Granta, this magazine has proven itself less discriminatory than other literary publications. Even if there is still a long way to go on the path to gender equality in this magazine, the panorama of the present decade seems to reveal a positive tendency toward it.

Bibliographic References


