

HUGUET, Montserrat. *Rebellious Histories of Bourgeois Women. 1790-1948*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2010. 248 pages. (Collection Historia / directed by Juan Paul Fusi). ISBN: 978-84-9742-964-1.

There is edited in April, 2010 the book *Rebellious Histories of Bourgeois Women. 1790-1948*, written by Montserrat Huguet, professor of Contemporary History of the University Carlos III of Madrid. The argument of the book can be explained in following terms: "*Women of the western middle class have had their plot of protagonism in the backing of the historical contemporary changes. Without resigning their docility and captivation, they were taking positions of forefront in the social change. Strangers in occasions and almost always misinterpreted in their own desires and public shares, the rebellious ladies and misses deserve now the attention of these pages. The History and its sources, the Literature and the cultural representations shake hands in these 'Rebellious Histories of Bourgeois Women' and guide the reader in a particular historical trip*" (From the counter front page)

The work consists of nine chapters organized in two parts titled: *The sports sense of the history*, and *The zeal of the discreet ones*, flanked by a presentation and a corollary. An extensive bibliography - organized in two paragraphs, *Essays and History*, and *Literary Works*, closes the book. The historical time to which the texts refer registers in an elastic way among the end of the 18th century (Mme. Roland formulated the exigency of the right of the citizenship for the women in 1790) and the first half of the 20th century (In 1948 the Declaration of the Human Rights is proclaimed). It is easy nevertheless to locate in the work historical and cultural references that refute certainly the chronological suggested frame, and that show that the dates indicated well might have been different. With everything, there is undeniable the historical clear continuity in the uneasinesses and the courage of many women during the century and way that passes between 1790 and 1948.

The structure of the chapters is that of the historical essay. In spite of the fact that there is a thematic and chronological progression in the development of the work, every chapter guards an own and autonomous argument, though linked to those who they precede and continue. The first block titles, as it is said, "*The sports sense of the history*" and studies the vocation of women for taking part in the general companies of progress in the contemporary history. The ladies were involved in revolts but also in the reactionary movements that followed the revolutionary changes. Women's examples appear involved in enormous adventures ("*Heroines of 'walking for house'*") and of others that on the other hand agreed to take part of "*The nice rear of the change*", that is the title of the following chapter, dedicated to welfare labors that they played. In "*To the pace of the contemplation: the adventure of the leisure*", one sees women going to acquire the modern habit of the leisure, proper of the liberalism and of the emergent middle classes in the western societies. In the leisure, women founded the **time** that they needed to think, to write, to be aware and to rebel. The following two chapters, "*To document the time*" and "*The intelligence of having a forgetfull attitude*", do considerations about the function of ladies while indispensable actors of the contemporary report but also of the oblivion.

In the second part of this book, *The zeal of the discreet ones*, four more topics appear. In the first term, the chapter "*Self-destructive drives: from the delivery to the appropriation*". Here the discreet ones, term to say to the ladies who feel captive of the privacy but are anxious for rebelliousnesses, they demonstrate singular moments of generosity that nevertheless are rewarded by their beneficiaries by gestures of undue appropriation. Under the vigilance of the male that guards them, many anonymous women were showing their ingenuity, creativity and intelligence. They could be punished by their audacity, but the reactions before the punishment not always were the acceptance and the penance. When a well versed sorrow was unbearable, some women were deciding to elude the reality. Read the chapter "*About the punishment and the*

fled". The diverse methods were going from the decision to be annulled as human beings to the physical and mental evasion. In "*Two for one: languid and idiotic*", there appears the way in which the judicious conduct of the ladies, their languid confusion and innocent appearance, had just constituted to raise an effective mask that, stuck to the face, made them unrecognizable. This mask is that of the contemporaneousness. In the middle of the 19th Century, Darwin took the decision to show to the public his theses about *The Origin of the Species*. This moment was precisely when women admitted the perspective to take the mask from them. Sacrificing the caudal fin, it means: the lightness, which had directed till then the course of the ladies in the social seas, they acquired finally the condition of real persons with a public identity. So, in "*From the adjustment of the species to the sacrifice of the lightness*", it is explained the way in which the ladies got rid of the discretion and showed themselves as they were: beautiful and spiritual, but also defective and coarse.

Questions of so much weigh for women, since they were the control of the birthrate and the economic independence already in the 20th Century, they revealed that the zeal of the discreet ones had made to themselves finally of meat and bone. And that, because of the incorporation of a new subject: feminine first, that of genre later on, into the historical statement. But on having written and observing themselves as History, women - the ladies - had to begin to be thought from external ends, they had to measure what might be said about them and what not. This step was the definitive test to proof the history yes was changing.