BEAUTY AND PERFORMANCE IN (RE) VIEW: EDUCATION OF THE FEMALE BODY IN THE MAGAZINES: ``O CRUZEIRO`` AND LADIES’ HOME JOURNAL (1946)

Gisllene Rodrigues Ferreira Demarque
Universidade Federal de Uberlândia (Brasil) University of California Berkeley (EUA)
Uberlândia – Minas Gerais
http://lattes.cnpq.br/0888215088199557
Abstract: The women’s press in Brazil, since its foundation in the 19th century until the 21st century, has disseminated practices and representations of what is considered ideally feminine (Buitoni, 1990, 2009). While reflecting desires and visions of the social imaginary in relation to women, it builds representations about what they must be, how they must think and act; prescriptions and advice that are generally taught through a language of “friendship” and transmitted by agents with a voice of influence, for example columnists. Given this scenario, we developed research entitled “Lifestyle Pedagogies: education, appearance and female performance in the magazines ‘O Cruzeiro’ (Brazil) and Ladies’ Home Journal (USA) – 1946-1953”, to think critically about how the Brazilian magazine: ‘O Cruzeiro’, through the Women’s Affairs section, and the North American magazine Ladies’ Home Journal sought, through their advice content and advertisements, to educate readers about ways of being in the world, what we call lifestyle pedagogies (Certeau, 1988; Le Goff, 2003; Prost, 2019; Cunha, 2007; Lipovetsky, 2000; Luca, 2013; Perrot, 2007; Pinsky 2013; Sant’Anna, 2013, Vigarello, 2006; Burke, 1992, 2005; Damon –Moore, 1994;Darnton, 1990;Scanlon, 1995; In this article we explain how the printed materials analyzed sought to educate the female body and behavior by transmitting pedagogies to readers through texts and images with advice content and through advertisements, with the main objective of promoting a consumerist lifestyle inspired by Hollywood celebrity lifestyle. We concluded that to fulfill this purpose, practices were taught that became fashions and fads, in order to generate demands and boost the market for consumer goods and services, especially in the area of beauty.

Keywords: History of Education; ‘’O Cruzeiro’’; Women’s Affairs; Ladies’ Home Journal; Women’s Press.

INTRODUCTION

We understand that there are several pedagogies in addition to those that are part of the school environment (Neiva, 2021), other places and pedagogical institutions, the women’s press being one of them, since it is made up of discourses that are sometimes seductive, sometimes normative and didactic aimed at women (Buitoni, 2009). After all, the content, more than informing and entertaining, aimed to educate its readers on how to behave, and even what worldviews they had in relation to “being a woman” in a given historical time, influenced by factors such as geographic space and current culture.

Pedagogies exist in the most varied places where knowledge is produced and taught to form people, their mentalities and sensibilities. Therefore, magazines, as pedagogical devices, form and inform, since “[...] the media construct meanings and act decisively in the formation of social subjects” (Fischer, 1997, p.1).

This article is an excerpt from the research entitled “Lifestyle pedagogies: education, appearance and female performance in the magazines O Cruzeiro (Brazil) and Ladies’ Home Journal (USA) – 1946-1953”. The main question that guided the study was: “What are the similarities between the Women’s Affairs section, of ‘O Cruzeiro’, and the North American magazine Ladies’ Home Journal, in the period from 1946 to 1953, with regard to female lifestyle? ” The magazines: O Cruzeiro (Brazil) and Ladies’ Home Journal (USA) were selected as sources of analysis because they are publications of great relevance in the social history of the 20th century press.
in their respective countries. Furthermore, they present similarities in their texts, images, means and ends.

When we analyze the traces of the past, transformed by us into sources based on the assumptions of Cultural History (Certeau, 1988; Le Goff, 2003; Prost, 2019; Pesavento, 2004), the History of Education of the body and female sensibilities (Cunha, 2007; Lipovetsky, 2000; Luca, 2013; Perrot, 2007; Darnton, 1990; Scanlon, 1995) we discovered what we call lifestyle pedagogies. We emphasize that ˝O Cruzeiro˝ and Ladies’ Home Journal are sources that reveal clues about the historical, cultural, educational and normative events of the female body and behavior. In this way, it appears that the texts, images and illustrations present in these periodicals are responsive to what is circulating in society at the time, involving the social practices of the time.

˝O CRUZEIRO˝:
BRIEF HISTORY

“We put the most modern Brazilian magazine in the hands of the reader.” It was thus, with a speech that was intended to mark the history of the national press, the first sentence of introduction to the editorial text of ˝O Cruzeiro˝. The first edition of the printed matter was launched by Assis Chateaubriand on November 10, 1928, in the national capital of that period, Rio de Janeiro.

One of the reasons that led O Cruzeiro to success was adopting an editorial line aimed at diverse readers, since “[…] men and women from all social classes came into contact with the magazine that wanted to ‘be popular’” (Sotana, 2017, p. 19). However, although the magazine is produced for a wide audience, much of its content is designed to attract, especially, white, middle-class women. Proof of this is the recurring female presence in different images and textual genres that made up the weekly periodical, including: advertisements, sections, columns and reports on social events. A wide variety of materials dedicated to them were published, with themes linked to fashion, health, behavior, among others, in addition to including, in its editions, literary texts such as chronicles and short stories (Barbosa, 2002).

During the years of the great world conflict (1939-1945), and especially after the end of the Second World War, O Cruzeiro went through a new editorial phase, marked by the increasing presence of statements that mention the American Way of Life.

It is noted that, from 1946 onwards, the ideas of the North American nation, which positioned itself as a new global hegemonic power, continued to be propagated in various textual genres and images.

LADIES’ HOME JOURNAL AS INSPIRATION FOR ˝O CRUZEIRO˝

The Ladies’ Home Journal magazine was founded by the couple Cyrus Curtis and Louisa Knapp Curtis in 1883. According to Damon-Moore (1994), at first the periodical was born as a newspaper supplement designed to attract the attention of the female public, and in Within a few years it would become the best-selling North American magazine. In the early days, Ladies’ Home Journal “[…] served as a prototype for commercial magazines with low prices and heavy dependence on advertising for revenue” (Damon-Moore, 1994, p. 1, our translation).

In the early years, it was published monthly and aimed at a target audience of white women from the lower middle class to the middle class across the country. Another characteristic aimed at is that women are increasingly likely to live in urban environments and, preferably, in cities with a population of more than ten thousand (Damon-Moore, 1994). From the
beginning, the magazine’s content sought to teach them how to “[...] shape and recognize themselves as white American women and associated this subjective position with meaning and social cohesion” (Foster, 2012, p. 292, our translation). In this sense, Journal encouraged readers to feel like they belonged to a group that stood out for presenting collective qualities (Foster, 2012).

At the dawn of the 1900s, researcher Damon-Moore (1994) states that Ladies’ Home Journal presented, throughout its pages, a miscellany of commercial messages and materials that collaborated to construct representations of the feminine. In 1903, the periodical had become the most read in the United States, being the first magazine to gain one million subscribers during this period (Miller, 1994; Sumner, 2010).

Beginning in 1935, editor Loring A. Schuler was replaced by Bruce Gould and Beatrice Blackmar Gould. The couple took over the editing of Ladies’ Home Journal, and the printed matter underwent revitalization and was renewed. Given this, the Goulds’ vision of the magazine is that it would be a “spokesperson” for a conservative lifestyle, in which North American women must mainly be wives and mothers (Endres; Lueck, 1995), a position reinforced by Beatrice Gould:

I believe it is a woman’s job to be as feminine as possible. I mean, feed your family, rest them, guide them and encourage them. To be as beautiful as possible, as helpful as possible, so that, if the whole world disappears, each family will have the center of warmth, comfort, joy and tolerant common sense (Gould apud Endres; Lueck, 1995, p. 176, our translation).

According to Scanlon (1995), faced with this new scenario, the format and standard of the magazine began to perform the function of bringing elements that corresponded to the lives of its readers. Although most of them were considered privileged, they were, in most cases, not rich or frivolous women. There were domestic chores and family responsibilities that they needed to carry out, which did not allow them ample space to read the periodical.

**FEMALE APPEARANCE AND PERFORMANCE: HOLLYWOODIAN LIFESTYLE IN FOCUS IN ‘O CRUZEIRO’ AND LADIES’ HOME JOURNAL MAGAZINES**

From 1946 onwards, news agencies had the functionality of being distributors of commercial content. Organizations whose central pillar was the dissemination of the American Way of Life, given that many were of North American origin, “two of them, the agencies United Press International (UPI) and the Associated Press (AP), practically monopolized the distribution of news” (Klanovicz, 2017, p. 47). It can be noted, then, that the content produced by Hollywood is becoming increasingly inspiring in prescribing values and conduct, especially among the younger population.

More than just informing, it was a strategy, a “win-win” situation.2. ‘O Cruzeiro’ received materials to be published, which were of interest to readers who liked entertainment. In this sense, there was audience loyalty, through a symbolic reading contract (Chartier, 1996; Eco, 1986; Verón, 1980), in which the reading public looked forward to the materials they would find in each edition.

Another benefit that the magazine had when publishing materials from North American agencies was a considerable increase in profits generated by a greater number of copies sold, all of this increased by the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the publication. This would be a pleasant practice – based on a relationship of

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2. Literal translation: “win-win”, an expression used in everyday Americans to refer to some situation of agreement or negotiation in which both parties involved win and benefit.
gains and interests – to offer Brazilian readers access to correspondence sent directly from Hollywood, which narrated the main and updated behind-the-scenes events of the most famous film industry in the world.

At this stage of the magazine, Hollywood was the subject of several topics. For example, in edition 0001, from 1947, in a text published in the Women's Affairs section – in the column From Women to Women written by Maria Teresa –, trends on fashion and hair that were highlighted were presented; however, not as something to be followed by readers, but rather avoided. And to illustrate, the columnist criticized the influence that the film character Gilda, starring Rita Hayworth, was having on the behavior of young Brazilian women, as described below:

The influence left by “Gilda” among Brazilian girls seems to have been great. You can now see, everywhere, long hair spread over the shoulders, in the style of Miss Hayworth. The issue of fashion doesn’t belong to me and if the copy was limited to hair, I wouldn’t address the subject. But the influence, unfortunately, goes beyond this sector. There are many young women who have become really excited and try to imitate the elegant star’s manners, as well as wanting to have the same “sex appeal”. It will not be imitation, however, that will give them the “open up, Sezamo” in the hearts of their chosen ones.

The man he loves seeks sincerity and, sooner or later, he would end up discovering his girlfriend’s true “self”, until then covered by a false personality to which he had allowed himself to be trapped, either by simple experience or by a passing illusion. The time the girl spent trying to imitate someone would have been much better spent if she had applied it to cultivating her natural gifts. They say that all women are like flowers: and there would be no point in trying to transform a rose into a tulip. Both are beautiful and have their own characteristics. The conditions in which they flourish can lend greater vigor and beauty to one or the other. Furthermore, an imitation, however perfect it may be, will always be a copy: and an original always has more value. Every woman must try to be simple, sincere, especially the one she loves. Not that for happiness in love it is necessary to give up vanity, since vanity is even a feminine privilege. What is counterable is exaggeration. And an excess of artificiality, an abandonment of one’s own personality in search of a different “self” that one intends to use only because it is fashionable, will create an impression of insincerity that repels all confidence. And this is, like water for plants, indispensable so that the seed of love can germinate in the heart. So, to the young women who want to be new editions of Gilda, I dedicate this chronicle to serve as a warning to them. Do not sacrifice your own personality for another, which can and must be, in reality, more valuable than that presented by Miss Hayworth in her temperamental and vampiric “Gilda”.

The “Gilda Complex”, which the columnist addresses, refers to the emblematic character played by American actress and dancer Rita Hayworth. In 1946, she played “[...] a fictional femme fatale who was a sexy and loud woman, men were attracted to her” (McLean, 2004, p. 1, our translation). The character represents a woman who is the protagonist of her choices and her own behavior. She knows how to use beauty tricks, exposing her body and her singing and dancing talents to win the admiration of men. We observed that Maria Teresa’s text fulfills its editorial proposal of

4. It is worth noting that several editions of the column From Woman to Woman received signature from Maria Teresa. Although it is a female name, the person who wrote most of the texts was the magazine’s director at that time, Accioly Netto (1998). This occurred because it was a common practice in the 20th century press, in which men wrote in the press aimed at a female audience (Buitoni, 1990).
6. Title of the chronicle signed by Maria Teresa.
being a sentimental consultation, as indicated by Netto (1998).

It is noted that the discussion presented by the columnist revolved around one main issue: guiding readers to be careful and not to be deluded by what they learned through the film. However, he instructed women to ensure that their behavior was consistent, which would make them capable of finding a suitor for marriage. Therefore, the writer’s advice would be for girls to focus on building a long-term relationship, and not on having an adventure, as the character’s example would be.

Maria Teresa, when discussing Gilda's complex, plays the role of educator and friend by instructing the model reader (Eco, 1986) on how to behave so as not to miss the chance of relating to a good match when the opportunity arises. According to the columnist, if the potential husband sees misconduct in the girl, as in the character Gilda, he may reject her, as he feels deceived when he realizes that she does not have good manners.

We also check in the topic: "From Woman to Woman", that the main text dialogues with the illustrations. The drawings reinforce representations written by Maria Teresa about Gilda, as can be seen in Figure 1.

![Figure 1: Illustration about Gilda in the From Woman to Woman topic](source: "O Cruzeiro" (2020)).

In the first illustration, it appears that there is a young woman holding the correspondence letter delivered by Cupid. He shows an expression of concern, while the character who can be seen as a representation of the reader receives the message with joy. We infer that the editorial choice, in presenting Cupid as worried when observing the young woman, would be to reinforce the speech of astonishment when seeing her similar to Gilda, both due to the choice of dress and the hairstyle, typically worn by the character.

In view of this, it can be seen that, both in terms of her way of dressing and her hair, the girl has attributes that discursively refer to the image of Gilda. Red clothing conveys the color’s meaning of power and sensuality, and it is possible to infer, in this sense, that she likes to appear and show off, as she is confident in herself. The yellow bow, on the very thin waist, alludes to the belt used on actress Rita Hayworth’s dress in one of the scenes in the film in which she appears smoking with a sensual look and pose, being courted by several men and generating jealousy among them. Furthermore, the dress, very close to the body, outlines the curves, revealing a curvy body type. The hips and bust were also well defined by the illustrator’s features – details that corroborate Gilda’s representations of voluptuousness.

On the other side, there is the cupid of love, the one who is responsible for the mission of darting hearts to form couples in love. The character, in the first image, is scared, perplexed, and even open-mouthed, as if he was surprised and amazed when looking at the young woman with the actress’s characteristics. However, in the second image, he appears as a happy and satisfied friend, painting the girl’s lips. Therefore, such a contradiction in the illustrations evokes the idea that, while the young woman’s sensuality is shocking, the care for her beauty, through the use of lipstick
(makeup), is capable of making her admired. Therefore, the textual and image discourses construct representations that readers may resemble Gilda in terms of vanity and appearance, but must avoid behaving like the character. Therefore, famously, Beauty and Performance are present in this content published by “O Cruzeiro”.

Regarding this page of the Da Mulher para a Mulher column, Maria Teresa reinforced her position of warning young women to be careful with the influences of cinema on their love decisions. This can be illustrated in the part of Correspondence in which Dorinha, from Rio, asks: “Do you think the fact that he is American would influence our love?” and the columnist responds to the reader’s letter:

Your question was very imprecise, do you suppose that since he is American he will not marry you? Love knows no borders, my friend. What seemed unjustifiable to me, however, is how little attention the boy devotes to Brazilian people and things. We are there, however, in a field that is no longer the property of love and becomes the domain of education and moral decorum. Defend your land, Dorinha, by not allowing it to be underestimated. And now pay attention to what I tell you: be careful with these cinemas!

Another striking element in this speech is the reinforcement of national culture and the appreciation of Brazilian identity. The advice for the reader is not to belittle herself, and to defend her land. And, to conclude her arguments, she reiterates that it is necessary to be careful with cinemas, probably because the romances shown on screen, compared to those in real life, can be different and have obstacles, such as, in this case, cultural differences.

The presence of artists as models in the magazine’s advertisements highlights the premise defended by Buitoni, that “[...]


films propagated new consumption habits, reinforced by the press” (Buitoni, 2009, p. 12). Therefore, in addition to dictating fashions regarding appearance and instigating consumerism, the film industry, with the help of the female press, aimed to disseminate standards of conduct, in a kind of feedback.

Another magazine that stood out on the international scene in this context of the 20th century was the North American Ladies’ Home Journal. The women’s print also published several images of Hollywood stars throughout its pages, who were presented as models to be admired and followed. The lifestyle of celebrities was displayed as a way of awakening in reader-consumers the desire to live like those who had achieved social prestige, success, status and achievement.

It was taught through Journal, for example, that having shiny and well-combed hair would be considered synonymous with beauty. In this regard, the North American magazine presented Hollywood actress Jane Powell as a reference. The celebrity used her influential voice to tell readers the secret to having the “most beautiful hair in the world” (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Shampoo Ad
The announcement of a cosmetic product for hair care, with actress Jane Powell, demonstrated a type of hairstyle widespread in the late 1940s: short hair, with well-defined waves. Another style considered beautiful at the same time was muster-length hair, with waves at the ends and voluminous bangs.

The North American women’s press communicated to its readers that by taking care of their hair they would be able to guarantee beauty, in this sense, the performance would become a provider of the coveted prize: an admirable appearance.

The ad text not only presented steps on how to use the product, but also explained, in a didactic and detailed way, how to execute them to achieve the desired result. The step by step consisted of: 1) Applying the Shampoo directly from the bottle, to the scalp, before adding water, massaging with your hands to ensure that the product reached the entire length of the scalp; 2) Add water gradually, until all the foam is removed; 3) Rinse completely with clean water, comb and dry your hair; and 4) Finish with a hairstyle.

CONSIDERATIONS

In short, we noticed that the magazines: “O Cruzeiro” and Ladies’ Home Journal dedicated their pages to entertain, inform, sell and instruct women about lifestyle pedagogies. Various social, cultural, historical and market factors, together with the interests of media producers, contributed to the construction and reconstruction of female representations and sensibilities. Texts and images were designed dictating what must be admired, aspired and experienced by readers. These, although they were in different geographic locations – USA/Brazil, participated in the same sphere of media communication, and shared a common model about a supposed feminine essence.

We identified that the periodicals analyzed transmitted to readers the message that female identity – that is, “being a woman” – was based on two main pillars: appearance and performance. Aspects mainly guided by the incentive to consumption. These aspects would be the parameters that would guide the readers’ decisions and actions so that, supposedly, they would be loved, well-liked, admired, accepted and valued.

Therefore, we noticed that the magazines: “O Cruzeiro” and Ladies’ Home Journal prioritized the theme of beauty. “Looking beautiful” was seen as an obligation, and those who managed to fulfill this duty could have a greater chance of succeeding in both the public and private spheres. Having good looks would also mean being able to choose suitors for marriage, maintaining marital happiness, rising socially, being invited to new social circles, among other social advantages.

10. In the Portuguese version: “The most beautiful hair in the world. It's kept at its best... with Luster-Creme Shampoo. Advertising model: Jane Powell, co-starring in MGM’s “Small Town Girl”, Color by Technicolor. Jane Powell... Luster-Creme presents one of Hollywood's most glamorous stars. Like most of Hollywood's top stars, Miss Powell uses Lustre-Creme Shampoo to care for her beautiful hair. Yes, Jane Powell uses Lustre-Creme Shampoo to keep her hair always luscious. Taking care of your beautiful hair is vital to your glamor career. You too, like Jane Powell, will notice a glorious difference in your hair after a Lustre-Creme shampoo. Under the spell of her lanolin-blessed foam, her hair shines, behaves, is eager to curl. Her hair, robbed of its natural shine, now shines with renewed highlights. Foams abundantly in the hardest water... no special rinse required. No other cream shampoo in the world is as popular as Lustre-Creme. For hair that behaves like angels and shines like stars... ask for Lustre-Creme Shampoo.”
REFERENCES


