

From perfumes to powders: advertising as a historical object

*De perfumes aos pós: a publicidade como objeto histórico*¹

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RESUMO

O artigo analisa anúncios de cosméticos publicados na revista *Fon-Fon!* de 1911 a 1934. Discute as rupturas e continuidades observadas nos anúncios de cosméticos coletados. Estuda especificamente a publicidade de pó para maquiagem e os modelos de feminino presentes nos respectivos anúncios, com base em duas grandes séries: os anúncios com e sem imagens femininas. Também introduz e discute a metodologia da produção de uma história com base em anúncios publicitários. Metodologicamente, destaca-se a importância e centralidade da imagem nas análises feitas, atentando para a composição das imagens e os modelos de feminino propostos. As ferramentas de análise da imagem se pautaram nos trabalhos de Sophie Cassagnes e Martine Joly, e os pressupostos de ordem teórica, em Haskell.

Palavras-chave: publicidade; cosmético; objeto histórico.

ABSTRACT

This article is a study of cosmetics advertisements published in *Fon-Fon Magazine* between 1911 and 1934. It discusses the continuities and ruptures observed in these advertisements. More specifically, face powder advertising and models of the feminine are analyzed, drawing on two major series: advertisements with female images and those without any. Also introduced and discussed is the production methodology of a history based on advertisements. Methodologically, we emphasize the importance and centrality of the image in the analysis, observing the composition of the images and the proposed models of the feminine. The tools for the analysis of images were based on the work of Sophie Cassagnes and Martine Joly, while the theoretical postulations were drawn from Haskell.

Keywords: advertising; cosmetics; historical object.

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Between 2009 and 2010 research was carried out on cosmetics advertising aimed at women in Brazilian periodicals during the nineteenth century. It was considered appropriate, given the variety of advertisements and advertising and publication conditions, to divide the period into four distinct moments: 1911-1935; 1935-1950; 1950-1970; and 1970-2000.

For each of these periods it was proposed to examine the models of advertising related to the question of the beauty industry; compose a framework of analysis which could indicate the receptors of the advertisements and the femininities highlighted as the models to be followed by women and desired by men at the time in question. The study, connected to the larger project carried out by the Fashion and Society research laboratory called “Brazil according to its appearances – the republic of image,” adopted an interpretation which located Brazil and its nation building projects as a semantic universe for the emulation of receptors.

This text will emphasize the ruptures and continuities in cosmetics advertisements, analyzing the advertising of makeup powder and the models of the feminine present in these advertisements. The universe of analysis is restricted to the period 1911-1934 in *Fon-Fon!* Magazine. Introducing and sustained the discussion, the article discusses the production methodology of a history based on advertisements.

Methodologically, the importance and centrality of the image is highlighted in the analyses, since, unlike many works which prioritize written texts in study of advertising language,² this paper concentrates on the composition of images and the models of the feminine constructed there. The image analysis tools were based on the work of Sophie Cassagnes and Martine Joly, and the theoretical assumptions of Haskell.³ The temporal focus and the selection of the periodical were based on the effective conditions for the research of primary sources. They were held in the Public Library of the State of Santa Catarina, whose periodical collections for the twentieth century are incomplete and only date back to 1911. Furthermore, this material impossibility coincides with the fact that the first record of advertising in Brazil dates to 1910, when João Lyra, using the pseudonym *Homem Reclame* (Complaining Man) started the technique called at the time the ‘Yankee complaint,’ consisting of a large panel with a poster set up in a busy location (in this case it was advertising Bromil syrup outside São José Theatre, in the center of São Paulo).⁴ At the other extreme is the end of the first period of the Vargas Era, when the Provisional Government was replaced and the new Brazilian Constitution enacted, containing well known judicial advances. However, in addition, in what

is an extremely historicist reference, it should be noted that the first Brazilian agency to introduce an operational model with US standards was opened in 1933 – Standard Propaganda S.A. in Rio de Janeiro. Following its establishment in the national scenario advertisements were dressed with new appeals and a more professional language adopted, demanding a differential analysis for post-1934 advertisements. In the temporal period used the term advertising is, therefore, not anachronistic, since companies from the area were already in Brazil, imprinting on their work a *savoir-faire* which constructed advertising discourse with authorial propriety. However, it is premature to attribute to this period an analysis based on current precepts of what an advertising campaign is. At this initial moment, resources were either scarce or foreign. At one extreme was *Eclética*, a company which opened in 1913 and is considered the first Brazilian advertising agency; and on the other the foreign perspective of J. W. Thompson (Ramos; Marcondes, 1995), the first multinational agency in Brazil. It opened in Brazil in 1929, but what it advertised in Brazil was not made specifically for the Brazilian public. Rather when it represented international brands, it transmitted in the Brazilian means of communications the advertisements it had produced for other international vehicles, and when hired by a large Brazilian company it gave these advertisements the international tone common to its work.

It is evident that these considerations about the emergence of advertising companies does not prevent the many other initiatives to publicize products and places of consumptions, which can be dated from the eighteenth century in Brazil, from being considered as ‘publicity.’⁵ However, it has to be taken into account that advertisements have a particularity which need to be properly considered by historians: knowledge and conscience on the part of publicist of the tools of persuasion and seduction, amongst which the use of verbal and visual language is determinant for the success of the desired reception, which is converted into consumption.

As a result of the above, it was not considered possible to carry out a historic study of publicity collecting from the same *corpus* advertisements made by the illustrator or sign-writer of the newspaper dating from a time when there was no specific profession of publicist. According to Tungate,⁶ the history of advertising began with the industrial revolution and the development of the means of communication, such as newspapers and magazines. This author, who is not a professional historian, but rather a journalist, attributed the creation of the first advertising agency to Volney B. Palmer in Philadelphia in 1842. Tungate also exalts Thomas J. Barret with the title of the first successful publicist for having

carried out a campaign for the English ham manufacturer Pears in 1862, in which the public image of an actress and courtesan, Lillie Langtry, was used to publicize the ham and create an advertising icon in relation to it. Also on this list are names such as Jules Chéret, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and even Alphonse Mucha who, despite being artists and not publicists, contributed to the growth of the importance of advertising in business success by placing their art at the service of profit. Pincas and Loiseau (2006), also not historians, confirmed Tungate's information, naming the Publicis Groupe, launched by Volney Palmer in the United States as the first publicity company.

Given the objective of discussing the methodologies for dealing with advertisements by historians, even though the advertisements discussed here were not submitted to the work protocols recurrent in contemporary advertising production, it is worth considering that the advertisements observed, colorful, attractive, intelligent and often lucid in magazines, demanded much work in their preparation. They required initial planning for the communication objectives – whom to speak to and what to say – to be precisely defined. This planning was preceded by a study of the target public (*target* in advertising language), which could be very broad ranging or more restricted, in accordance with the product in question, though in could never be neglected. Initially it was necessary to define how many people would be interviewed and how they would be chosen to create a consumption sample for a determined product, what were the forms of access to the sample units, what forms of observation and measurement of the variables would be used in relation to the data collected and finally, the far from simple question of what forms of interpretation of the results to use, since false or partial conclusions could result in the failure of an advertisement of the publicity campaign which accompanied it.

Once the public had been defined, the product still had to be studied, as well as its position in relation to the public and what implicit 'promises' could be made to its consumers. In other words, it had to be defined what had to be said and how to say it, which leads to the second stage of the work, creation. Involved here was creating something not only new, artistic and pleasant, but above all effective, since creating in publicity implies studying the message to be transmitted in relation to its form and suitability to the communication strategy and target. Completing the journey was the third stage. Discussed in this was what should be said and with what intensity, in other words, the media was studied in order to select the one most suited to the target public and to analyze how the vehicles of communication would be used, how fast, and with what financial resources. In the book *Pesquisa de Propaganda* by Sérgio

Cotrim,⁷ from the Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing de São Paulo (ESPM), each of the stages summarized here occupies dozens of pages in a very pragmatic form to teach professionals from the sector how to achieve the expected results – establishing a product in the market. The author also completes the process with a fourth stage which consists of the evaluation of results, in other words, the verification of whether the objectives proposed have been achieved.

In addition to helping to reaffirm the temporal delimitation of this study and the temporal approaches adopted to the research universe, the considerations presented here also highlighted the specificity of the work of historians with advertising sources.

Looking at an advertisement, it is of vital importance for historians to situate the document in its context of production, which allows a composition of enunciations and the generation of unique feelings to be carried out, as well as the insertion of ‘triggers,’ as stated by Jauss,⁸ fundamental in the production of an aesthetics of reception.

The concern with a general and generic context in which economic crises, political situations and other pasteurized situations try to give meaning to the advertising message comes from a positive historiographic tradition, which neglects LaCapra’s proposal: “context itself is a text of various kinds.”⁹ In this way, in the inter-iconicity¹⁰ observable among images from the same epoch this general context can be read as evidence posted in an image, offering possibilities for its interpretation. Language, as a metaphor and instrument for the transformation of reality, has an active role in the creation and description of historic reality as Bhabha¹¹ considers in studying relations of national identity in contemporaneity. It is also worth considering what Gombrich says about the conditions of production for the study of a visual source. He states that, “All of them have to know the capacity and the limitations of their instruments ... The easier it is to separate the code from the content, the more we can use an image to communicate a particular type of information,”¹² which applies to this study and to any other about advertising: it is impossible to work on the advertisement without understanding the process which produced it, which *a priori* constitutes its context and the semantic universe of the advertisement.

Entering into the production structures of advertising work, the role of language has to be seen as occupying a very significant place. Without it there are neither advertisements nor reception, nor even communication. According to Carvalho,

The entire advertising structure sustains an iconic-linguistic argument which leads the consumer consciously or unconsciously to convince themselves. It has the form of a dialogue, but produces an asymmetrical relationship in which the emitter, despite using the imperative, transmits an expression from outside themselves. The real emitter remains absent from the speech circuit; the receptor, however, receives the attention of this emitter in relation to the object. Organized in a form different from the other messages, advertising imposes openly and between the lines, values, myths, ideas and other symbolic elaborations, using the resources of the language used as a vehicle, whether they are phonetic, lexico-semantic or morphosyntactic.¹³

After all, the mere communication of a product does not result in an efficient message in which meanings are determined *a priori* and where interpretation is closed in on itself, because there is a structured code of meanings which locate and permit the reading of meanings.¹⁴

The use of nouns, adjectives, and verbs, as well as stylistic resources, form the fundamental tools of the publicist, who submits them to the power of the image which does not illustrate the advertisements, but determines them in a process of semiotic significance, giving possible meanings to the terms used.

It is in this meeting between image and text where the message is composed, and implicit in this is the public for whom the advertisement is intended, which was constructed and guided in its subtexts. In the case of cosmetics advertisements, both the product line and its type – lipstick, nail varnish, etc. – characterize the public at which it is aimed: female or male, younger or older, more daring or more discreet, among many other possibilities, not just stating what they are, but also promising who they can be.

The inseparability of form and content, so dear to the discussion of visual arts, echoes in the analysis of the product-message-public-relationship, making indispensable a study that covers the semantic conditions of language, the possibilities of the existence and diffusion of products and the cultural and professional consensus about the public targeted.¹⁵

BEAUTY FOR SALE

In the works of advertising theorists it has been a consensus that women as the target public are linked to the ideal of domesticity,¹⁶ shown in the scenarios in which the products aimed at this public are located, but more especially in the discourse used. According to Raoul Smith¹⁷ female language

presents the following principal characteristics: a) different lexical elements, being capable of composing a wider and more subtle vocabulary; b) frequent use of intensifiers which give the discourse a more emotional texture; and c) the constant use of questions which seek adhesion or concordance with their ideas. In summary: it is the discourse of a subject dislocated from the center of power, who has learned more to listen than to speak, which results in a more dense vocabulary and the capacity to identify and attribute terms to small nuances; which need more to convince and seduce than to demand to be complied with, and which count on the adhesion of their announcer to acquire authority in what is said.

According to Nelly Carvalho (1996, p.18), advertising aimed at women continually explores the same notion: “to be happy and successful women need to be always beautiful and to (appear to) be young,” with the result that advertisements and publicity campaigns aimed at this public are centered on personal success, vanity and appearance. Naomi Wolf, a US journalist, has written about this advertising language for cosmetics consumers. According to Wolf, advertisements tend to attract women through comforting evocations such as “protect your skin against aggression,” using terms such as “soften, enrich, revitalize, whiten, energy, shine...”,¹⁸ always in a maternal tone with the intent of compensating daily stress, as if the attention and care received in infancy could be recovered in the daily act of caring for oneself.

In the research it was noted that this conclusion presented by advertising specialists has historic variants that need to be considered, since the research project identified that the models of domesticity attributed to the feminine public were ‘repaginated’ and supplied with different argument during the twentieth century.

In addition to some of the relevant aspect of the public in question, it is also appropriate to present some elements linked to the products being analyzed, cosmetics.

Some authors have indicated the existence of cosmetics as far back as antiquity,¹⁹ however, it is interesting to discover, by way of introduction, the moment the cosmetics industry emerged and with this its advertising. The cosmetics industry, strictly speaking, began when in 1846 Theron T. Pond, an American, improved an natural extract known by his family and in 1873 started the T. T. Pond Company in New York City. In the following year this brand used important advertising campaigns to sell its products. Five years later the company had already set up in Europe and arriving in Brazil in the 1930s.

The history of Avon started in 1886 with David H. McConnell, a travelling bookseller who began to manufacture perfumes and set up, as his experience indicated, a cosmetics company based on house-to-house sales, initially called the California Perfume Company. In 1896 he developed the first leaflet for the brand, which arrived in Brazil in 1958. The first Avon product line for which there was an advertising campaign in Brazil on radio and television was the fragrance Wishing, launched in 1965, presented as a cologne, *sachet* cream, perfumed talcum powder and soap.

Even though there were various initiatives in the nineteenth century, it was during the twentieth century that the great cosmetics brands emerged and established a new process in the creations of standards of beauty, connected to advertising appeals. Helena Rubinstein, a Pole, born in 1870; Elizabeth Arden, a Canadian born in 1878, and Max Factor, another Pole, born in 1877, revolutionized the sector with their products, labels, and most especially advertising. Rubinstein opened her beauty salon in London in 1908, financed by her husband and by the success of her cream *Valaze*, obtained in Australia. Florence Graham, owner of the Elizabeth Arden brand in 1909 launched it and began to attract a rich clientele in New York, while Max Factor, after wandering through the United States, settled in California, where he began to have much success, first with his wigs, and afterwards his makeup, the famous *pancake*. In the same way, Nivea Cream, created by Oskar Tropolwits, Isaac Lifschutz and Paul Unna in 1911, made with eucerin by Beiersdorf in Hamburg, brought advanced technology and versatility to the world of cosmetics by presenting a product which was stable (it did not need to be refrigerated to be conserved) and sold in small blue tins, with *art-nouveau* patterns.

It was only from the 1940s onwards that the Helena Rubinstein and Max Factor brands began to frequent the pages of the *Ilustração Brasileira* (1940) and *A Cigarra* (1944) magazines, respectively.²⁰

Beauty powder, the object of study presented here, often made from rice starch, called for this reason 'rice powder,' is one of the oldest resources for human makeup. The expression rice powder has been associated with cosmetics since 1845, according to Alain Rustenholz (2000).²¹ According to Ytzhak,²² good powder had to be light, soft to the touch, cover the skin well, and not to agglomerate forming lumps. Its primordial function was to absorb the secretions of the skin without leaving traces, giving the face a homogenous and 'natural' color in weather conditions that were wet or dry, cold or hot. The industrialization of the product started at the end of the nineteenth century, due above all to the development of packaging which allowed its transportation

and conservation. The materials most used were talcum powder, zinc oxide, lime carbonate, and at times, traces of arsenic.

Among the oldest manufacturers, there is information about some of those which are still known today, such as the Shiseido brand, a Japanese company famous since 1897, Bourjois, and Coty. Shiseido had innovated in the facial powder sector in 1906, offering the product in natural skin tones, such as Kaede and Hana. The Shiseido Institute opened its division dedicated to makeup in 1916 and the following year had already seven colors: the traditional white, yellow, flesh, rose, peony, green and purple. Bourjois was the best known Brazilian brand at the beginning of the twentieth century, having produced since 1879 *Poudre de Riz Java*. By the end of the nineteenth century two million of these pots had been sold in 120 countries. In 1891 the brand catalogue had more than seven hundred products: soap, powder, brilliantine, *rouges*, shadows, *tablettes indiennes* (the old name for mascara) and capillary lotion. Since 1910 the *Cendre de Rose* powder was the leader of sales. In addition to facial powder, now known as compact powder, Bourjois produced the first non-oily industrialized blush, created by Alexandre-Napoléon Bourjois in 1881.

Alongside these, the Coty brand emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, opening its makeup sector with the *Tissée d'air* powder, presented in a triangular glass jar designed by Lalique. In 1914 in the Americas alone, 30,000 pots were sold with the compact version of this powder. François Coty stated at the time that “My compact powder is the best publicity,” and it was made available in distinct markets in twenty nuances.²³

Among the powder brands mentioned in this text, a historic reference can be found to only one – *Germandrée*, produced by Mignot-Boucher, a French manufacturer, which in 1900 was awarded the gold medal at the International Exhibition in the perfumes category, thanks to the powder being advertised. For the other powders, only the Royal Briar manufacturer was located: Atkinson.

It is in this universe of cosmetology discoveries, of the large brands which established themselves in the international market, and of great commercial competition, helped by advertising which had professionalized, that beauty powder and cosmetics in their generality began to be consumed by Brazilian clientele. These customers were also cultivated by Brazilian brands, which have now disappeared, and which made the consumption of similar items to imported *cendre de rose* or *poudre Germandrée* available to a less well-off public.

FON-FON! BEAUTY IS ALSO FOR BRAZILIANS

Fon-Fon! magazine was born in Rio de Janeiro on 13 April 1907 and remained in existence until August 1958. Published on Saturdays, it can be identified as an abundantly illustrated varieties magazine or one of mundane activities. It proclaimed itself a “happy, political, critical and brilliant weekly, a broken newspaper, telegraphy without wire, an epidemic chronicle.”²⁴ According to Zanon it was “one of the best illustrated magazine at the time, portraying Brazilian private life, reflecting the vision of the world of the bourgeois society at the beginning of that century and influencing the behavior of the Carioca elite through its comic reports.”

Its founders, three symbolists, – Gonzaga Duque, Mário Pederneira and Lima Campos –, ran the magazine until 1915. Replacing them, Álvaro Moreyra and Hermes Fontes continued the publication. Among the collaborators, the presence of great illustrators stands out, such as Raul Calixto and J. Carlos, in the first phase, and Correia Dias and Emílio Cardoso Aires later on. Its roots in the symbolist movement did not restrict the periodical to the literary universe, as only in its first two years was it a magazine aimed at a male public and ‘serious’ subjects. During most of its existence there was an effort to keep alive its popular appeal and to make it a “happy, political, critical and brilliant weekly,” in which could be found literature, humor, varieties, and public utility, according to Macena.²⁵

In the words of Nelson Sodré, at the beginning of the twentieth century there emerged a ‘depoliticized’ press,²⁶ resulting in the multiplication of periodicals such as *Fon-Fon!*, which sought to involve a more popular, heterogeneous and urban reader with a light and agreeable text, supported by many images, from photographs to arabesques and caricatures, and whose content circulated around social events, short stories, poetry, humor, curious facts about the country and the world, newsflashes from urban life, fashion, etiquette and health, as well as charades, games and literature. While the ‘politicized’ press was aimed at the male and erudite public, the varieties press gave predominance to the female public, with average levels of education and desiring information rather than education. With this purpose, not only was the reader more frequently attracted, but was considerably solicited to adopt a model of femininity based on the taste for fashion, concern with social etiquette in the domestic and maternal universe and, of course, the consumption of the emblems of modernity. As Tania de Luca explains, this type of periodical tells its readers from the “middle strata of society” everything which it

considers fundamental for these subjects “to be able to familiarize themselves with the standards of elegance of the better off classes.”²⁷ In relation to these objectives the models of civilization and modernity were configured, whose mirrors were found in the local elite who occupied the headlines and which in turn were imprinted by the consumption of a reified European culture in the symbolic objects of good taste and superiority, such as French *haute couture*.

Despite the confirmation of female orientation in the content and the way it was presented, the logo of the magazine had an image in which the male dominated, both in the characters, two men – a driver and a refined man within a car driving off fast –, and in the intrinsic theme: speed, the city, modern times, these adventures and spaces of male dominion. Associated with this funny drawing was the title of magazine which indicated the hurry and the presence of the same times. According to Giovanna Dealtry,²⁸ the logo contained the ambiguity of the new times in the figure of the man holding his top-hat while his chauffeur accelerates the car making the tires ‘sing,’ contextualizing the magazine at the beginning of the twentieth century when Brazil came to have a predominantly urban elite, who, nonetheless, would not give up a series of privileges and protections which had come from imperial times. Therefore, it can be interpreted that these men and their ‘wonderful machines’ showed female readers that they could be modern like them, but in their role of spectators.

The editorial structure of the magazine varied during its 51 years of existence, however, during the period studied here what predominated was an opening with a text of a literary nature, which sometimes was an editorial, followed by other texts and reports, whose titles always had a humoristic tone. The advertisements were mostly concentrated from the fifth page on, sometimes in the middle of comic-strips or reports of social events. There was space for the publication of short-stories and chronicles sent by external collaborators, and also for readers’ letters.

Fon-Fon! was a magazine with great popular appeal thanks to its comical reports and its photographs of social events, in the words of Brito Broca (who in addition to a critic was a reader of the magazine), both it and similar magazines “carried out this decoding movement of cultures, attracting, with its humorous and mischievous cartoons, readers from the middle and the more popular classes, both educated and uneducated,” according to Mônica Velloso.²⁹

The universe of analysis collected in *Fon-Fon!* consists of 114 issues which contain cosmetics advertisements, published between 1911 and 1934. In this

period there are no issues available for the years of 1913, 1922, 1924 or 1932. The *corpus* for analysis consists of 166 advertisements, distributed as follows: 63 perfume advertisements; 43 advertising treatment and beauty creams; 34 for rice or beauty powder; seven for cologne milk or beauty water; seven for soap; five for hair; three for deodorant, two for toothpaste, one for nail polish and one for mascara. To the contrary of what was expected, only in 1936 was the first lipstick advertisement found, despite all the sensation produced during the 1920s about *lábios carmim*, drawn in the shape of a heart. However, this division is precarious, because many advertisements were multiple – with the manufacturer having different lines of cosmetics, thereby including various products in the same advertisement. The selection was based on the product highlighted in the advertisement, even when others were presented with lesser prominence.

In this paper rice powder advertisements are analyzed, since there are a sufficient number of them and they clearly are in the field of cosmetics. They were subdivided, with criteria used throughout the research, into two series: advertisements *with* and *without* the female image, resulting in 15 without and 18 with some female portrayal. The decision to have a study based on image and not on temporal groups was justified on two premises:

- a) Since the image is central to the proposed analysis, it should lead the object of study and be the starting point for the formation of series or groups/themes for discussion (the contrary would result in the mistake of making the image secondary or complementary to the discussion);
- b) It is interesting to emphasize non-linearity, to deny alleged ruptures constructed over time, to show the presence of various modes of publicity and women intersecting over time, without this also being understood as ambiguity or contradiction, just as possible gatherings. After all coherence and homogeneity are always an effort of reason.

FIRST SERIES: ABSENCE OF FEMALE BODY

The oldest among the advertisements found in *Fon-Fon!* (1^o July 1911, year V, n.26) are in the group without the image and consist of a black line at the bottom of the page, where the “*Senhorita*’s beauty powder is announced,” which is said to “cure freckles, stains, pimples, spots and all the afflictions of the skin.” It was sold in perfumeries, despite presenting itself as a medicine,

and could also be ordered by post. The cost of a box was 1\$500 *réis*. In 1914 another advertisement was found for the same brand, with the same layout, more phrases and the pattern of the product's box, which contained the figure of a woman.

Few advertisements did not contain an image of the product jar, in fact only four were found: Bijou (1915); Lady (1925); Hovenia (1930) and *Les poudres de riz* (1923). In 1927 the latter had its name in Portuguese and its advertisement showed four fancy boxes, which could be recognized by the manufacturer alongside the name, L. T. Piver. Bijou's rice powder had a layout which balanced arabesques in the form of leaves, a short text, and a phrase in a large easy to read font, with a seductive function. Lady rice powder had various advertisements during the period in question, as will be seen below.

Of the other advertisements which are in the group without female images, two are from Lady (28 April and 7 July 1917); two from Lubin (1923 and 1925); two are from Eunice (1920 and 1921), one from Dora (1919), one from Mulheres Bellas (1930) and one from Royal Briar (1934). The last two stand out because they broke with the previous aesthetic standard, as they had dialogue with more modernist dialogue – more rigid forms, a predominance of black, and parallel lines compose the image. Especially Royal Briar (21 Apr. 1934, year XXVIII, n.16, p.23), which abandons explanations of any type and in addition to the product packaging and the brands, only has a single phrase: “beautify women.”

This inventory of advertisements without the female figure permits the investigation of evidence of both the advertising conditions produced and the clients targeted.

Advertising work shows a greater concern with giving visibility to the product, having its existence remembered and not effectively just conquering clientele, since it is assumed that its role is information and not seduction,³⁰ something defended by marketing schools after the Great Depression.

In these advertisements the implied woman is a customer already used to looking after herself, to the use of rice powder and who, thus, does not need to be reminded of the need for, or the efficiency of, beauty and of unblemished skin. She is a woman from the elite, informed, and at whom advertisements should be aimed without badgering, reminding her of the existence of the product, where to find it and the price to pay. With this information, her choice could be counted on.

SECOND SERIES: THE FEMALE BODY PRESENT

In the group of advertisements with female images it was also noted that it could be subdivided into two other groups, those with photographs of women and those with drawings seeking the perfect representation of the feminine. These consist of 10 and 8 advertisements respectively.

Various subdivisions exist in the drawings group. Two advertisements (Teindelys, 1920, and Fé, 1928) use allegorical drawings, in other words they present a mythical figure, as if they were portraying a goddess of 'powder' to accompany the product jar. Another advertisement (Mendel, 1923) has a drawing of the complete body of a woman in front of her dressing table, applying the powder. Her clothes and pose are like those of a porcelain ballerina. The advertisement contained many lines and three boxes explaining in detail the qualities of the product. Another three (Mila, 1920; Meu Coração, 1923, and Lucy, 1925) used arabesques to create a frame for the advertisement and presented a female drawing in a partial form, showing half the body. All contained a figure applying powder and allude to an educated lady. *Meu Coração* rice powder has the drawing of a seated woman, seen by readers from the side, who is admiring the powder jar and smelling its perfume. Behind her there is a circle drawn and composing the scenario. The Lucy advertisement (20 June 1925, year XIX, n.25) is on the inside cover, a rarity in this period, occupying the whole page. No explanation is given and the drawing presents the various sizes of the product and highlights the manufacturer: Lambert – Rio.

In this group there are also two relevant advertisements as they present drawings of femininity emphasizing the modern woman, Orygam de Gally (1931) and Royal Briar (1934). This modernity identified in the figure of the feminine can be found most especially in the drawing style, since the lightness of the lines and composition of the picture are in harmony with the *art deco* style which advocates pure straight lines, space, clarity, and black and white contrast and elegance, quite evident in these advertisements in the traits with which the feminine figure was drawn.³¹ In the first there appears the profile of a woman with very long hair, long eyelashes and a fringe over her eyes; in the second the fine and transparent line which sketch the feminine face are accompanied by long and delicate fingers holding a jar of the product. In both the background is in black and the extremities of the figure are cut off.

The group with photographs of women is very varied. Dating from 1915 and 1916, two advertisements (Epidermol and Poudre Germandrée) convey an image of a woman that is still *belle-époque*, inspired by the *art nouveau* style,

doing justice to the women represented by Mucha. The figures in the advertisements have enigmatic looks, which stare at readers and offer them a simple smile; their necks, slightly turned, show them to be delicate and submissive, though at the same time beautiful and desired. They have full hair, arranged on top of their heads, leaving the neck and the lap bare. They are surrounded by volumes, roses in the former and flowers in the latter. The background remembers the textures of studio photographs, with smoke and mists. It is the projection of chimera which the product had to make real.



Figure 1 – Epidermol, 1 July 1916, p.13.

In turn, the 1916 Epidermol advertisement (Figure 1) has another woman, still with voluminous hair, but with a more innovative hairstyle. In the *Avenida* (1920) advertisement for rice powder, there is a photographic image cut and pasted on a white background which serves to advertise the product. Instead of references to the *belle-époque*, the 1916 advertisement references the *art deco* style, with two stylized tulips flanking the photograph and thick black lines framing the advertisement and highlighting the explanatory text. This makes it innovative for the time it was published.

Among the numerous products to give the face a more velvety skin, *Lady* rice powder, well known at the time and almost synonymous with the product among many customers, is what possessed greatest frequency in the *corpus*

worked with. Its three advertisements with photographs consist of a case for analysis in particular.

AMONG LADY, GALLY AND MENDEL, POSSIBILITIES FOR THE WRITING OF A HISTORY



Figure 2 – Lady Powder, 9 Aug. 1919, p.5.

In a 1919 advertisement for Lady powder (Figure 2) there is considerable graphic cleansing. A woman with short way hair, a serious look and without a smile, applies the powder on one of her hands, holding the jar with the other. On top is the name of the product and beside the cropped photograph where not even the shoulders have been preserved, a short phrase – “It is the best and not the dearest!” – concludes the advertisement, leaving for the lower part the basic information with the address and manufacture’s name. The slogan is repeated in other advertisements for this brand, but not the style. In the 1929 advertisement a smiling woman with a *à la garçonne* hairstyle composes the scene with the name of the brand (Figure 3) in well drawn large letters, making it into a piece with an *art deco* style in which three superimposed circles create a large amount of movement. In 1934 a young elegant woman is replaced by one with long undulating and well cared for hair, with a romantic look, without a smile but with prominent lipstick, drawn amongst clouds with a voluminous

dress (Figure 4). The typography of the brand name gains new contours, not it is similar to that of a Hollywood sign-writer.



Figure 3 – Lady Powder, 6 July. 1929, p.81.

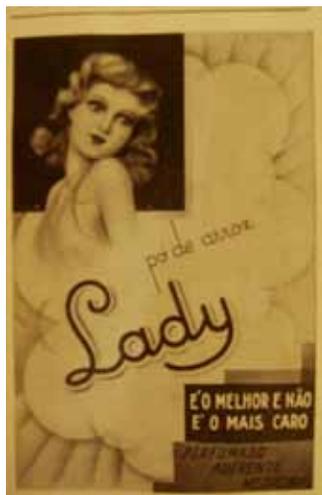


Figure 4 – Lady Powder, 17 Mar. 1934, p.21.

What can be observed in these three advertisements, published at irregular intervals and with notably diverse graphic contents, is the sketching of

different females, indicating a dialogue with distinct women for each epoch. The historic context conventionally attributed to these periods is not presented here as a justification, but as evidence to interpret the inter-iconicity between these advertisements, the series in which they are inserted, and a broader universe of images produced at the same moment.

In 1919 there was not much laughter in the world. The Great War had just ended and women, if they were not in mourning for a loved one, had to at least contain their impulses due to the pain of others. In this spirit of containing joy, advertisers proposed an image of a serious introspective woman, who would provoke empathy in hundreds of other possible consumers, who, without losing their emotional reserves, were able to give themselves the pleasure of beautiful skin. The dryness of the advertisement, the appearance of being somewhere between tired and hopeless, and the position of the figure beside it are evidence of a discourse which reverberates in many others and which makes us think about this moment of condolences following the recently ended war. This look and the coldness coming from the empty space produced a reception which provoked more silence than euphoria, since as Haskell has stated:

An image is not a world in itself, an inert object: it does not exist except in the perspective of its spectator who, in turn, looks at it with his culture and personal preoccupations; its reception changes according to the epochs and places considered, and if we do not close ourselves to the question of the hypothetical polysemics of the image, it is necessary above all to consider that the questions we put are what are polysemic and changing.³²

The second advertisement, from 1929, invests in the woman who has experienced the 'crazy 20s' and who as a *garçonne* proposes herself as modern, happy and captivating, and having left her moral reserve, experiments with her smile, beauty and seduction. Despite her body being turned to the side, her face is clearly turned to the reader of the advertisement, inviting her to participate in this world of innovations which she enjoys. The innovation is present in both the *art deco* style chosen for the image, and the dark tone around the female figure and the lower part of the advertisement. These graphic resources make the part where the name of the product appears seem more positive. Similarly, the window or shop-front which mentions the outside world, drawn behind the female figure, represents the street where this woman allows herself to have adventures. This model of the feminine speaks both about the success

of beauty and the freedom of the new times, calling on consumers of rice powder to experiment these new possibilities.

The final advertisement in this series, in turn, ignores liberty and adventure to emphasize the chimerical woman, an idea constituted by the clouds which form a background to the figure. This woman with dreams idealizes loves that appear on cinema screens, evidence of which can be found in the dark rectangle that frames the face. More than a face, the woman who lives on dreams possesses a body, a body which serves to exhibit a dress that is also exceptional, made for unforgettable moments. Ordering all the icons around the cinema message and its universe of dreams, the name of the product is drawn with the graphic resources common in titles of Hollywood films, which is also a recurrence given all the spatial organization of the advertisement. This brings to mind well-known film posters, where the beautiful 'girl,' young but melancholic, will have a happy ending. The consumer, now younger and single, is interviewed as this woman who feeds on dreams and desires of love, counting on beauty to achieve her role – in this case the social role of mother and spouse.

Alongside the dreaming young girl of Lady, another two advertisements from another brand, but from the same year of 1934, were aimed at another female public. In Brazil a new constitution was enacted that year, which granted women the vote and enacted other democratic demands, stating in its preamble that this had been done “to organize a democratic regime which will assure the nation unity, liberty, justice and social and economic welfare.” Arising out of the internal political pressures unchained by the Constitutionalist Revolution of São Paulo in 1932, the Constitution gave visibility to other social groups in the scenarios of power, such as the army, urban and industrial groups created through the organization of cities with autonomy from the influence of agricultural power. In addition, this visibility was due to the advances proposed in social and labor rights, which sketched out a more democratic state, autonomous from the interests of the large landholders.³³

The 1934 Orygam de Gally rice powder advertisements (February and August), alongside the other cosmetics advertisements from the same time, allowed reflection on these new social configuration experienced in Brazil, and it is through this inter-iconicity that the context to propose an interpretative path to the advertisements can be found.

In the February advertisement (Figure 5) there is a strong mention of futurism,³⁴ with lines that interpose and demonstrate movement, very innovative for that period. In composition with those lines is the figure of a woman

with long wavy tidy hair, with her neck and lap bare. Equilibrating the picture in the inverse corner to the female figure, the product jar appears in movement as well. In the August advertisement (Figure 6) the term Orygam disappears and the product is only advertised as Gally. In a more classical manner, an advertisement is composed in which a woman, contoured in grey, is looking at herself in a hand mirror on the right-hand side, while on the left three vertical lines and three horizontal balance the set and form a black picture in which can be read:

The modern woman knows to prefer rice powder which provides here with a healthy, perfect and satin cutis, which gives support to her natural beauty. Gally rice powder with well-known purity and perfume, has all the qualities necessary for the care of the female epidermis. (*Fon-Fon!*, year XXVIII, n.7, 25 Aug. 1934, p.25)

What stands out here is the adjective which describes the consumer as 'modern' and associates her 'modernity' with knowledge, with the wisdom which will lead her to choose this product as the most suitable. However, the posture of the body, the look, and the beauty demonstrated in the photography which compose the advertisement are determinant in the typification of this modern woman: slim, beautiful, haughty, elegant, well dressed, ruler of herself and of relevant importance, without stains on her morality, since the image does not propose any lust.

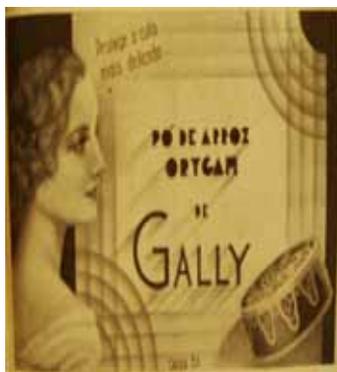


Figure 5 – Gally Powder, 17 Feb. 1934, p.47.



Figure 6 – Gally Powder, 25 Aug. 1934, p.25.

In the two advertisements the female drawing represents a more mature woman, a reserved lady – since her gaze is not directed to the reader – and one who can take care of herself, since her skin, hair, clothing and makeup are all impeccable and balanced, demonstrating sobriety and elegance. Unconcerned with this outside world, these representations of the feminine focus on looking after themselves, in smiling towards the product jar which guarantees them the desired beauty, in looking with pertinence towards the mirror which revealed their beauty and distinction. The woman convoked to consumption is not altered by the rumors of the streets, perhaps she is not even happy with the right to vote conquered by her sex. Wise and modern, she recognizes that her superiority comes from a natural condition, which external things can reinforce, but not attribute to her.

This very distinct customer of Orygam de Gally rice powder had nothing to do with the elegant woman or the dreamer of Lady rice powder, or with the daring of Mendel *graseoso* powder.

Mendel's 1925 advertisement (Figure 7) is considerably different from its previous one from 1923. The porcelain doll from the first one is replaced by a young woman with a daring look. It contains an *art deco* type frame in which can be seen the drawing of a young woman with short voluminous hair, a provocative look, wearing makeup and with a grin behind red lips. A dense line, which in the corners is slightly broken, dominates the advertisement. The young woman drawn there has her neck slightly tilted forwards and her gaze



Figure 7 – Mendel Powder, 20 June 1925, p.81.

is directed to the side and upwards, as if answering someone's call or to show her interest and provoke the attention of someone nearby, perhaps inside a café. She is wearing black. It could be a blouse without a plunging neckline, or a dress with a high neck, but it cannot be defined. However, the black refers to irreverence and the bohemia of the night. The *boucles* of her hair – especially on the left side of her face – denounce her intentions, since it is the famous *pega-rapaz* (mancatcher) common in the 1920s. She is completely seductive and daring.

This advertisement shares inter-iconicity with various other texts and images, such as *Salomé* by Gustave Moreau, so appreciated in that decade by symbolist and moderns, which, as Claudia de Oliveira has stated, interjected an image of a woman concerned with her desires which leads to “new forms of amorous meetings between the male and female, allowing a new eroticism to emerge, in the passage from an idealized woman to a ‘real’ and carnalized woman who emerges with the modernization of the city.”³⁵

In the lower part of the advertisement, in a more formal frame, are evocative phrases: “The saving resource. To be able to beautify the cutis, restoring to it the freshness and delicacy of infancy, freeing it from any stains, all you must do, ladies, is to use the Mendel *graseoso* powder daily...” (*Fon-Fon!*, year 10, n.25, 20 June 1925, p.81).

The two advertisements from the 1920s – the elegant lady and the ‘daring’ Mendel – call on women to discover the important of looking after themselves and seeking a ‘saving’ path on which they can react against ageing and the traits which obfuscate their beauty. They are texts which speak to the young, to young ladies who have come to have contact with the city and with commerce and who want to be daring in the new world, to show their youth and enchantment. Young women who saw the figure of the *garçonne* or elegant lady as a new woman, with short hair and her ankles in view. Living in the city, they knew how to act. They were the young women who celebrated having acquired liberty, who were on the streets, in the cafés, who were euphoric with the speed of cars and the sound of the horns blaring on avenues, and who as moderns understood themselves, even as distinct as those ladies of Orygam, they wanted to look after themselves and to possess the beauty and youth with distanced them from models of the feminine which represented the past: matrons, overworked, tired, with messy hair, untidy, with dry and colorless skin, who were afraid to live in the city in the middle of the noise and multitudes.

The possibilities for the analysis, contraposition and grouping of these images are infinite, since being advertisements they cannot be considered apart from this. Their publicizing occurred on the pages of a periodical whose editorial policy was defined at the service of the new modern city of the recently commenced twentieth century.

The analyzed advertisements show that in the field of cosmetics in this period of advertising, which was still precarious in terms of its methodology and resources, the domesticity of the feminine was predominantly produce in the sphere of image. From dolls to smoky images, also including daring young women or dreams, as well as reaffirming the superiority of ladies from the elite, which is shown is the appeal to beauty as a natural condition of the feminine. If the consumption of these products was forbidden to anyone, the possibility of being beautiful would have been lost with youth, and of being modern would have remained a chimera, something from a world that did not belong to them.

It was intended here to provoke some historiographic reflections about research in advertising, indicating that this object could not be worked with – notwithstanding the methodologies which produce it – nor could the image without seeing it and prioritizing it in the investigation. Images have to be allowed to conduct the analysis, the argumentation, attempts at association and approximations, not as in a dark room, but starting from a repertoire which allows us see. As has been discussed by Gombrich,³⁶ there is no innocent look,

and the production of the past will always be done based on desires to assemble and combine suggested by the present and sweetened by projects which lead the historian in the mesh of intertwined forms and tones, as emphasized by Didi-Huberman, Walter Benjamin and Antoine Prost.³⁷

NOTES

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² See PALACIOS, Anamaria da Rocha J. Cultura, consumo e segmentação de público em anúncios de cosméticos. *Comunicação, mídia e consumo*, São Paulo, v.3, n.6, p.123-135, 2006.

³ CASSAGNES, Sophie. *Le commentaire de document iconographique en histoire*. Paris: Elipses, 1996; JOLY, Martine. *Introdução à análise da imagem*. Campinas (SP): Papirus, 1996; HASKELL, Francis. *L'historien et les images*. Paris: Gallimard, 1995.

⁴ In: RAMOS, Ricardo; MARCONDES, Pyr. *200 anos de propaganda no Brasil*. São Paulo: Meio & Mensagem, 1995. All information relating to dates and names come from this source.

⁵ The first advertisements are attributed to Theophraste Renaudot in 1630, who put into *La Gazette de France* paid announcements about products and places of commerce. In 1786 in England, Willian Tayler offered his services to the *Maidstone Journal*, starting this service in that country. In: PINCAS, Stéphane; LOISEAU, Marc. *Née en 1842, une histoire de la publicité*. n.l.: Mundocom, 2006. For the Brazilian scenario it is common to find the indication of the creation of *Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro*, after the arrival of the royal family at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the announcements of slaves present in this newspaper, as the first advertising and publicity events in Brazil. See: SIMÕES, Roberto. *A propaganda no Brasil, evolução histórica*. São Paulo: ESPM, 2006.

⁶ TUNGATE, Mark. *El universo publicitario: una historia global de la publicidad*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2008. p.22ss.

⁷ COTRIM, Sérgio Q. *Pesquisa de propaganda*. 2.ed. São Paulo: Global, 1995.

⁸ JAUSS, Hans. A estética da recepção: colocações gerais. In: LIMA, Luiz Costa (Coord.). *A literatura e o leitor: textos de estética da recepção*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1979.

⁹ LACAPRA, Dominick, apud KRAMER, Lloyd S. Literatura, crítica e imaginação histórica: o desafio literário de Hayden White e Dominick LaCapra. In: HUNT, Lynn. *A nova história cultural*. Transl. Luiz Camargo. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1995. p.154.

¹⁰ A concept created by Jean Pirotte to discuss how images are related to other images. PIROTTE, Jean. *Images et critique historique*. In: JADOULE, Jean-Louis. *L'histoire au*

prisme de l'image. v.1: L'historien et l'image fixe texte. Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain, 2002.

¹¹ BHABHA, Homi. *O local da cultura*. Belo Horizonte: UFMG; Humanitas, 2007.

¹² GOMBRICH, E. H. *La imagen y el ojo*: nuevos estudios sobre la psicología de la representación pictórica. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1993. p.137, 138.

¹³ CARVALHO, Nelly. *Publicidade: a linguagem da sedução*. São Paulo: Ática, 1996. p.13.

¹⁴ See JOLY, 1996; BARTHES, R. *Elementos de semiologia*. São Paulo: Cultrix, 1997. The distinction between communication and language needs to be stressed, because they do not mutually imply each other.

¹⁵ For further discussion of this, see SANT'ANNA, Mara Rúbia. *Teoria de moda: sociedade, imagem e consumo*. 2.ed. São Paulo: Estação das letras e das cores, 2009.

¹⁶ VERTERGAARD, Torben; SCHRODER, Kim C. *A linguagem da propaganda*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2004. p.118ss.

¹⁷ SMITH, R. A functional view of the linguistics of advertising. In: PIETRO, R. J. *Linguistics and the professions*. Delaware: University of Delaware, 1988. p.95.

¹⁸ WOLF, Naomi. *Quand la beauté fait mal*. Enquête sur la dictature de la beauté. Paris: First, 1991. p.123.

¹⁹ According to Kohl, they were used by Mesopotamians and Egyptians to draw dark contours around the eyes. In: VITA, Ana Carolina. *História da maquiagem, da cosmética e do penteado*. São Paulo: Anhembi Morumbi, 2008.

²⁰ All data were obtained in the sites of the respective brands: mundodasmarcas.blogspot.com/2006/06/ponds-beauty-care-with-success.html; www.br.avon.com/PRSuite/whoweare_main.page; www2.nivea.com.br/story/history/history_frameset.php?goto=11; Accessed on 30 June 2010.

²¹ RUSTENHOLZ, Alain. *Maquillage*. Paris: Ed. du Chêne, 2000. p.187.

²² YTZHAK, Lydia Ben. *Petite histoire du maquillage*. Paris: Ed. Stock, 2000. p.136, 148.

²³ HEALY, Orla. *Coty: la marque d'un visionnaire*. Paris: Ed. Assouline, 2004. p.18.

²⁴ ZANON, Maria Cecília. A Sociedade Carioca da Belle Époque nas Páginas do *Fon-Fon! Patrimônio e Memória*, Unesp/FCLAs/Cedap, v.4, n.2, p.225-243, jun. 2009.

²⁵ MACENA, Fabiana Francisca. *Madames, mademoiselles, melindrosas*: 'feminino' e modernidade na revista *Fon-Fon* (1907-1914). Masters Thesis in History – Programa de Pós-graduação em História, Universidade de Brasília. Brasília, 2010. Available at: bdtd.bce.unb.br/tesdesimplificado/tde_arquivos/33/TDE-2010-10-29T110754Z-5167/Público/2010_FabianaFranciscaMacena.pdf.

²⁶ SODRÉ, Nelson Werneck. *História da imprensa no Brasil*. 4.ed. Rio de Janeiro, Mauad, 1999.

²⁷ LUCA, Tania de. *A Revista do Brasil: um diagnóstico para a (n)ação*. São Paulo: Unesp, 1999. p.58.

²⁸ DEALTRY, Giovanna Ferreira. Crônicas de uma cidade em mutação. *Revista Nossa História*, Rio de Janeiro, n.12, out. 2004.

²⁹ BROCA, Brito. *A vida literária no Brasil*. 4.ed. Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio Ed.; Academia Brasileira de Letras, 2004; VELLOSO, Mônica Pimenta. As modernas sensibilidades brasileiras. *Nuevos Mundos*, jan. 2006. Available at: nuevomundo.revues.org/index1500html

³⁰ See MARTIN, Marc. *Les trois siècles de publicité en France*. Paris: Odile Jacob, 1992.

³¹ See HILLIER, Bevis; ESCRITT, Stephen. *Art deco style*. London & New York: Phaidon, 1997.

³² HASKELL, 1995, p.16. Free translation into Portuguese from the French version by MRS.

³³ SILVA, Hélio; CARNEIRO, Maria Cecília Ribas. *O início da era Vargas: 1934/1936*. 3.ed. São Paulo: Ed. Três, 2004.

³⁴ See FABRIS, Annateresa. *O futurismo paulista: hipóteses para o estudo da chegada da vanguarda ao Brasil*. São Paulo: Perspectiva; Edusp, 1994.

³⁵ OLIVEIRA, Claudia. As pérfidas Salomé: o tema do amor na estética simbolista e as novas formas de amar na *Belle Epoque* carioca – *Fon-Fon!* e *Para todos...* (1900-1930). *Nuevos Mundos*, jan. 2007. Available at: nuevomundo.revues.org/3148.

³⁶ GOMBRICH, E. H. *Arte e ilusão: um estudo da psicologia da representação pictórica*. 3. ed. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1995.

³⁷ DIDI-HUBERMAN, Georges. *Cuando las imagenes toman posicion: el ojo de la historia*, 1. Madrid: A. Machado Libros, 2008. Cap. La disposición de las cosas: Desmontar el orden; PROST, Antoine. Criação de enredos e narratividade. In: _____. *Doze lições sobre a história*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2008; BENJAMIN, Walter. Sobre o conceito da História. In: _____. *Magia e técnica, arte e política: ensaios sobre literatura e história da cultura*. Transl. Sergio Paulo Rouanet. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987.