

The body and its techniques of beauty: on the schemes of the cultural industry in “Boa Forma” Magazine¹

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Abstract: The article presents the results of a research about the constitution of a certain obligation to be feminine under prescriptions of Boa Forma magazine. The research analyzed mainly the editorials, sections and articles about body care, taking as the main sources the summer editions and those editions immediately prior to it (Sep/Feb, 2001-2006). The results point to a control apparatus focused on the use of ambiguous discourses; on the body investigation; in the discipline and sacrifice appreciation; and on the use of legitimization methods guided by mechanisms of the cultural industry.

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1 Introduction

The bodies are more exposed than ever, provoking desires and craving, overall to reach promises of freedom, happiness and success, which are embodied in the appearances considered as beautiful and healthy. To this movement, there is a whole corresponding pedagogy combining the production of subjectivity that finds in the body its contemporary accomplishment, and the market avatars – with its apparitions embodied in the surface of rigid muscles and dissimulated fats. However, a didactic material diffused through daily newspapers, weekly and monthly illustrated magazines, open and cable TV television programs is necessary; it has as its territory the beauty shops, fitness and bodybuilding centers, the nutritionist's and plastic surgeons' offices, spreading through the residences, workplaces and mixing with leisure spaces². Within this context, the illustrated magazines for women are true evangelizing guides about this changeable religiosity that fitness is. If the cultural industry schemes are a kind of “daily liturgy” (CLAUSSEN, 2000) aiming at not only inviting, but also

² It is worth noting that the prescriptions for the constitution of the model body are attached not only to the traditional expected spaces, as the ones aforementioned, but also to some unsuspected ones, since it is possible and necessary to reserve some minutes a day to dedicate to the body capital, even if you stay home all day or during work break.

requiring the subjective dispositions for consumption, it's in the body that they find their desideratum.

Among so many guide books, it's worth mentioning the *Boa Forma*⁵ magazine, in circulation in a continuous manner for more than twenty years, consolidating itself as one of the privileged contemporary vehicles of the bodies politization processes⁶, source and vector of dissemination of the cultural industry schemes⁷ through investments on individual and collective bodies. *Boa Forma* is a magazine targeted to women, to the consumption expectations that can be produced or are found in the horizon of an urban, contemporary feminineness, impelled to dispute the male affective market (the *Boa Forma*'s women are young and heterosexual).

Boa Forma has as its central content techniques (diets and exercise series), drug substances for skin and hair for body beauty and health care purposes, and self-help articles. It is organized into specific sections: 1. Fitness; 2. Beauty; 3. Diet and nutrition; 4. Well-being; and 5. Special. In addition to those sections, it always presents an interview with the "Cover Girl" and other mini-sections that inform contents similar to the regular sections'. The specific contents of each section are mixed, sometimes, with the other sections'.

It's such issues that this work deals with. It presents some results of a research that had the purpose to analyze how a certain "must be" feminine transmitted by the magazine is configured, something that is configured in the general scene of the question about aspects of body pedagogy within the contemporary society. The investigation works inspired by the concept of cultural industry, created by Horkheimer and Adorno

(1985, 1997), seeking getting closer to Michel Foucault's contributions (1979, 2000), especially in regard to the biopolitics concept. These authors outline an analysis of the present focused on the mechanisms impinged by the rationalized society, resulting in subjectivity processes that occur through the control, the submission and, paradoxically, also through the increase of the body power.

The analysis on *Boa Forma* focused particularly on the cover, the editorials, specific sections and articles whose theme is the body and health care, especially in relation to the techniques and products for skin and hair. A period was limited comprising the last four and the first two editions of each year from September 2001, becoming complete in February 2006. The choice for the months that compose summer and a period prior to it is explained by the enhancement of body care at this time, provided that this is a period in which its visibility acquires performing contours, determining, in relation to whether one has or not the "ideal" body and health, the concerns and restrictions of the exposure of oneself.

In the following pages, we are going to present and discuss some of the main devices used by *Boa Forma* like body control technologies, jointly with the outline and reflection about some of its implications. Therefore, we briefly dealt with the concept of technique and its relation with body, in order to present it in details according to the instruments *Boa Forma* elects for the women bodies' constitution. This detailing is about the articulating concepts that we developed when analyzing the empiric material, when crossing the research's objectives and the voices announced by the object: the concern about the body

investigation, the reproduction of formulas that promise a renewed success, the martial character of a body confrontation, the discourses that legitimize the body techniques. At the end, we sought to conclude the reflection through a synthesis that, unsurprisingly, replaces the biopolitical strategies' context theme.

2 Technique and body

In general, technique can be considered as all the measure performed to better reach a certain purpose. It is the expression of improvement of the most different human actions, including the care for one's own body that becomes an instrument; what allows Marcel Mauss (1974) to talk about "body techniques". According to him, the "[...] fundamental education of all these techniques consists in adjusting the body to its use." (MAUSS, 1974, p. 232). The relation between technique and body somehow constitutes the mankind itself and, at the same time, body is understood as an instrument, object, but also as a potential territory of resistance.

The physiological system of the man's senses has worked for a long time on the physical experiments in details. The way how the parties are taken apart or joined in the recorder observation, the way how some parties are unperceived and others stand out, is equally the result of the

modern way of production, just like the perception of a man from any tribe of primitive hunters or fishers is the result of their conditions of being and, therefore, undoubtedly of the object as well. In relation to that, we could invert the sentence: the tools are extensions of the human organs, into the sentence: the organs are also extensions of tools.³ (HORKHEIMER, 1989, p. 40; 1970, p. 23).

This conformation/production of senses finds its wicked fate in the administered society, in which Adorno called “technological veil”, a social place that techniques takes in the contemporary:

The men tend to consider the technique as something in itself, a purpose in itself, a strength itself, and forget that it is the extension of men’s arms. The means – and the technique is a concept of means

³ This fetishism of the technique is also found in sports and its mechanical character, also regarding the cultural industry: “The dominated celebrate their own domination. They transform freedom in a parody, as they freely put themselves in favor of the separation of the individuals and their own bodies, once more. Through this freedom, the lack of justice is confirmed – based on social violence – that once more is destined to slaved bodies. That is the basis for the passion for sports, where the controllers of the mass culture perceive the true substrate for their dictatorship. It is possible to put oneself in the position of controller, as the ancestor pain, violently repeated, once more is provoked on themselves and on the others. (ADORNO, 1997a, p. 328).

directed to the human species self-preservation – are made a fetish because the purposes – a worthy human life – are covered and disconnected from people’s conscience. (ADORNO, 1995, p. 132-3, 1997b, p. 686).

In a tradition that separates the somatic of another dimension in relation to it (spirit, mind, cogito, etc.), the technique, what becomes the purpose, and body, technical instrument by nature, are reified⁴. The former can, therefore, become a means of organization of the latter’s suffering, destitute of its qualities when it is reduced to the condition of manipulable object, as in the case, in most of the cases, of the body training processes and the diets, among other ways to relate to one’s own body (VAZ, 1999).

Among so many body techniques existing among us, today, those that are intended to reach beauty are the ones of great importance. Boa Forma presents those technical sets that seem to be the main methods to discipline and control the body shapes: physical exercises, diets, but also cosmetics and aesthetic treatments of another nature. Each one of such sets shall be its specificities, which, along the magazine pages, are strategically outlined through the determination of spaces,

⁴ The separation between body and mind is, in the registers suggested by Adorno (1997d), simultaneously real and fictitious. Real because the history of civilization was built, in great part, having it into account, in a way that could legitimate slavery, the exploitation of the potential of work force and the renounce of the immediate tendency gratification; fictitious because only for didactic objective we can separate one from the other, whose frontiers, in fact, are not known.

periodicities, intensities, ways of application, moments of use and suitable instruments. Everything is circumstantially defined, along with written instructions, images, equipments and means so that the reader can know how it is supposed to be and, thus, watch on her own behaviors and results. In the discipline of the bodies, the essential thing is the process control.

3 The investigation of a body, of several bodies

As shown by zur Lippe (1988) the impulse to investigate the body comes from the Renaissance and corresponds to the interest to dominate and systematize nature, both external and internal to the human being. This process marks would be the birth of a ballet grammar, as well as, later, the gardens of the European courts and the anatomy practice.

This destination we found in *Boa Forma*. There is a whole system of investments in body, which shows itself as necessary when the magazine informs the reader, among other procedures, of the muscles that will be developed by each one of the exercises presented in it. Such information come along with the imperative that it's necessary to "sculpt each centimeter" (PENTEADO, 2003 p. 50).

The body is, therefore, divided, cut, and investigated in order to perform a circumstantial and efficient work in it, once the reader must have enough knowledge for that. Likewise, the recommendation to use cosmetics also occurs through an exaggerated rationalization of the body, because in addition to the necessary investment in each of its parts, the care

specialization is prescribed: relax, clean, hydrate, in a differentiated manner, with products suitable to each anatomic portion.

This careful care supposes and predicts a woman's responsibility to her body, something that started in the first decades of the XX century, as presented by Schpun (1997), Goellner (2001) and Albino and Vaz (2006), among others. The need to perform a circumstantial investment in herself grows, however, according to the level of exposure of the body. There is a "morality" in beauty that can be granted as a gift, but that is, overall, the possible result of a behavior connected to an asceticism necessary to beauty.

The immorality linked to the presentation of an unfit body is something that is contemporarily strengthened. The body throughout its surface must be shown, exhibited, so that it can likewise be appreciated, desired, cause envy or solely be noted, as long as it is fit for that, as in the question made by Boa Forma: "Do you want to make your buttocks smooth and retire your "canga" (piece of cloth worn around the waist over a swimming suit), beach skirt or shorts this summer?" (LUBLINSKI 2002, p. 89).

A control-stimulation process is identified herein (FOUCAULT, 2000), a dominance performed in a different manner from the repression formerly performed over the body. This is transformed into a dominance through the stimulation to show and make oneself desirable, what incites to become possible, at least illusorily, whatever the desired body configuration – or through another, required by the consumption demands.

In the middle of all such cares imposed to the women's body, it's worth mentioning that "belly", "buttocks" and "legs" are the parts granted a singular importance⁵ by Boa Forma. The appreciation of such anatomic parts is due to the interest to reinforce feminineness referred to what is believed to be the men's expectations, something well limited by the magazine through assertions like "What is sexier in the beach? They tell everything." (LUBLINSKI 2003, p. 62).

The fact that the opposite sex's opinion guides the women's investment in their bodies is something that has already been pointed by Sabino (2000, p. 100), under study in fitness and bodybuilding centers in Rio de Janeiro's outskirts: "[...] The women's search for shapes is the women's search for the men's approval, provided that the representation of what is beautiful for women's body comes from classifications that give priority to the men's point of view and their preference". In reference to the panoptic's vigilance system⁶, Sabino affirms that the fitness center space produces a self-control of appearances through look, for the fact that it's a place where each one observes everyone and everyone observes each one.

⁵ Sabino (2000) had already highlighted the existence of the division of the muscular work according to gender, as men and women do exercises for the parts of the body that are more important for each group.

⁶ This is an expression applied by Bentham in the end of the XVIII century to refer to a power technology appropriate to solve vigilance problems that emerged in a previous moment. It basically consisted of an architecture that allowed everything to be permanently seen. This vigilance model, that was present in hospitals, prisons, schools and other places, was seen by Foucault (1979) as one of the most important disciplinary mechanisms that can be taken as a model for the contemporary dispositions. The same author highlights that this system is applied in such a way that the one who is supposedly observed must interiorize this vigilance.

However, if everything indicates that the look has an important function to inspect the body, not being the target of look maybe can also be a control mechanism. The reason for that is the fact that what is desired is calling the attention, being seen, mainly in a country like Brazil that, as well pointed by Malysse (2002, p. 133), has the visible things like “[...] the privileged way to relate to itself and, mainly, with the other.”⁷

4 The different possibilities for the always same

Among the privileged strategies to the vigilance introjection is the choices availability. This is a resource widely used by *Boa Forma* and is expressed, among others, through the prescriptions of diets and exercises.

In regard to diets, the control occurs through the presentation to readers of the number of calories and, sometimes, the amount of nutrients each food and beverage contain. Considering such values that classify and put them in a hierarchy, several tables and *rankings* are formulated by the magazine in which those presenting the lowest caloric value and/or fat percentage rank first. It is also suggested that the information printed in the food packages be carefully read, because in this manner, women “[...] tend to consume less

⁷ To the women the necessity of being noticed is much more intense if we consider that her investments on her body aim at capturing the masculine attention, confirming what is suggested by Lipovetsky (2000, p. 153), that they “[...] give value to the power-seduction in detriment to the hierarchical power.” In other words, there is no inversion in hierarchy, or which would correspond in emancipation purposes to its end. Sabino (2000) found similar results in his aforementioned study.

calories and more healthy nutrients.” (CONTRERAS, 2005, p.114)⁸.

The access to such information is considered as an opportunity for women to have choices, what would allow them to make the “right choice” (FARNESI, 2004, p.79). Andrade (2003) has already pointed to this Boa Forma strategy of choice availability and the imperative in order to make the right choice, what is “[...] to eat what is healthier, less caloric, and even keep the taste and the pleasure to eat.” The author also emphasizes that “[...] it’s within this space, as a guide for women’s behaviors and choices, that the magazine consolidates itself and wins more and more readers.” (ANDRADE, 2003, p.115). However, the possibilities are limited to what the magazine recommends beforehand, being indispensable to calculate, balance, substitute and keep yourself always attentive to certain “traps” (CONTRERAS, 2006, p. 68-71) that cooking may offer, whether at home or at the restaurant.

The reader will also find different options for the practice of physical exercises that would meet the needs of those women with a lot or not too much time, making it possible to practice exercises even during a traffic jam or “when watching TV, in a

⁸ This exaggerate preoccupation with eating can be considered in the terms proposed by Sant’Anna (2003, p. 43), when it is highlighted that with the propagation of scientific language “[...] the food spectacular presentation is the same as the one of the chemical elements”. We are indicated to think about food regarding the proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals and vitamins which they can supply to the body. For Sant’Anna this is directly associated to a decline of social and individual uses related to eating and to an increase in popularity of body transformation (identity) as something that can be achieved and reached based on what is ingested. “Through food one can for example, change their body appearance, transform their emotional state and daily reinvent their own subjectivity (SANT’ANNA, 2003, p. 42).

break at the office” (PENTEADO, 2004, p. 96). “The exercise menu is democratic” (REIS, 2005, p. 5) the editor said⁹. For those who have not chosen any kind of gymnastics yet, there are tests so that they can find out what type would be more pleasant for them, ceasing to be an obstacle for the practice of physical exercises (PENTEADO, 2004, p.54-9).

For the fact of always outlining a way to solve the reader’s lack of time, money or taste, *Boa Forma* reinforces the need to make any choice, what ends up becoming a strategy to incorporate the habit of vigilance through the guilt for not caring constantly about the appearance, provided that the body in its parts would always need some improvement and transformation. However, the magazine affirms that the woman should not feel guilty if she “damages the diet and eats chocolate at the wrong time”, does not “work out” (CAVALHEIRO, 2002, p. 85), among other missteps she may commit. This type of discourse is recurring and, as a self-help prescription, it emphasizes that one must avoid this type of feeling caused mainly by the excessive demand that would be made by the woman herself. The illusion, however, that certain “obligations” have been attenuated is transformed in its opposite, provided that such appeal informs the woman of the situation that should cause this guilt feeling to her.¹⁰

⁹ An example of this kind of test can be found in Penteado (2004, p.54-9).

¹⁰ The emergence of guilt as a behavior control measure shows to be present at least since the beginning of the 40’s from last century. At that moment one can notice that coercion was supplanted by the guilt feeling that came from not using the offered products, which implied in not following the habits of their own time, not being seen as *modern* – an expression that carries a lot of positivity, especially in Brazil and even more at that time (ALBINO; VAZ, 2006).

A new ambiguity of the discourse is expressed through the praises to an aesthetic ideal along with the assertions that the woman must accept her body and not constantly seek to have the actresses' and top models' appearance. Thus, if it's common for the magazine to affirm that a "sexy" body is that with "[...] slim waist, shapely belly, round buttocks, upright breasts and amazing legs" (PENTEADO, 2002, p. 46) and reinforce that "we like well-shaped bodies. and smooth belly as well. [...] You deserve all of that and must win" (REIS, 2003, p. 9 – our underline), it simultaneously promotes a self-approval discourse, because:

[...] eager to be classified into a beauty pattern, many of us live our life unsatisfied or seek magic formulas (and, quite often, dangerous and inefficient) that demand high doses of sacrifice to reach a perfection that is not part of our reality. (LUBLINSKI, 2004, p.115).

In this section, *Boa Forma* makes reference to different "types" of beauty. These are taken as variations of the hegemonic pattern diffused through the models that illustrate the magazine. The woman can have a "sports", "hyper-sensitive", "mermaid" style (GARCIA, 2003, p. 62-3), at the same time in which she can create her own way of being. Such type of classification only shows, actually, that everything must be

standardized once each of those different beauties will receive specific beauty recommendations.

As taught by Horkheimer and Adorno (1985, p. 116; 1997, p. 114),

Something is provided for everyone; so that nothing is left out, the distinctions are emphasized and diffused. [...] Reduced to a simple statistic material, the consumers are distributed on the research institute maps [...] The procedure scheme shows itself in the fact that the mechanically differentiated products end up by revealing themselves always as the same thing. [...] The advantages and disadvantages that the experts discuss are only to perpetuate the illusion of competition and the possibility of choice.

The possibility to have one's own style is dissolved like something that could really become real at the moment when such styles are limited to what is expected. The assertions that propagate the existence of different "types" of beauty complement the imperative that the woman should reinforce "her strong points" (GREINER, 2002, p. 6), because the proposal is for the woman to find "her" best (good) shape. The discourse reminds the one that was frequent in the first decades of last century, when beauty was considered as a "gift", such as described by Sant'Anna (1995). This notion started in that

period giving room to the need to build a beautiful appearance. Even though, there seems to be in Boa Forma a combination between gift (what is “possible”) and what can and is worth being reached through personal effort and investment. In the middle of the paradoxes that compose the discourse, the axiom that every woman can be beautiful, as long as they invest in themselves, use cosmetic products, care about their health, deserve to be beautiful, prevails.

Another important conjugation is that the promises of body emaciation and strengthening are always referred to from exact measures to be reached and/or related to correct periods to their accomplishment: “2 days to reduce a swelling, disintoxicate and lose 1 kg” (BOA..., 2005), ensures Boa Forma. Such resource, which has as a signature a scientist discourse, expresses the rational spirit of the present time that predicts numbers and calculations of costs and benefits determining investments. At the same time, a magic bond combines with the scientific discourses, maybe because body, as a result of the crossing between nature and culture, is indeed the privileged territory for it. In the predications and justifications for the body performance, it reaches even higher spheres because the adhesion to good shape occurs through the beliefs in fast results and within a determined time, associated with the experts’ legitimizing discourses of several types that officialize the beauty rituals: dermatologist, make-up professional, hair stylist, plastic surgeon, nutritionist, endocrinologist, yoga instructor, personal trainer, among other professionals that are more and more being considered indispensable in the (infinite) search for beauty.

5 The war against the body

Perform a self-control of one's wills, change, model, discipline the body. The purpose of the pedagogy adopted by Boa Forma is to teach woman to do it through severity, discipline and sacrifice, even if each of such elements has to be occasionally dissimulated, made something pleasant or almost experienced not as a task, but as part of her everyday life.

Such measures are necessary because the body is taken as something that "becomes rebel" (GREINER, 2002, p.12) and that needs to be refrained, according to a western tradition that considers nature as a threat, the body and its pulses as instances that need to be dominated, undermined. Reaching the desired shapes is only possible if the woman learn how to "keep her body under control. [because] It has to know that you are the one in the control and it cannot put on or lose weight as it wishes!" (GREINER, 2002, p. 12).

Thus, in the action against the body, it is recognized as **something apart** from woman, an object to be dominated, which it's necessary to start a real war with. Such perspective is outlined in the martial language in order to refer to the actions to be used over it: "arsenal against hunger", "burn the fats", "blow up" the extra pounds. It's necessary to "counterattack" the fat and flabbiness from the "plans" and "programs"¹¹. Along this

¹¹ If the war is the moment that makes the possibility of plain experience disappear, the one that can be narrated (ADORNO, 1997c), we suggest that the war metaphors might really be the determination of limits imposed to the body (the experience territory) in the relationship with its own expressions, among several, eating. With the processes of body death, even if fortification efforts are invested, language would

process, every mark showing flab or floppiness must be extinguished, provided that it presents itself as the opposite sign of a strong, powerful and controlled body¹².

In this struggle to tame the shapes, “villains” and “heroes” are elected. A function usually fulfilled by foods, which suffer an anthropomorphization and start to be classified as good and evil, friends and enemies, solidary and saboteurs¹³. There is here a responsibility inversion, once the foods (constituted of calories and other physical-chemical components, but mainly – and therefore – products of the social-cultural relations) kind of acquire life and personality, starting “threatening”, in non-scarcity times, the imperatives of good shape. A certain article devotes three pages to describe all the benefits of “maçã-maravilha” [“wonder apple”] for heath/beauty: it increases the satiation sensation; prevents heart diseases; delays the ageing process; protects against cancer; improves the respiratory capacity, among other “superprotective” functions (CONTE, 2002, p.92). Another article presents several damages caused by the white bread,

have made its alliance: “It transformed the stroll in movement and the food in calories, similar to the way that a live forest in English and French language are referred as woods, which also refers to the dead cut forest. With the death rate, society degrades life in a chemical process.” (HORKHEIMER; ADORNO, 1995, p. 219; 1997, p. 269).

¹² Andrade (2003) also highlights the imperatives of will power, self-control and discipline, present in the magazine, highlighting the subject of the body as the center for disciplinary power, as approached by Foucault.

¹³ In a direction similar to the one we take here, Amaral (2000) analyses commercials that use nature metaphors to explain or legitimate products offered in the market. This process of naturalization of what is socially produced can be seen, for example, in the use of butterfly evolution, initially connected to a cocoon, in a caterpillar stage, that is then freed and starts showing characteristics as lightness, typical of the kinds of products that are advertised.

considering its high glucose content and, therefore, it stimulates the fat build-up in body (CONTRERAS, 2006, p.68). The calories/fats themselves can even be considered as good (“full”) and evil (“empty”), depending on the nutrients that come along with them (CONTRERAS, 2003, p.54).

In the battle against the “wills”, mainly that considered as “uncontrollable” (CARDOSO, 2005, p. 36), which is the will to eat, it’s indispensable to have discipline and submit ourselves to sacrifices on behalf of beauty. Discipline and suffering are presented interconnected, where the emphasis falls upon the acquisition of the first, while the second is seen only as a measure necessary to reach the targets and purposes that are presented as if they were intrinsic to the reader. Such objectives always aim at the acquisition of a slim, muscle, trained body, where reaching it means a triumph. The sacrifice required is justified through *Boa Forma*’s writings in the benefit of a future satisfaction, provided that it understands sacrifice only as a means to reach the promised pleasure. As affirmed by the magazine’s editor, “[...] nothing comes for free, the process of changing has its price” (GREINER, 2003, p. 8). The sacrifice introversion in the form of a routine and ritualistic domain – and, therefore, its extinction, if we treat it in a severe way¹⁴ – is a premise of the subjective formation.

Paradoxically, the idea that emaciation and the techniques to gain muscles “[...] do not need to cause suffering

¹⁴ We here refer to the distinction that Agamben (2002) proposes between a life that can be sacrificed – or in other words, still in the marks of an individualization – and another, that can be killed – exchangeable and so, disposable. A very similar interpretation of the shrinking of sacrifice space in contemporary times can be found in Horkheimer and Adorno (1985, 1997).

is emphatically reiterated.” (SECCO, 2005, p.65). However, this seems to be a stimulation, at the same time that it is configured as a fallacious discourse, because if it really happens in this manner, perhaps it would not even be necessary to mention it. Suffering is something that must be taken as “natural”, necessary, in such a way to become bearable and can be repeated. Such naturalization is quite often present in articles about aesthetic treatments, in which there is a classification of the pain through one more “ranking” (HOLLO, 2002, p.76): 1. itching or burning; 2. slight discomfort; and 3. aching.

In the body strengthening process, sacrifice is the condition required so that one can know and have control over it. Becoming human means putting nature subject to reason, control one’s emotions and renounce the pleasures of the immediate reward of pulses. Therefore, it’s necessary to take the body as an object, degrade it to the condition of **another** whom is dominated, formulating a whole knowledge about it to be used in the rationalized dealing with it. In this process, understood as a civilizing one, the sacrifice is present through the renouncement and self-control, the condition of nature that composes the subject (HORKHEIMER; ADORNO, 1985; 1997).

Before the multiple possibilities that are offered to women, the opportunity suffers metamorphosis in the obligation to promote more and more a concrete investment through the exercises and not simply through equipments like the corset or other disguising measures, like it happened before (SANT’ANNA, 1995). It’s necessary to have a self-control incorporated, a control over the body that insists on being

unsubmissive and, therefore, needs to be dominated. With respect to it that the magazine elucidates the reader about the “risk phases” – the moments of life in which “the compulsion may become strong” and, therefore, there is more vulnerability to put on weight: ageing, pregnancy, stress, marriage – and prescribes “counterattacking” actions” (LUBLINSKI, 2005, p. 104) that fundamentally refer to food restriction, the regular practice of physical exercises and the acquisition of other habits suitable to good shape. It’s essential to control the body wills, because “if you really decide to lose some centimeters, chose: either binge on a “brigadeiro” (popular Brazilian chocolate candy) bowl or have your dream body.” (LUBLINSKI, 2006, p.66).

6 Legitimation methods

The desire to maximize the body derives from the will to know (elucidation) and the belief in the infinite progress that the rationalization process introverted in the individual spirits. Through the science, the reason finds the power to legitimize the human actions, specially the ones performed on the body. It will be through the scientific way that the beauty techniques presented by the magazine shall be validated as true and efficient. This resource’s power is shown in the fact that science to a certain extent is mentioned in virtually all the technical prescriptions informed by the magazine.

In relation to the experts aforementioned, they are considered as gurus in front of whom it’s not allowed to have

any suspicion. They tell “what is – and will continue to be – a success” (LUBLINSKI, 2004, p.60), saying that not only about the present, but also making predictions. So that no doubt is left about their power, the magazine further grant them countless adjectives: “understands about diet like few do”, “wizard of the scissors”, “guru of the perfect shapes”, “master of the brushes”, “expert in fitness” (LUBLINSKI, 2004, p. 60-1). They further enjoy a prestige not only for their relation to science, but also for their products: the actresses and models to whom they render their services. Thus, the magazine usually qualifies some professionals as “[...] the best [...] of the market” for they have sculpted “each centimeter of muscle of their famous pupils” (PENTEADO, 2002, p. 100), where this is an unquestionable credible factor¹⁵.

Beside the experts, the models and actresses are also considered as references of truths and certainties in *Boa Forma*. Like the bodybuilders¹⁸ at the fitness centers, the models and actresses have a body capital¹⁹, a prestige for having reached a body that is considered an beauty icon and, therefore, they are taken as holders of secrets and formulas that they promise to reveal in the section “Cover girl”. Such promises suggest to the reader that it’s possible to have body similar to the models’, or

¹⁵ The elucidation, that in the civilization process was understood as transcending the myth, but in the moment it is taken as non questionable acquires the character of belief, goes to Mythology. When substituting the myth reason, the imagination for the calculation, it is maintained in the mythological circle because it produces its blind logics (HORKHEIMER; ADORNO, 1985; 1997). This way, the prescriptions performed by the magazine can be understood as a kind of synthesis between belief and elucidation.

that the beauty such “stars” have is the result of the correct investment (possible for all) in their bodies.

At some moments, the other women, called “ordinary”, usually readers and reporters of the magazine, are also considered as references to be followed. It occurs when they manage to reach some targets, becoming examples of persistence and overcoming, when propagating the axiom that “you can get there too!” (COELHO; PENTEADO, 2004, p. 84).

In addition to this measure of approach to the reader and legitimization of its contents, the magazine further uses other important strategies. Among them is the empathy with the readers, in the assertion that *Boa Forma* comprehends the women’s anguishes, frustrations and fears, committing, thus, to help overcoming them (GREINER, 2003, p. 8, among others) through the techniques it informs. It’s also worth mentioning the wide use of testimonials that fulfill the important function to show through the readers’ speech that the possibility of losing weight and/or having a well-shaped body is real. The “before and after” images are very important in this process, for which the smiles are also a central resource, once they seek to legitimize the results in an empirical manner. The strength in the liturgy of fitness is once again shown, provided that the testimonial becomes an important pedagogical part of the purification and, overall, the conversion processes, just like in several religions.

Composing the roll of the legitimization strategies used by the magazine is the emphasis on novelty, or, more precisely, on the promises they make. Associated with science, each new technique or product has as its presumed function to solve the

reader's aesthetic problems. It's easily noted, however, that novelty is only what has already been presented and disguised – the union of two or more gymnastic techniques; a minimum modification of a certain diet – so that it seems to be a new strategy or product. The idea of advancement existing in the obstinately new is nothing, thus, but a mere advertising, because it remains only as a promise that disguise the repetition of an “always the same”(HORKHEIMER; ADORNO, 1985, 1997).

The untruth that a novelty would be the solution for all evils the body undergoes, as well proposed by Boa Forma, shows its fragility in the discourse that, in the advertisement of a new technique, affirms that this one “**really** works” (BOA..., 2004 – our underline), or even that the new “emergency diet” is to be used “when all the others have **failed**” (BOA..., 2001 – our underline). If the promises were really fulfilled, such emphasis would not be necessary.

7 A final consideration

The emphasis on scientificism, however mingled with the belief systems, the fulfillment of promises that are not fulfilled and the appeal to novelty, are the cultural industry's mechanisms that guide the control and domination of the bodies at the present time. The old discipline gives more and more room to this new way of dominating the individual, which is performed through the diffusion of presumed possibilities, although the disciplinary power remains and continue complementing such behavior control mechanism. The former disciplinary mechanisms are

combined with those that strengthen the body regarding the obligation to joy, as a synonym of happiness, whether in the form of new subjectivities that enable living, or even as non-subjectivity devices, resulting from a process not exclusively of disregard for the body, but, on the contrary, of maximization of the concern about it. Such domination model, which shows the cultural industry systems as biopolitical devices, is only made possible because it's on the bodies that the contemporary finds its moment of fulfillment.

In this work, the subject studied points to a mix of devices that falls especially on the feminine. In its central pedagogy, it's the presence of ambiguities in the beauty discourse – an indispensable measure, once the possibility to comprise different audiences, or even the social contradictions of the search for balance between desire and self-control (ascetic and Hedonist ideals) is considerable. The internal (in)coherence of the discourse of its ambiguities is not a problem, but the circumstantial character of the beauty process prescribed is essential. This latter, from the introjection of vigilance it fosters when doing it in the most circumstantial way, has as a consequence the incitement to body control for the thousands of readers who have access to it. In other words, the technique fetishism as a system or mechanism is what ensures the magic and scientific character of the cultural industry's promises.

The self-domination mentioned further has as its central reference the men's opinion, mainly for the fact that the magazines are directed to heterosexual and young women. Thus, the will to enjoy the social valuation of being beautiful fosters a feminine responsibility before her body and incites and

legitimizes the idea that the woman herself should recognize and perform, through sacrifice, the rationalization and investigation of her body. To say it in a different way, she should put her desire at the service of the biopolitical devices that correspond to the government of the cultural industry systems.

The body and its techniques of beauty: on the schemes of the cultural industry in “Boa Forma” Magazine

Abstract: The article presents the results of a research about the constitution of a certain obligation to be feminine under prescriptions of Boa Forma magazine. The research analyzed mainly the editorials, sections and articles about body care, taking as the main sources the summer editions and those editions immediately prior to it (Sep/Feb, 2001-2006). The results point to a control apparatus focused on the use of ambiguous discourses; on the body investigation; in the discipline and sacrifice appreciation; and on the use of legitimization methods guided by mechanisms of the cultural industry.

Keywords: Cultural industry; Cult of body; beauty techniques

El cuerpo y sus técnicas de embellecimiento: sobre los esquemas de la industria cultural en la revista “Boa Forma”

Resumen: El artículo presenta resultados de una investigación sobre la constitución de algo como un deber ser femenino en las prescripciones de la revista Boa Forma. Se analizó sobretodo los editoriales, secciones y reportajes sobre los cuidados con el cuerpo, tomando como fuentes principales las ediciones de verano y las que para ello preparan (setiembre-febrero, 2001, 2006). Los resultados sugieren la existencia de un aparato de control que está centrado en el uso de discursos ambiguos; en el escuadrinamiento del cuerpo; en la valoración de la disciplina y del sacrificio; en el uso de métodos de legitimación orientados hacia los mecanismos de la industria cultural.

Palabras clave: Industria Cultural; Culto del Cuerpo, Técnicas de Embellecimiento.

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Essay

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