

Torches of Freedom: Women, cigarettes and consumption

Torches of Freedom: mulheres, cigarros e consumo

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Abstract *This article analyzes the relationship between cigarette consumption and ideals of female emancipation expressed in advertising throughout the 20th century. The discussion has as a starting point the march known as Torches of Freedom in 1929 and the analysis of some advertising campaigns in both the United States and Brazil. Based on the theoretical framework of the anthropology of consumption, aspects of the cultural context are discussed that formatted the possibility for the meaning of women smoking to be transformed into representations of freedom. From being a male product, considered immoral for women to use, cigarettes become a symbol of the modern woman. The conclusions of this article indicate the complexity of the relationship between feminism and consumption throughout history.*

Keywords: *Cigarette; consumption; feminism; advertising*

Resumo *Este artigo analisa a relação entre consumo de cigarro e ideais de emancipação feminina expressas na publicidade ao longo do XX. A partir da marcha conhecida como torches of freedom, em 1929, e da análise de algumas campanhas publicitárias tanto nos Estados Unidos quanto no Brasil, são discutidos, com base no referencial teórico da antropologia do consumo, aspectos do*

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contexto cultural no qual se formataram as condições de possibilidade para que os sentidos do tabagismo feminino fossem transformados em representações da liberdade. De produto masculino, considerado imoral para as mulheres, o cigarro se transforma em símbolo da mulher moderna. As conclusões deste artigo indicam a complexidade das relações entre feminismo e consumo ao longo da história.

Palavras-chave: *Cigarro; consumo; feminismo; publicidade*

Introduction

In 1929, a group of women take over the streets during the Easter Sunday Parade in New York.⁴ A little less than a decade after the approval of the Ninth Constitutional Amendment, which gave women full voting rights across the United States, young women march for freedom. Instead of placards, they take cigarettes. The act was a political challenge as well as a break in customs of the time: smoking was an exclusively male habit. The press coverage completed the symbolism evoked by cigarettes in women's hands: a product made of tobacco rolled up in paper, they became "torches of freedom" in the headlines of the day.

The cigarettes were Lucky Strike. The march was orchestrated by Edward Bernays, the father of public relations, in line with feminist concerns. Freud's nephew Bernays, an Austrian who had settled in the United States, was working for the company American Tobacco, which was seeking to expand the habit of smoking to a public so far unexplored – women (AMOS & HAGLUND, 2000; BRANDT 1996). The movement was therefore articulating female freedom with a market opening.

Despite having collaborated with the debate around smoking and its relationship with new gender roles, Bernays did not invent it. The 1920s in the United States and many other countries was marked by struggles of the first feminist wave and the expansion of consumption – two phenomena that dialogued in the creation of imagery about modern women and their emancipating relationship with the world of goods, such as great department stores (ROCHA *et al.*, 2015), the bicycle (MELO & SCHETINO, 2009), the car and the cigarette itself.

The movement for occupying spaces then restricted to men gave women smoking, at that period, an aura of revolution. The image of the emancipated woman, who could vote and was beginning to enter the labor market, was used several times by advertising and the cultural industry of the period (COTT, 1998). When it came to cigarettes, adverts directed to women were proliferating and female characters were

⁴ Traditional festive parade held on Easter Sunday on Fifth Avenue, in New York.

glamorizing smoking on the movie screens. These new representations were part of a historical moment in which female roles were being discussed and redefined in public sphere.

It will be shown, through a brief history of the links between smoking and gender relations, how cigarettes were no longer a practice restricted to men in the 19th century and becomes a symbol of women's freedom in the first decades of the 20th century. Based on the literature of gender studies and the anthropology of consumption, this work contextualizes historical conditions that made it possible for women smoking to be transformed into a sign of freedom.

The reflection focuses on three movements that characterize the change of an exclusively male product for something that, by signifying freedom, reaches the large female market, previously excluded from consumption. The first movement is the episode that became known as torches of freedom, which happened in a historical context in the United States, Canada, and Europe marked by, on the one hand, feminist struggles and, on the other, the expansion of the consumer society. The second deals with the advertising narrative of cigarettes that, since the 1920s, started using the image of women as a way to turn them into a target public. Finally, two Brazilian campaigns of the company Souza Cruz are studied. They reveal some clues about how the relationship between cigarette consumption and the emergence of new female roles occurred in Brazil, where redefinition initiatives for women smoking in advertising happened a little later, at end of the first half of the 20th century.

It is important to mention that consumption phenomenon is seen as a privileged way to observe and describe a particular social imagery. As a practice built within the culture, consumption plays a central role in structuring values and constituting the identity of individuals and social groups, as well as the relationships between them. Consumer goods are neutral in themselves; the meanings they carry are assigned within a historical and cultural context (DOUGLAS & ISHERWOOD, 2013; ROCHA, 2010, 2012). This perspective permeates the reflections of

this work, which seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of the complex historical relations that associate feminist movements and consumption representations and practices.

Women and cigarettes in the 19th century

In the 19th century smoking was considered a male habit. Smoking the first cigarette was, for a long time, a kind of rite of passage that turned boys into men. Associated with rational thought and an alert mind, cigarettes accompanied everyday male life, having an indispensable presence in conversations about politics and economics, in cafes, entertainment clubs, and when reading newspapers. It was a practice of sociability between men from different classes and cultural backgrounds around a common reference of masculinity (APPERSON, 1919; RUDY, 2005).

According to the etiquette of the period, respectable women would not smoke. For the Victorian morality that marked the 19th century in Europe and the Americas, women should represent purity and have good manners. In this way, the possibility of women desiring cigarettes was not even considered, since it was a habit distant from their angelic characteristics. In Canada, the habit of smoking used to refer to native people, considered wild. In 1904, the historian Edmond Roy rebutted the criticism of an American traveler who had written, more than a century before, that women from Quebec did not stop smoking. Roy said the traveler had confused Canadians with the descendants of indigenous people. For him, the native were smoking pipes just because they were primitive (RUDY, 2005). Women smoking was seen as uncivilized behavior, incompatible with the bourgeois modernity on the rise.

The cigarette in their mouths and hands meant the risk of moral failure, addiction and bohemia. It was far less problematic for men, because the danger was kept in check by the inherent male ability of self-control and rationality. Whereas women, if they smoked, would likely become addicted since they were seen as weak and emotional. In Western culture, women were indeed defined, at different historical moments, as *emotional* beings. Both feelings and the female sex are considered by

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common sense and part of scientific thought as *natural* entities, and therefore, chaotic, irrational and potentially dangerous. Women would represent risks to the social order because they are less rational than men (FREIRE FILHO, 2013, 2014). Thus, female smoking was related to a lack of morals and doubtful sexual behavior, associated with pornography and prostitution (AMOS & HAGLUND, 2000).

In this moral sense, women even had an important role in the anti-cigarette movement. The Chicago Anti-Cigarette League was founded in 1899 by a woman. The National Council of Women, in the United States, called for laws to ban the sale of cigarettes to women. In 1908, a woman was even arrested in New York for having a cigarette in public. Groups like the International Anti-Cigarette League pressured film producers not to show women smoking in movies, unless the characters had a “questionable character” (BRANDT, 1996).

In addition, the time for smoking was separating men and women, promoting an organization of space that reflected produced social roles for each gender: After dinner, as women were in the kitchen preparing the dessert, men were smoking in their offices. Women should not only abstain from smoking; they should not even be in the same places that men were smoking. In public spaces, a man who gives up his right to smoke because of the presence of a woman was a gentleman (RUDY, 2005). In the famous movie *Titanic*⁵ (USA, 1997), directed by James Cameron, a passage perfectly illustrates what is this. After a dinner in the first class area, the men get up to smoke and discuss politics and business in another room, away from the presence of women. Only Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio), a lower-class man who had been invited to dinner in return for having “saved” the young aristocrat Rose DeWitt Bukater (Kate Winslet), is excluded and stays for a while with the women. With this, he has the opportunity to discreetly invite Rose for a party in third class (steerage). She accepts it, and among lower-class women she feels free to smoke a cigarette.

⁵ The plot takes place in 1912.

As the scene shows, smoking a cigarette was a symbol that established the boundaries of behavior and social roles. According to Douglas and Isherwood (2013), consumer goods are mediators of social experience. They communicate values and provide stability and visibility for social hierarchies. The cigarette, as a consumer good invested by a symbolic dimension, was marking the line between men and women, delimiting their position in space and reinforcing subjectivity models. Despite being restricted to males, its meanings were shared throughout society.

When appropriated by women, cigarette consumption starts communicating new values and constituting an element that provides and communicates a new form of occupation of public space by women. Next, the conditions of possibility that enabled the transformation in the meanings surrounding cigarette consumption by women is explored.

The 1920s and the modern woman

To understand how cigarettes become a symbol of female emancipation, it is necessary to situate the cultural context of the first decades of the 20th century, which is strongly marked by feminist struggles. The first wave of the movement, dating from the late 19th century and early 20th century, had begun in England and spread to several countries, characterized by the struggle for civil rights. Its main claim was the right to vote, which made feminists of that time to be known as suffragettes (RAGO, 1995).

Access to the labor market and their own money were also relevant issues to feminism of that time. This was a particular agenda of bourgeois feminists, since historically poor women always worked. For wealthier women, work would be a form of participation in the public sphere, putting an end to confinement in the home (SARTI, 1997) and bringing financial independence (WOOLF, 1985).

In fact, the expansion of the so-called *consumer society* in the early 20th century was an important element among the conditions for the emergence of new female subjectivities. One of the main differences that marked the social experience of men and women was the separation of

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public and private spheres based on gender. The domestic space and its tasks were reserved to women, while men could participate in business and politics, social gatherings and had free transit through the streets and their attractions. Women could only attend church and its activities – masses, processions and charity events – and friends' households. In other spaces, when transiting unaccompanied, they were viewed with suspicion by society. The “public woman” was, par excellence, the prostitute (PERROT, 1998).

In this context, Rocha *et al.* (2014) analyze the relationship between the emergence of department stores in the second half of the 19th century, as the primary format for modern consumption, and female emancipation processes in the early 20th century. They represented safe spaces for women to transit alone or with friends and relatives of the same sex, reproducing, on a larger scale, the domestic environment. These spaces put the female consumer at the center of her own activities, since the shops and products were thought to be for them. In addition, department stores represented job opportunities, forming a new class of sellers that had more financial independence, access to consumer goods and forms of bourgeois fun, and opportunities to achieve higher positions in the retail market. The department stores also served as a meeting point for feminist militants, providing space for meetings of the movement and support with thematic shop windows and investments in publicity favorable to women's suffrage.

In addition to the feminist struggles, the early 20th century is marked by an emphasis on the growth of the media, particularly in the United States. The products of this cultural industry promoted an American lifestyle centered on modernity and consumption. The idea of progress was related to the increase in purchasing in volume. The advertising industry was growing and becoming more complex with the beginning of market surveys (AUCAR, 2016).

Such media discourse disseminated the emergence of a “new woman,” born, grown and strengthened by previous struggles of political, economic and sexual emancipation. This model of the modern

American woman challenged both the old patriarchal lifestyle and the new collectivist lifestyle. It had less to do with a political banner, in the traditional sense, than with its representation in fashion and film, and especially in advertising.

Advertisements exhaustively explored the topic of buying as a choice and control field in which women could exercise their rationality and express their values. . . . A domestic product advert published in the *Chicago Tribune* in 1930 proclaimed “Today’s woman gets everything she wants. The vote. Fine silk linings to replace bulky petticoats. Glass objects in blue sapphire or bright amber. The right to a career. Soap to match the colors of their bathroom (COTT, 1998, p. 110).

Advertising disseminates new feminine models by stimulating consumption. In the advertisements, attractive young ladies handle products that become symbols of the American way of life, such as Coca-Cola and cars. Numerous publications of the 1920s mentioned the statistic that 80% of consumer purchases were made by women; however, more than a display of products directed to them, advertising conveys representations of women (COTT, 1998).

Thus, consumption consolidates itself as a central aspect of social life, a phenomenon that organizes the modern experience. Within the transformation of women’s roles, struggles for emancipation do not develop only in the strict political sense, but also occur in the space of consumption. In this context, the cigarette becomes part of women’s lives in a position close to rebellion against outdated customs and struggle for freedom.

Torches of freedom: from the streets to adverts

In the early 20th century, research showed that cigarette consumption among women grew dramatically in the United States. As a response to the movement of feminist struggles, smoking became a way of challenging social conventions. In the American magazine *Atlantic Monthly* (*apud* BRANDT, 1996, p. 63) published in 1916: “For woman, it [the

cigarette] is a symbol of emancipation, a temporary replacement of the ballot.”⁶ The vote would only be allowed in the country four years later.

If, for men, cigarette evoked images of power, authority and intelligence, for women, it started representing glamor, rebellion and entry into a new era of modernity and independence. As stated by Brandt (1996, p. 64), the cigarette had contradictory meanings: “While smoking symbolized rebel against social conventions, at the same time, it represented conformity with the principles of the growing culture of consumption.” The point is that the second contradiction was not part of the consciousness of that time.

A bill proposing to ban cigarette consumption by women in the District of Columbia caused a heated debate and powered support for smoking in women emancipation movements. The newspapers of that time reported the demands of women for spaces to smoke in the places they used attend.⁷ The Globe Theatre in New York, for example, created a lounge for women to smoke in 1922 (BRANDT, 1996). Even with these advances, it was still unacceptable for men and women to smoke in the same space.

In this circumstance the cigarette industry, like any attentive industry, realizes the unexplored female public could give rise to a large consumer market. For this, the act of smoking should be emphasized not only as respectable, but as desirable, modern and feminine. Product advertising, which until then was directed to men, begins to target women. Lucky Strike’s campaign in 1925 was based on the slogan “Reach for Lucky instead of a sweet,” interacting not only with the new meanings around smoking, but also with an ideal of beauty centered on a slim body (AMOS & HAGLUND, 2000; BRANDT, 1996).

Lucky Strike cigarettes, four years later, would be in the hands of young women in the march that became known as “torches of freedom,” earlier described in this article. Despite appearing as a spontaneous

⁶ This and other translations of quotations in foreign languages are ours.

⁷ The New York Times published in 1922: “There is a growing demand for smoking compartments for women. The female travelers wants a place to relax and smoke as much as the male public” (New York Times, July 22, 1922:III2 apud BRANDT, p. 64).

demonstration, the march was architected by Edward Bernays, considered the father of public relations. Hired by American Tobacco and responsible for Lucky Strike's advertising, Bernays intended to break a taboo that still hindered the consumption of cigarettes by women: smoking on the streets. For this, he hired debutantes – attractive young women – to parade in the Easter Parade with Lucky Strike cigarettes in their hands. With the repercussions in the press, various manifestations of women smoking on the streets were observed in several American cities (BRANDT, 1996).

Consumption markedly appears in this episode in ritual function: The object (in this case, cigarettes) was taken out of its usual context and placed in an alternative situation. The purpose of rituals is to pass on a clear meaning in relation to social life, fixing them in the imagination, a task that is strengthened by the presence of material goods (DOUGLAS & ISHERWOOD, 2013; ROCHA, 2010). Cigarettes in women's hands on the street becomes a ritualized torch of freedom, a passport for the emancipation of the modern woman and feminist heiress, who were increasingly active participants in the consumer culture.

Bernays's march fits with what Boorstin (1992) calls a *pseudo-event*: an event held for the sole purpose of being broadcast by the media. It is what, in some contemporary contexts, is called factoid; something created to attract public opinion's attention. It does not mean the event is false: it ritualizes aspects of everyday reality, turning them into a show to be broadcast by mass media. Thinking of the march of cigarettes through a vision of communication as mind manipulation would disregard the historical-cultural process that led to clashes around the significances of women smoking. The desire for freedom and transformation of women's social role as well as the symbolic disputes around cigarettes were shared by society. In fact, the torches of freedom event is more complex than what is called "marketing action" today. It is a fitting of affinities between markets to be conquered and libertarian ideologies wishing to be carried out. An arrangement or articulation between two poles that eventually converged in that context, although dissonant in many others.

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At the same time, it is not possible to neglect the role of advertising in the spread of female smoking and its potential to redefine, from communicational actions like this, symbolic production of cigarette and its relation with women. From the 1930s, cigarette advertising heavily exploited the association between smoking and women's emancipation. These adverts functioned as a broad discursive space, where, more than cigarettes, new femininity representations were sold to an audience even broader than the consumers of the product. As stated by Rocha (2010, p. 32),

In each advert, lifestyles, feelings, emotions, world perspectives, human relations, classification and hierarchical systems are sold in significantly higher quantities than refrigerators, clothes or cigarettes. A product is sold for those who can buy it, an announcement is distributed without distinction.

Several advertising campaigns of that period put women as target: cigarettes become advertised as a product for them. Women in the adverts begin to appear not only as sexy appeals to strengthen the aura of power around the man who smokes, but as consumers of the product, representing a revolution in customs and gender roles from these new buying habits. One of the most significant campaigns of this context was of the cigarette company Chesterfield in 1930, which draws a parallel between the right to vote and to smoke, highlighting the opening of a new possibility of pleasure for women (Figure 1).

I really do not know if I should smoke . . . but my brothers and my dear one smoke, and it gives them great pleasure. Women started smoking, so they say, while they began to vote, but this is not the only reason why they should do it. I think I just like smoking – that is it. And I smoke Chesterfield. They seem to be lighter and have a very nice flavor.

*I really don't know
if I should smoke...*

... but my brothers and my sweetheart smoke, and it does give me a lot of pleasure.

Women began to smoke, so they tell me, just about the time they began to vote, but that's hardly a reason for women smoking. I guess I just like to smoke, that's all.

It so happens that I smoke CHESTERFIELD. They seem to be milder and they have a very pleasing taste.

the Cigarette that's Milder

the Cigarette that Tastes Better

© 1938 LIGGETT & SMITH TOBACCO CO.

Figure 1. Advert by Chesterfield (1930) cigarettes, one of the campaigns that had women as their main target, drawing a parallel between smoking and women's emancipation.⁸

Advertising can be understood as the narrative that gives meaning to consumption. It baptizes products and services, making them known and close, positioning them in relation to purposes, symbols and values. Thus, adverts play the role of teaching to new women consumers that they can (and should) smoke. Already far from the idea of immorality, the cigarette begins to represent a passport to the modern world first-post feminist wave.

⁸ Available in: <http://hypescience.com/10-inacreditaveis-anuncios-propagandas-cigarros/>. Access on: 30/11/2015.

In the 1960s, during the second feminist wave, another impactful cigarette campaign made analogies between smoking and the movement's achievements. Philip Morris Companies (now the Altria Group) launched in 1968 the brand Virginia Slims, positioned in the market as a product for women (TOLL & LING, 2005). With the slogan "You've come a long way," its adverts recognized past feminist struggles and invited women to enjoy emancipation by smoking Virginia Slims cigarettes. Black and white photos portrayed women, who would have been pioneers, smoking while this habit was still socially disapproved of. They paved the way for women's freedom that could now choose what to consume, appearing in color in the foreground, as can be seen in the advert below (Figure 2):

1) Mrs. Violet Anderson says she smoked her first cigarette on May 19, 1910. . . in her grandfather's attic. 2) Cynthia Irene Bell smoked her first cigarette behind an old barn on January 4, 1912. 3) Myrna F. Phillips confesses she smoked on March 4 or 5, 1911, in the field where only a squirrel and a bird could see her. You've come a long way. Now there is a new light filter cigarette that is all yours.

This campaign points out a particular social arrangement that allows female subjectivity to incorporate representations of a libertarian modernity expressed by the advertising narrative itself. It shows the cigarette as a magic element capable of resolving social contradictions around gender roles, leading women to experience emancipation from a practice of consumption.

When we see a product magically working is because it works, previously, *inside* the advert. . . . Let us look at the model: a social situation is created, the product has to be in it and, by definition, will solve it. The image of life (the advert's story) includes a problem (lack, deficiency, need), and the economy of abundance occurs (the product is simply there), solving the problem (end of advert) (ROCHA, 2012, p. 183).

① Mrs. Violet Anderson claims to have smoked her first cigarette on May 19, 1910...in the attic of her grandfather's farmhouse. ② Cynthia Irene Bell smoked her first cigarette behind the old barn out back on Jan. 4, 1912. It was cold. ③ Myrna F. Phillips confesses she smoked March 4 or 5, 1911, out in the country, where only a squirrel and a bird could see her. The others offered no comment: "You've come a long way. Now there's a new slim filter-cigarette that's all your own."

New Virginia Slims.
 What is this new extra-long cigarette for women? Is it just a normal ordinary cigarette we call "a woman's cigarette"? No. We tailor it for women. We tailor it for the feminine hand. Virginia Slims are slimmer than the fat cigarettes men smoke. They have the kind of flavor women like—rich, mild Virginia flavor.

Regular or Menthol

You've come a long way.

Figure 2. Advertising piece of the cigarette brand Virginia Slims from 1968. With the slogan “You’ve come a long way,” the adverts recognized past feminist struggles and portrayed the new emancipated woman.⁹

By consuming cigarettes “in” the advert, a woman could become emancipated. As stated by Rocha (2001, p. 25), advertising narratives are not false or true, their regimes are the magic: “Advertising contrasts with our rational creed, because the objects in it want and can turn into affections, sensations, emotions.” The advert sews another idealized reality: It transcends rational thought that structures modern society and produces a narrative that, analogous to the myths of tribal societies, can magically solve the contradictions presented, resulting in the idealized project. In

9 Available in Prasad *et al.* (2014).

the world expressed by advertising, the cigarette is transmuted into a torch of freedom.

Repercussions in Brazil

In the Brazilian experience, the torches of freedom do not seem to have had great repercussion nor had the relationship between cigarette consumption and the first feminist wave had greater weight in the country. The right to vote was gained in Brazil only in 1932, and feminism at the time was divided into two main aspects. One was formed by liberal feminists, women from the coffee elites, who especially questioned the difficult access of women to education and work in a country that was going through a process of modernization and urbanization. The other aspect was formed by feminist workers who fought with anarchist movements against exploitation in factories and sexist oppression by employers, besides rejecting moral standards that legitimized the wedding imposition and submission of women in domestic space (RAGO, 1995).

However, two advertising campaigns held at the end of the first half of the 20th century in Brazil reveal this relationship between women and cigarettes and deserve to be highlighted. The brand Continental, owned by the company Souza Cruz, launched a set of adverts in 1949 focused on changes that were being experienced by society, produced by new technologies and the revolution in customs. The idea of the campaign was that the world might be changing, but the preference for Continental cigarettes remained. Four of the six pieces published during that year, in the *Jornal das Moças* (*Young Women's Newspaper*), portrayed the woman as a symbol of modernity.

The first piece shows an out-of-fashion couple perplexed by a woman in a two-piece bathing suit, a bold clothing innovation of the time (Figure 3). The following three adverts focus on advances in technology and material culture. The artifacts – respectively, the typewriter (Figure 4), the radio (Figure 5) and the electric lampshade (Figure 6) – are operated by women who smoke cigarettes. In the background, flustered men act in an old-fashioned way because they write by hand, they are

tied to old crystal radios, are unable to use modern receivers and try to switch on old and outdated lamps. The text of the typewriter, for example, states that “Yes – today women take the place of men and business mechanize... but the popularity of Continental cigarettes remains the same.”

o estilo dos maillots
modifica-se...

...mas
a preferência pelos
cigarros Continental
permanece

Há mais de 15 anos Continental é o cigarro
de qualidade mais vendido em todo o Brasil

Sim — o tamanho dos maillots torna-se cada vez mais reduzido... porém a popularidade dos cigarros Continental permanece inalterada. Continental é o cigarro que soube manter uniforme

a sua suprema qualidade. Hoje, Continental é melhor do que nunca — e um público cada vez mais numeroso dá sua preferência a Continental — o cigarro de qualidade mais vendido no Brasil.

Cigarros
Continental
— uma preferência nacional

Lisos ou com ponteira
Companhia de Cigarros **SOUZA CRUZ**

Figure 3. Adverts of the cigarettes brand Continental (1949) showed woman as a symbol of modern advances. For example, the two-piece bathing suit.¹⁰

10 *Jornal das Moças*, 1949, No. 1774. Available in: <http://bndigital.bn.br/hemeroteca-digital/>. Access: 30/11/2015.

modificam-se
os sistemas
de trabalho...

...mas
a preferência pelos
cigarros **Continental**
permanece

Há mais de 15 anos Continental
é o cigarro de qualidade
mais vendido em todo o Brasil

Sim — hoje as mulheres tomam o lugar dos homens e os negócios se mecanizam... mas a popularidade dos cigarros Continental permanece inalterada. Porque Continental manteve sempre a alta qualidade que fez dele o cigarro mais popular do Brasil... hoje como há quinze anos atrás. Sim — cada vez mais numeroso é o público que dá preferência a Continental, o cigarro de qualidade mais vendido no Brasil!

Lisos ou com ponteira

Cigarros
Continental
- uma preferência nacional

Companhia de Cigarros **SOUZA CRUZ**

C. 1949

Figure 4. In another advert of the 1949 campaign, the cigarettes brand Continental represented a modern woman who was taking the place of man in business, in a world of increasingly mechanized work.¹¹

11 *Jornal das Moças*, 1949, 1778. Available in: <http://bndigital.bn.br/hemeroteca-digital/>. Access: 30/11/2015.

isto já mudou

...mas
a preferência pelos
cigarros **Continental** permanece

Há mais de 15 anos Continental
é o cigarro de qualidade mais vendido
em todo o Brasil

Sim — do rádio galena ao receptor moderno hou-
ve uma grande mudança através dos anos... porém
em matéria de cigarros a popularidade de Continental
conservou-se a mesma há mais de 15 anos. Porque
Continental soube manter sua qualidade uniforme.
Hoje, melhor do que nunca, Continental continua a
ser o cigarro de qualidade mais vendido no Brasil.

Cigarros **Continental**

- uma preferência nacional

Companhia de Cigarros **SOUZA CRUZ**

8-9-1949 JORNAL DAS MOÇAS

LIDOS OU COM PONTEIRA

Figure 5. Technological innovations, cigarette and female independence appear related in another advert of the cigarettes brand Continental (1949).¹²

12 *Jornal das Moças*, 1949, 1786. Available in: <http://bndigital.bn.br/hemeroteca-digital/>. Access: 30/11/2015.

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Para "acender" a luz já não se usa fósforo

...mas a preferência pelos cigarros Continental permanece

Há mais de 15 anos Continental é o cigarro de qualidade mais vendido em todo o Brasil

Sim — hoje, o gesto de acender a luz já não é mais o mesmo... todavia a preferência pelos cigarros Continental é sempre a mesma. Cigarros de suprema qualidade — o segredo do sucesso de Continental está na permanência dessa qualidade que é tida em tão alta conta pelo fumante exigente.

Cigarros **Continental**

— uma preferência nacional

Companhia de Cigarros **SOUZA CRUZ**

LEIÃO OU COM PONTEIRA

Figure 6. The last advert of the 1949 campaign of Continental analyzed in this article contrasts the emancipated woman smoker operating a modern lampshade and a man trying to switch on an outdated lamp.¹³

Just over twenty years later in Rio de Janeiro, in 1971, Souza Cruz launched an exclusive brand of cigarettes for the female public, as well as the American Virginia Slims: Charm cigarettes. After extensive market research, thirty famous women (among them, Leila Diniz, Elke Maravilha and Danuza Leão) were chosen to feature in the launch

13 *Jornal das Moças*, 1949, No. 1797. Available in: <http://bndigital.bn.br/hemeroteca-digital/>. access: 30/11/2015.

campaign, representing, in the view of consumers, the emancipated side of women (MAZETTI, 2014).

The photos of celebrities with cigarettes between the fingers had phrases like “We already have our cigarette,” “Do not let any man smoke,” “Say enough to man’s cigarette.” Heavily influenced by the second feminist wave, the advert’s text stated: “Charm came at the time when women are struggling to become more independent. Now every time you want to show you are more feminine and have your own personality, light a Charm” (*Manchete*, 05/02/1972, p. 133, *apud* MAZETTI, 2014, p. 158). Therefore, seeking synchrony with both the foreign cultural context and the feminist struggles that flourished in the country, the Brazilian advertising invested, in these two moments, in the subjectivity of emancipated women, potential consumers of several products and services, obviously including cigarettes. These two campaigns show that in Brazil, as well, the cigarette and the consumption of other multiple goods by women was strongly associated with ideals of freedom and modernity.

Final considerations

In this study, it was possible to observe that consumption was one of the fields of dispute between traditional values surrounding gender roles and the configuration of a female identity, marked by a context of feminist struggles and the expansion of mass society throughout the 20th century. The cigarette, which in the 19th century was restricted to men and a symbol of masculinity, was redefined throughout the 20th century, becoming an icon of female emancipation – if not in the concrete plans of practices, certainly in the magical plans of advertising narratives.

It is important to emphasize that it was not affirmed here that these narratives orchestrated the transformation of women’s role throughout the century. An evident criticism to this idea is that advertising did no more than capture feminist discourse in vogue at the time and, emptying its collective dimension, emphasized the issue of women’s individual freedom to challenge submission through consumption. But, it is not so

simple or reductionist, because, on the other hand, discourse analysis on cigarettes over the past century reveals the precise articulation between advertising narratives and social and historical contexts that it both reflects and produces. Feminism and the movements of transformation of woman's social roles inspired – and even demanded – a change in the representations disseminated in the adverts. At the same time, advertising discourse was also part of the process of creating female subjects and conformed to the demands of the consumer society.

Cigarettes, as well as other goods, had their materiality taken through diverse meanings throughout their history. Currently cigarettes' meaning have been reconfigured. Advertising them is banned and they are continuously associated in media discourse with the harm they cause to health. This only reinforces how meanings of consumer goods are changeable and clearly attributed to historical and social contexts in which they are embedded.

In the case studied here, and based on the analogy by Douglas and Isherwood (2013), cigarettes were no longer a fence that separated, spatially and culturally, men and women, becoming, instead, a bridge that led women to freedom, in the logic of advertising narratives. In reality, the contradictions are multiple and gender inequalities are supported by historical, cultural and economic situations that permeated the 20th century and still continue today. Although, it is possible to state that the relationship between feminism and consumption is much more complex than what a simple binary reduction between adherence or rejection could assume.

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