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## SCOOPS AND ADVERTISEMENTS: temporalities in perspective in Fon-Fon! illustrated magazine

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## Abstract

Based on the premise that communication is a social practice, we propose to study the relationship between media culture and modern life by reflecting on aspects of temporality and resorting to the past as a tool to understand the present. In this paper, we regard illustrated magazines as producers of the spectacle of cities and representations of modernity, translating to readers the appropriate forms of sociability of the period and acting like mediators in a transitional phase. Our sample includes twelve issues of Fon-Fon! published in 1908. We analyze the sections "Na Calçada" ("On the Sidewalk") and "O Rio Elegante" ("Elegant Rio"), besides a number of advertisements.

**Keywords:**

Modernity; illustrated magazines; temporality; advertisements; society page.

## Introduction

The year is 2018. A half-page column in the Sunday edition of one of the most traditional newspapers of the city of Rio de Janeiro<sup>1</sup> highlights: “Etiquette in chaos: how to exercise empathy and good manners”<sup>2</sup>. The text suggests the reader to learn an “ensemble of rules that seem obvious, but that the current permissive education raising princes and princesses is unable to handle.” After the preamble are nine rules on how to behave appropriately in public spaces, such as public transports and restrooms, cinemas, theatres, and restaurants.

In the following week<sup>3</sup>, the column titled “Etiquette in chaos 2: persisting with the civilizing process” presents the reader to further nine rules on the ways of being, acting, and behaving in the city. The journalist explains the sequel was prompted by the response to his previous column. Numerous e-mails and messages on social media from friends describing various situations led him to “put on paper what should be on everyone’s mind.”

And what are those rules that “should be on everyone’s mind”? The columnist makes a clear reference to a term coined by Norbert Elias (1994/1939) in his work *The Civilizing Process*, which shows that no society becomes civilized overnight nor is the becoming civilized a unique and specific event. According to Elias (1994/1939), though we are used to regarding civilization as a possession that comes to us ready-made, it is in fact part of a process in which we ourselves are involved and that harkens back to the past.

Hence, there is meaning in searching for the past in an attempt to understand the present. Reinhart Koselleck (1990) indicates the present is apprehended as past through history in a cyclic dialectics between past and future that does not end. The past is a “no longer” and the future a “not yet”. We live in this suspension, in this becoming. In Koselleck (2018), historical time is related to concrete experiences of social actors, who, at each moment, articulate their accumulated experiences and project expectations.

We use the past to deal with the present, because today is already yesterday, instants escape us and never remain, as examined by Leo Charney (1995). The instant is only acknowledged after it has past, which means the present is always lost. The present itself is an instant that is only apprehended after it has past. Benjamin (1997/1969) called that ephemeral experience the moment of shock, which for him represented the modern experience itself. It is in this context that Benjamin (1997/1969) understands modernity, in this removal from experience conceived as a continuous accumulation “towards an experience of momentary shocks that bombarded and shattered subjective experience like hand grenades” (Charney, 1995, p. 285).

In Koselleck’s (1990) view, modern times are translated by rupture and transition, which increases the difference between past and future, opens a gap between previous experience and the expectation of what is to come, and, thus, configures acceleration as a basic experience of time. Understanding that modernity erases the opposition between past, present, and future through making them instantaneous and imperceptible (Paz, 1974), and based on the premise that communication is a social practice, this paper proposes to understand the relationship between media culture and modern life by reflecting on aspects of temporality and resorting to the past as a tool to think the present. Pursuing “the footprints of multiple trails” could be a way of revealing “some of these modes of communication” (Barbosa, 2013, p. 166) at the dawn of the twentieth century.

The press is an instrument to disseminate “rules that should be on everyone’s mind”, which takes us back to narratives of illustrated magazines, one of the dominant means of communication in the turn of

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<sup>1</sup> “Sempre aos domingos”, journalist Gilberto Scofield Jr.’s column published in “Caderno B” of Jornal do Brasil, May 20, 2018, p.6.

<sup>2</sup> All quotations from works originally published in Portuguese were translated to English in this paper.

<sup>3</sup> “Sempre aos domingos”, journalist Gilberto Scofield Jr.’s column published in “Caderno B” of Jornal do Brasil, May 27, 2018, p.6.

the nineteenth to twentieth century. Illustrated magazines materialized the new times in the capital of the Republic, which was a metonym for the country, and offered a handbook on how to be modern and stay up to date with models of civilization like Paris and London. These periodicals also had a more sophisticated graphic treatment and better print quality than newspapers (Siciliano, 2014; Oliveira, 2010; Velloso, 2010). “Snapshots unfolded in the eyes of readers, providing a mosaic that grouped events, manners, and fashions. Through magazines’ scoops, it was possible to know who were the elegant ones, enjoy cartoons, and savor chronicles.” (Siciliano, 2014, p. 137).

This way, as protagonists, content producers, and historical witnesses of that period, press professionals reported their perceptions on the “permanent transience”<sup>4</sup> of those accelerated times. The blame is on Cronos, the “old and bearded Cronos, who casts his ice mantle over everything”, declared Machado de Assis, literary icon of that period<sup>5</sup>.

Hence, the purpose of this paper is to discuss the media culture disseminated in the press through illustrated magazines that encapsulated the spirit of the times through joining word and image, translated in “poses and gestures” captured by modern artifacts, such as photographs, which seized the instant and bequeathed its traces to observers from the future. To understand how illustrated magazines contributed to the development of patterns of sensibilities of a modern life style, we consider the written and visual material obtained from *Fon-Fon!* magazine as an object that provides threads, trails, signs, and vestiges that can lead to knowledge of experiences of another time, as Ginzburg (1990) has taught us. *Fon-Fon!* illustrated magazine circulated in Rio de Janeiro between 1907 and 1945. Our analysis comprises 12 issues published in 1908. One year after the periodical was launched, Rio de Janeiro hosted the Exposição Nacional (National Exposition), which presented the remodeled capital like a “showcase of progress” (Neves, 1991), as documented in the pages of illustrated magazines, then sources of assimilation of new habits and customs announced by modern winds. We focus on the society page “*Na Calçada*” (“On the Sidewalk”) and chronicles from the section “*O Rio Elegante*” (“Elegant Rio”) published between May and July, 1908, besides some advertisements from the same editions.

In line with Rocha’s (2010) methodological perspective on the analysis of ads, the choice of *Fon-Fon!* considers the existence of empirical materials that can be more predisposed or reluctant to the understanding of the logic of the system to which they belong to. There is some arbitrariness in the selection of the periodical and its sections. However, the choice forms a pattern that operates like a “reference myth”, enabling a broader discussion on the whole system of which it is an integral part (Rocha, 2010, p. 95). Our hypothesis is the society columns and advertisements that circulate in illustrated magazines operate like mediators in the learning of civility rules on how one should be and offer observable material of a socially shared civility code.

## The Rio de Janeiro of modernity

To discuss the signals of modernity in illustrated magazines it is necessary to contextualize Rio de Janeiro, the federal capital of the Republic, in early twentieth century and understand the mentalities of opinion makers of that period, such as chroniclers, photographers, and novelists. The analysis of advertising images is also central in this work, since, as Ana Maria Mauad (2005) explains, “visual image engenders a narrative capacity processed in a given temporality [and] establishes a dialogue of senses with other cultural references of verbal and non-verbal character. Images tell us stories, renew memories, invent experiences” (p. 134) to imagine History.

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<sup>4</sup> Carl Schorske used that expression in his work *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, published in 1980. According to the author, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the word modern and its marks in cultural expressions no longer defined themselves in opposition to the past but independently from it.

<sup>5</sup> In one of his monthly chronicles in *Ilustração Brasileira*, published in February 1878, Machado de Assis complains that his text may seem musty to readers, because “facts from thirty days ago belong to history, not to chronicles” (Siciliano, 2014).

“Modern life is made of lightning bolts in the brain and fever pulses in the blood”, wrote the poet and journalist Olavo Bilac, under the penname O.B., in the chronicle that opens the first issue of *Kósmos* illustrated magazine on January 1, 1904. The feeling of modernity is ambivalent. For Marshall Berman (1988), modernity denotes “an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are.” (p. 15).

This ambivalence permeates the beginning of the twentieth century, the period in which this paper focuses. The setting is the city of Rio de Janeiro in 1908 after a process of urban transformation that materialized the idea of federal capital. Margarida de Souza Neves (1991) underscores the federal capital can be considered a metonym of the country. However, such image only becomes convincing after the reforms undertaken during Rodrigues Alves’ mandate (1902-1906), which materialized with “pickaxe blows” the role of “progress showcase”:

The city, regarded by contemporaries as epitome and microcosms of the country, will have to erase the traces of Portuguese colonization, identified with backwardness, to emerge as capital of the progress of Brazil and thus demarcate the achievement of a concrete space among civilized nations. (Neves, 1991, p. 5)

The civilizing project of Rio de Janeiro reached most part of the elite, but it was not necessarily shared by poorer layers of urban society that were forced to dodge the mechanisms of the “civilizing process” and the “etiquette” required by the “cosmopolitan life style” of elites. Even those who perceived the changes as positive were immersed in the contradictions and ambivalences of life and human experience, oscillating between the defense of certain national traditions and the adoption of sociability codes of Parisian and London fashion. They swayed between endorsing the regional and differentiated ways of living and thinking from Brazil and embracing the adventure of a perspective more connected to universal values and inspired by the European breeze (Siciliano, 2014; Siciliano, 2016).

Yet, in the glamorous world of illustrated magazines, “Rio was becoming civilized”. That expression, which became associated to the urbanization of the federal capital, was used for the first time by Figueiredo Pimentel in the column “O Binóculo” (“The Binoculars”) of *Gazeta de Notícias* (Broca, 1956; Edmundo, 2003). Considered one of the first society pages in Brazil, the column exposed the carioca mundanity in Ouvidor street and newly opened avenues, the parties, the flower battles, the parades, the ladies’ fashion, and the attires of smart men. However, the pedagogy of illustrated magazines was not always enough in urban experience. Mechanisms of social pressure were used to “educate” the inhabitants of the federal capital of the Brazilian Republic in European style: law decrees and prohibitions inhibited the circulation of street vendors, while practices such as begging, spitting, and urinating on the street were repressed.

The year 1908 was an important “civilization mark”; it was the celebration of 100 years since the arrival of the Portuguese Court in Brazil and the opening of ports in 1808. The highpoint of the centennial was the National Exposition. A European practice and recurrent topic in the press, the expositions were spaces constructed to promote inventions, demonstrate industrial development, and celebrate the integration between the diverse participant countries. Commemorations help to reestablish a “narrative logic in which the past may be used concomitantly with the present and, thus, shape a different reality” (Barbosa, 2007, p. 55). To educate sensibilities, promote etiquette codes, consume progress, and exhibit civilization: that was the ideological basis that guided expositions, which were always celebrations to the triumph of capitalist ideals of free commerce and industrialization, and propagators of the bourgeois life style (Levy, 2008; Neves, 1991). Expositions explored themes of leisure with educational purposes, the visualization of progress, and festivities to work, invention, and industry while always promoting modern artifacts, raising pavilions for the industry, and stimulating commerce (Siciliano, 2014). The subjects of commerce, leisure, and consumption were also present in illustrated magazines.

The choice of the centenary of the opening of ports as a pretext for holding the National Exposition is not unjustified. One century separates both events and a tribute to the occasion would be a way to remember Brazilian developments, “to draw up an inventory of the country”, as per the decree 6,545 from July 4, 1907, of the National Congress, which determined the celebration would be a National Exposition and fixed the funds for the event. The message is clear. It was necessary to display progress to visitors – through the products of commercial, industrial, agricultural, scientific, and artistic activities – and demonstrate how Brazil was diligent and capable of achieving the same degree of civilization of the most respected nations in the world (Siciliano, 2014).

## Representation of modernity in *Fon-Fon!*

Illustrated magazines frequently circulated in Rio de Janeiro between the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, involving its audience – not just its buyers but also over-the-shoulder readers and everyone who listened to conversations about the periodical – in subjects of everyday life in the city and modern innovations. Magazines helped Rio residents to keep up with urban temporality on a fast pace and filled with visual information, such as cartoons and photographs. Among many periodicals – *Revista da Semana*, *Careta*, *Kósmos* – the *Fon-Fon!* weekly stands out with its title that alludes to the sound of automobiles, the modern machine that caused awe and fear in the big cities. It is significant the arrival of a magazine with the sound of honks – the instrument that announced approaching vehicles, be them automobiles or periodicals.

*Fon-Fon!* issues, which are available through the digital archive of the National Library of Brazil, were very critical to the administrative politics of that period. On the other hand, the magazine narrated the modes of being and circulating in public spaces and the appropriate clothes to stroll in recently opened avenues through chronicles and society pages to help readers to familiarize themselves with the idea of a city replete with stimuli (Simmel, 1950/1903) and shock potentials (Benjamin, 1997/1969). Therefore, we propose to use the columns “*Na Calçada*” and “*Rio Elegante*” as indications to understand other temporalities, though thinking with contemporary inquiries. As stressed by Howard Becker (2007), social columns and advertisements tell about society and its temporalities. The author argues that photography, cinema, theatre, literature, and maps – we would add cartoons, society pages, and advertising as well – are as valid means to reflect on “how society is built” as are the methods that social scientists generally use to represent the social. The analysis of any of those materials can lead to expressive stories about the world that surrounds us, because they are narrative forms produced by society itself.

As mentioned before, we selected twelve issues of *Fon-Fon!*, the numbers four through fifteen published from May to July, 1908, when Rio de Janeiro became the post card of the First Republic. Every one of those issues has thirty-six pages. Not all sections of *Fon-Fon!* were regular (that is, present in every issue). Hence, the selected columns drew our attention for their regularity and content: the chronicles of “*O Rio Elegante*” (FIG. 1) and columns of “*Na Calçada*” (FIG. 2) emphasize narratives on the habits, ways of being, and modes of dressing in public spaces (Medeiros & Porter, 2018). Illustrated magazines were lens that gave access to readers and even illiterate people to the understanding of events, manners, and fashions. Through magazines, it was possible to know who was elegant, laugh with cartoons, and relish chronicles. Illustrated magazines presented readers to “new space-time coordinates” (Velloso, 2008, p. 228).

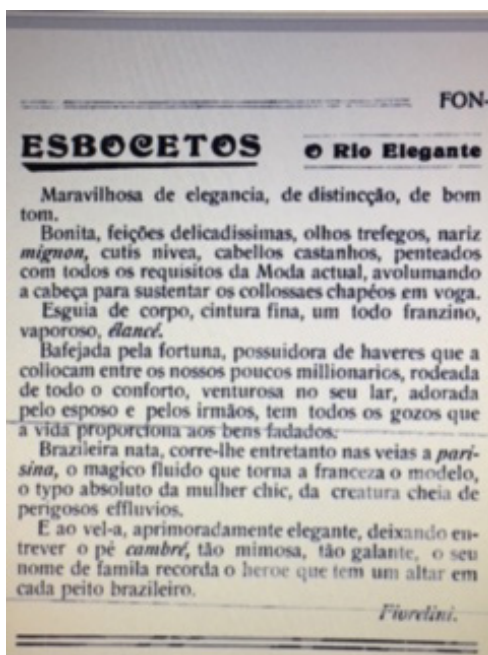


Fig. 1 Source: Biblioteca Nacional, Fon-Fon!, n. 10, June, 1908, p.19.

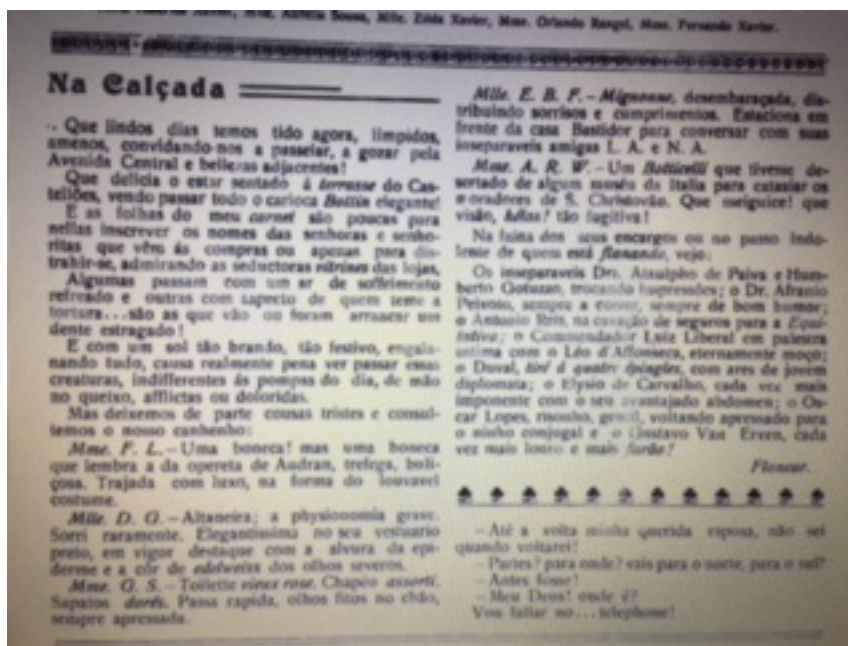


Fig. 2 1 Fonte: Biblioteca Nacional, Fon-Fon!, n. 7, May, 1908, p. 23.

In “O Rio Elegante”, the columnist, writing under the penname Fiorelini, selects a lady of the carioca society to narrate in a poetic form her manners, without revealing her identity. The author recounts how the lady circulates, acts, walks, gazes, and dresses in public spaces, besides describing her physical appearance and alluding to her ancestry and family origins. “Na Calçada”, the society page signed by Mario Pederneiras under the suggestive pseudonym of *Flâneur* (Velloso, 2008, p. 46), is not very different. The French term *flâneur* was on everyone’s lips in carioca society, besides being the theme of *A Alma Encantadora das Ruas* [The Enchanting Soul of the Streets] by João do Rio (2008/1908). Strolling was

a way of understanding the “psychology of the streets” for João do Rio – a sport, a practice, an art. In modern Rio de Janeiro of early twentieth century, “see and be seen” was part of the routine of elites that strolled around the remodeled urban space. Benjamin (1997/1969), based on Baudelaire (1995/1863), indicates a relationship between walking down the streets and observing like a detective who tries to unveil what is behind poses, gestures, clothes, and behaviors. To some extent, social columnists, who were emerging professionals in illustrated magazines, are voyeurs and flaneurs, because they walk the streets with their quills and photographic machines to expose and extract the eternal from the transitory (Baudelaire, 1995/1863).

Streets become the locus of the feminine show. Male chroniclers begin to observe women with curiosity and analyze their ways of moving, dressing, talking, and presenting themselves in public to interpret their personalities, interests, and life purposes, which up until then were not explicitly revealed (Medeiros & Porter, 2018). Furthermore, columns emphasized the manners and gestures of family girls. Behaviors in public places require specific face to face interaction protocols that are different from those of private places (Goffman, 1963). These rules compel social actors to “fit in”, that is, to adapt their verbal and body language, as well as their conversation topics, to the different groups they interact with in each situation they participate in. After all, what is considered appropriate in one occasion may be inappropriate in another (Goffman, 1963).

Simmel (1957/1904) observes early twentieth century fashion is an important vehicle in social interaction, because it epitomizes the double movement, the constitutive tension of modernity, between differentiation and equalization. Fashion is characterized by the tension between universal and particular, equality and difference, imitation and distinction. Through fashion, individuals express their belonging to specific groups and, at the same time, separate themselves from others.

People spotted in avenues and public spaces by columnists and recorded in snapshots served as models to others. Flirtation and coquetry are also a part of new worldly behaviors. The importance of fashion meant that it was necessary to stay informed on the latest novelties and attires as well as etiquette codes from abroad, especially, from France and England. After all, the new city invited the *homo urbanus* to exhibit themselves, to see and be seen in the new avenues and renovated streets. The city welcomed sociability and voyeurism. Moreover, the federal capital was not only the site of the civilizing process, but was itself the fundamental component of that process (Pechman, 2003, p. 130). As a result, sociability and performance became essential practices for maintaining the myth of the capital. As the city transformed itself, its inhabitants had to show they were up to date with such changes. Hence the importance of dressing up in style and knowing how to behave like a “civilized person” to keep a convenient “front” in the social theater of new urban “showcases”.

Descriptions of physical appearance and women’s clothing choices are recurrent in the examined columns of “*Rio Elegante*” and “*Na Calçada*”. In them, some of the frequent expressions are: pampered, vaporous, delicate, sophisticated, distinction in elegance, gracious movements, serene, refined taste but without exaggeration, chic, dressed according to fashion. Every column presents passing women who probably belong to high society, because they are described as rich, “fanned by fortune”, and holders of cultural capital (they love music, theatre, speak French and travel frequently to Europe). Although their names are not cited, they are easily identifiable. Women who used to be restricted to the private spaces of their homes begin to circulate in public places, avenues, and cafes. They also form an important audience for illustrated magazines, which they bought to keep up with the latest cultural events of the city and acquire conversation topics for their interactions in public spaces. In early twentieth century, to see and be seen, talking about other people’s lives, and having their own behavior become the focus of conversation or gossip are strategies for socializing in the public spaces of the federal capital. That is precisely what society pages promote.

European countries governed fashions and rules of conduct. The residents of a civilized Rio looked for references, especially in Paris, on the ways of dressing and behaving in public spaces and



social gatherings. Magazines demonstrate that influence in their narratives: “Wonderful with elegance, distinction and good taste. Like a Frenchwoman.” (Fiorelini, 1908, p. 19). Both columns frequently mention the activities of speaking in French and traveling to Europe as synonyms of sophistication and grace. “Na Calçada” pointed out how the toilette and gestures of Mademoiselle C.K., dressed a la French mode, made her attractive to the male gaze and left a “trail of broken hearts”:

the vaporous morning mist toilette is proper of the season – *gris automne*. The hat has the same nuance. Burning red lips to flavor so much cold. Gazelle steps. Her little head held up high, arrogant like someone who knows she will leave a trail... of broken hearts! (Flâneur, 1908, p. 32)

Illustrated magazines disseminated feminine behaviors that should serve as models of politeness, elegance, and good taste for other readers to copy: “color sobriety”; “classic repertoire using French clothes without perfectionism nor exaggeration”; “uses of hats”. In the columnist’s words, his chosen one for the “Rio Elegante” section of the seventh issue in May, 1908, was “somewhat stingy in smiles, yet did not spare the most seductive affability with her acquaintances. She dresses up with refined taste, with confidence, without the perfectionisms and exaggerations that fashion advices in its frivolousness.” (Fiorelini, 1908, p. 30). Her behavior was a model of discretion, sociability, and unpretentiousness, like a girl from good family or married lady who complied with etiquette manuals.

Columns suggested that marriage was a girl’s destiny, although submission and dependency no longer appeared as a female condition in that period. In adulthood, ladies are described as distinct, elegant, and refined, compared to European women, goddesses, works of art, and opera characters. “Madame A.R.W. is a *Botticelli* that fled some museum in Italy to fascinate the residents of São Cristóvão. How sweet! Alas, what a vision! [She’s] so fleeting!” (Flâneur, 1908, p. 23). Regarding marital status, some of the expressions used to describe married women are “well cared for”, “surrounded by a large and beautiful offspring” or “in the company of their husbands”, an indication they should always be accompanied by family (children, spouses, sisters, nephews, nieces) or friends.

It is worth stressing that, since mid-nineteenth century, marriage begins to attribute central importance to romantic love and family life in the projects of men and women of the middle layers and elites of urban society. But the sexual roles performed by men and women were well-defined and differentiated (Araújo, 1993). Men were the head of families and their legal representatives, even if they no longer had limitless powers as was the case in the colonial period. Comprehension of the appropriate codes for the diverse social groups that visited public spaces was often triggered in different ways. There was a proper side to show in public, while everything was done differently in private (Siciliano, 2014). For women, knowing how to behave was a sign of distinction. And columns reinforced that rule as synonymous with civility.

The analysis of editions shows narratives present two phases of women’s lives, youth and adulthood, but, in the second one, they are only referred to as wives or widows, never as single or divorced. In the case of young women, adjectives used to describe their appearance are: lively, interesting, pampered, delicate, funny thing, fetish. They were compared to flowers, mornings, angels, representations of the lightness of youth, the life phase in which there are no concerns and great responsibilities. Exceptionally, narratives about young women who were distant from their fiancés described them as pale and sad due to the absence of their partners. For example, in issue 13, July 1908, “Na Calçada” narrates the following: “Mademoiselle N.V. is pale, excessively pale. She is nostalgic because of the absence of her fiancé, the handsome T.P.”. These narratives suggest young women were always in search of good suitors, even making explicit comments about them glancing at young men on the streets. In issue 12, June 1908, “Na Calçada” exposes such a moment: “As the procession moves, Mademoiselle O.X. keeps her eyes on a handsome marine officer. Doesn’t the anchor symbolize hope?” (Flâneur, 1908, p. 16).

Neither the noun civility nor the verb to civilize appear in the narratives of the examined columns, which suggests these expressions no longer needed to be used explicitly and that the pressure to adopt new manners was becoming subtler. The new forms of sociability were suggested in a more subjective way. Women's personality traces were mostly limited to two options: either they were smiley and responded to everyone's salutes or they were gloomy and averse to smiles. The smiley woman is more frequent in narratives and regarded as the most proper model of conduct.

Advertisements were also constructors of the urban spectacle and indicated forms of sociability appropriate to modern life. In her work with ads from São Paulo, Marcia Padilha (2001) shows that advertising occupies a considerable place in the configuration of new public spaces, "which were being built and transformed together with the city" (Padilha, 2001, p. 104). As Everardo Rocha (2010) explains, advertising discourse converts production into consumer goods that situate us in our world. Advertising professionals are like bricoleurs who incorporate diverse knowledges and resort to collectively shared signs as constitutive elements of their narratives. Hence, ads can be a way of understanding the logic of a particular time and society, because every one of them sell "lifestyles, sensations, emotions, worldviews, human relations, and classification systems..." (Rocha, 2010, p. 32).

Since the arrival of the Portuguese court and given its centrality as capital (Kingdom, Empire, and Republic), Rio de Janeiro became the stage for a society that increasingly circulated in the streets and formed a growing consumer market. Thus, advertising took on a relevant role in the construction of this social imaginary. Alencastro (1997) shows the impact of the monthly arrival of packet boats – especially, the consumer goods, fashion novelties, and new habits brought by them – in Brazilian imaginary was so significant that women's menstruation was dubbed *paquete* (packet) during the Empire and Republic in reference to the 28-day journey from England to Rio de Janeiro.

During the Empire, consumption habits of leisure change as well. Cafes, confectioneries, and restaurants become gathering points. In 1874, about ten thousand houses had gaslight, which made residents rethink their ways of dressing and presenting themselves at home and on the street. Individual appearance had to acquire new aesthetic attributes in the bright spaces of houses, salons, and cafes. Hats, gloves, and dresses, often the overstock from European and United States markets due to economic crises or fashion changes, were imported to Rio de Janeiro. Some of these ornaments reveal intimate habits and expectations of the ascending groups of imperial society (Alencastro, 1997).

Also, Alencastro (1997) observes that national and foreign novelties received the approval of the courtly society and press before spreading to the rest of the country. Shoes were a posh people thing and exclusive of free men. Money was not enough to acquire them. Even slaves who earned money<sup>6</sup> were not allowed to wear shoes, which made clear the distinction between those who could and those who were forbidden to own that good (Medeiros, 2017). Imitating the behavior of posh people, ladies from coffee farms visited the Rio de Janeiro of the Court to go to the theatre, shop in Ouvidor street, and seek health treatments. The desired social representation was accomplished through the consumption of goods and fashions from the court and even from abroad. Inventories of rich farmers of that period demonstrate their ostentatious pattern of consumption, mostly of silverware, jewelry, and fine and imported clothing. "Tableware, furniture, bedclothes, and dresses were purchased through the catalogs of stores from the court and even from France, especially *Galleries Lafayette*" (Mauad, 1997, p. 212).

Alencastro (1997) indicates imperial time synchronizes with the time of European modernity; consuming and knowing how to behave are a part of that synchrony. As noted above, consumer practices of Rio de Janeiro society in the Brazilian Empire sought to symbolize status, to delimit groups, and

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<sup>6</sup> There were slaves who performed paid tasks to third parties and gave some of the amount they earned to their masters, often managing to make a nest egg to purchase their own freedom. These slaves had means to acquire many goods: smart pants, velvet jackets, pocket watches, rings with stones, hats, even cigars (Alencastro, 1997, p. 79). However, they had to walk bare foot, because shoes were a symbol of the elite.

distinguish individuals. Certain objects became fetish merchandises of that economic and cultural phase, like the piano, which was desired even by those who did not intend to play the instrument but wanted to adhere to the “Frenchness” of Rio de Janeiro elite (Alencastro, 1997, p. 43). In early twentieth century, Rio de Janeiro, the “radiating capital” potentiated its centrality as the “sound box of great transformations underway around the world” (Sevcenko, 2002, p. 513) and disseminated the new codes of modernity, for example, through print media. Ads educated consumers on life modes and styles through promoting modern codes and new habits, including hygienic ones, and teaching practices and conducts to help aspiring cosmopolitans in their performances. In the early decades of the twentieth century, advertising had a poetic format and was written by literary authors, journalists, and chroniclers. Urbanization, the inauguration of public transports (regular tram lines), and commerce prompted the growth of advertising. The new had to be announced and consumed.

The twelve issues of *Fon-Fon!* examined in this work give special focus to the feminine figure. Many ads present products for women, usually imported clothes, adornments, and perfumes which came mostly from France. In fact, the French inspiration is evident in the names of advertised establishments, such as *Parc Royal*, *Maison Blanche*, *Madame Garnier*, *Madame Soussan*, *Madame Berthe*, *A Notre Dame de Paris*, and so on. Ads for national brands stress their capacity to rival the best foreign brands to indicate the distinction and quality of products. Being elegant and chic was a requisite of the remodeled city, as the ads below show.

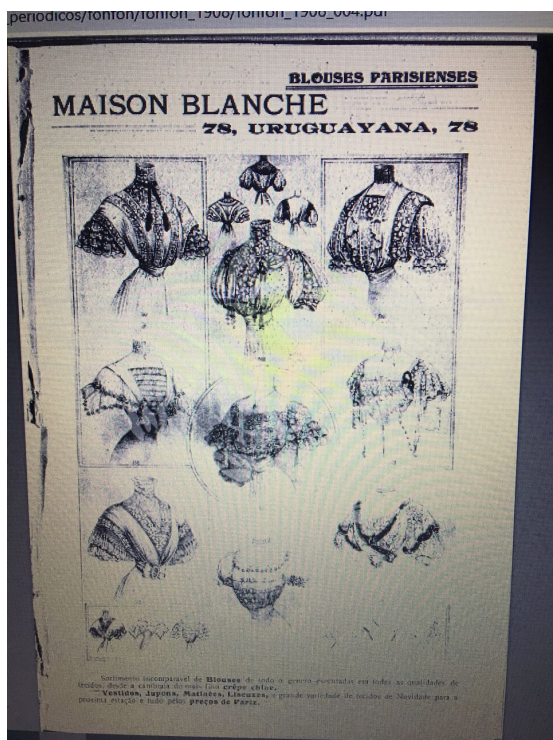


Fig. 3 Source: Biblioteca Nacional, *Fon-Fon!*, 4, May, 1908, p. 03.

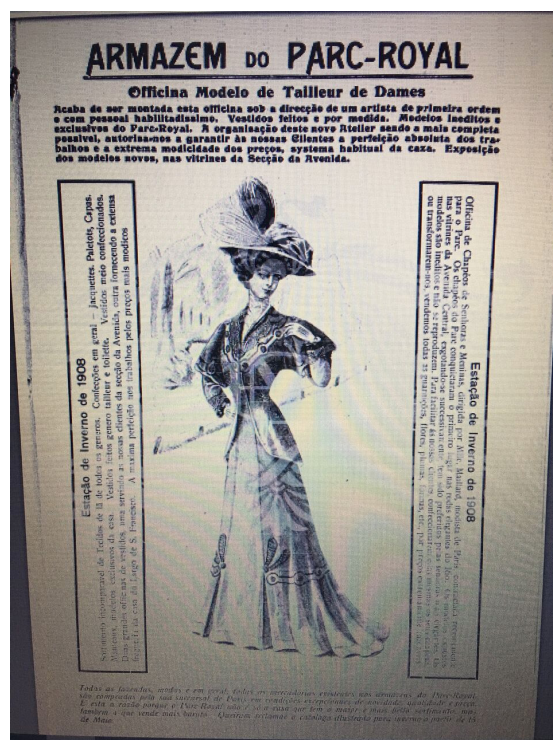


Fig. 4 Source: Biblioteca Nacional, *Fon-Fon!*, 4, May, 1908, p. 05.

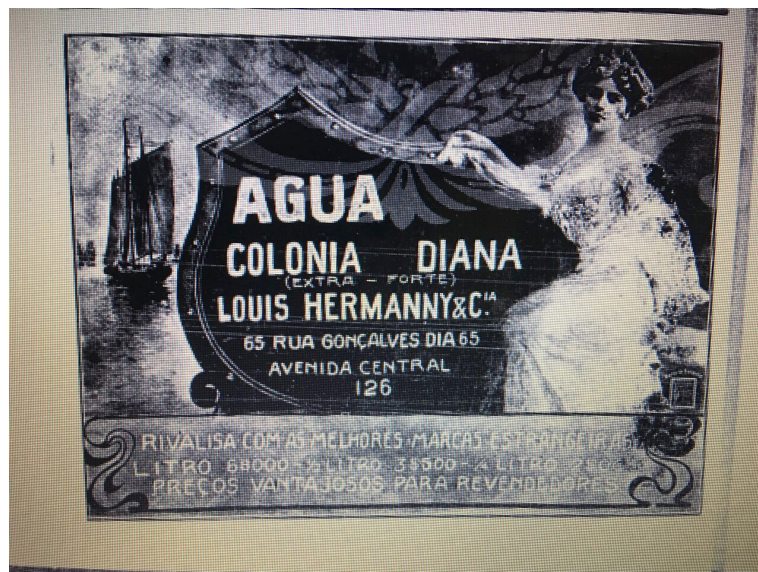


Fig. 5 Source: Biblioteca Nacional, *Fon-Fon!*, 5, May, 1908, p. 32.



Fig. 6 Source: Biblioteca Nacional, *Fon-Fon!*, 10, June, 1908, p. 33.

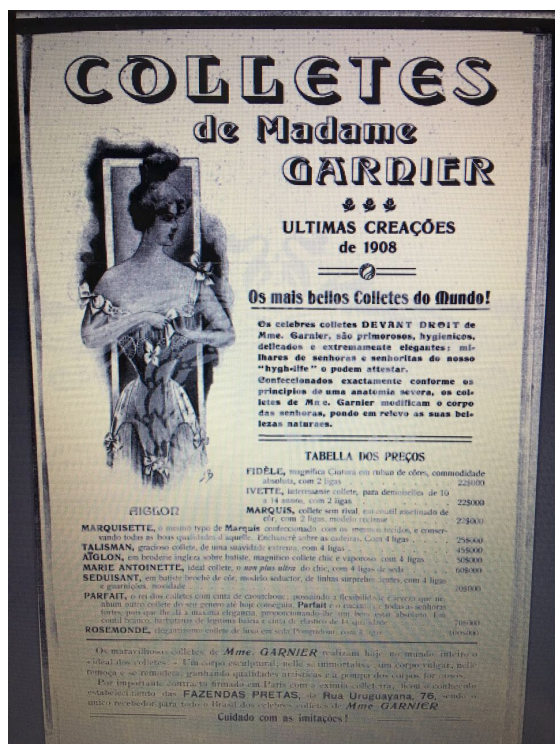


Fig. 7 Source: Biblioteca Nacional, *Fon-Fon!*, 13, July, 1908, p. 03.

## Final considerations

Society pages and advertisements operated like showcases of elegance and handbooks for the learning of urban codes that followed the European model, particularly, France. It is not by chance that many words cited in ads are French. For instance, the advertisement for Mme. Soussan’s house is entirely written in French. From the perspective of ads, the existence of a national industry is practically null. Occasional ads for goods made in the country were mostly related to food. Those few related to clothes resorted to comparisons between the local product and its imported competitors.

Another aspect that draws attention is the centrality of hats as elements of distinction, markers of an elegant elite that sought to distinguish itself from the inelegant masses. The hat becomes a fashion element charged with aesthetic and social values as well as symbolic and semantic ones directly connected to thoughts and the world of ideas (Lenzi, 2015). The writer Machado de Assis (2009/1883) in his story *A Chapter of Hats* narrates the importance of the adornment for those who wore it in the late nineteenth century. Conrado, the main character of the story, believed the hat was a part of his body. And when the hat loses its importance, it is replaced by another object. The same thing happens to trams, which were replaced by automobiles, buses, and so forth.

Given that societies are shared constructions that require mediators to facilitate interactions, the learning of good taste, fashion, and etiquette codes continues to be fundamental for those circulating in urban public spaces, regardless of specific objects that adorn bodies and cities. These codes, which are expressed in the columns and ads of illustrated magazines, mediate communication in a temporal perspective of past, present, and according to Machado de Assis, of future as well:

I don’t know if H.Em. is like me. I like to contemplate the past, to live the life that was, to think of men who, before us, honored the chair that H.Em. occupies or who peeked other people’s lives like me. At other times I stretch my gaze forward into the future and see what this good city of Saint Sebastian should be a century later, when the tram

will be as discredited vehicle as the gondola, and the current male hat nothing more than a historical reminiscence. (Assis, 2009/1877, p. 147)

The media can be regarded as a mediation process that extends beyond the point of contact between media texts and those who consume them – in this case, the audiences of illustrated magazines (their readers, but also anyone who had contact with that print media, including illiterates) – and involves “producers and consumers of media in a more or less continuous activity of engagement and disengagement” (Silverstone, 1999, p. 13). According to Silverstone (1999), experience is so expanded that enables these meanings to be evaluated and absorbed in many different ways.

Going back to Koselleck’s (2018) perspective, with which we begin this paper, historical time relates to the experiences of social actors in a dialectics between accumulated experiences and projected expectations. In this sense, communication, time, and media are interconnected and function as setting to reflect on the multiplicity of experiences we go through. Thinking about time is always a challenge. After all, “time is an invisible fabric upon which one can embroider everything: a flower, a bird, a lady, a castle, a tomb. One can also embroider nothing”, as Machado de Assis (2000/1904, p. 52) teaches us in *Esau and Jacob*.

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