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CYBER-ADVERTISING, GENDER AND GOFFMAN: hyper-ritualizations in the digital context

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Abstract¹

This paper undertakes an exploratory analysis of cyber-advertising from Erving Goffman's perspective in Gender Advertisements. It was assumed that the digital environment - by allowing the spread of voices previously suppressed by the mass media; by providing artefacts for cyber-activism, especially in relation to representativeness; and by causing the emergence of advertising with the "reality effect" - could reveal significantly different imagetive results from those found by Goffman in print magazine advertisements in the 1970s. There was, however, a significant continuity of Goffmanian conceptions, revealing the urgency of future research that seeks the mapping of gender hyper-ritualizations in contemporary advertising.

Keywords

Hyper-ritualization; Gender; Goffman; Cyber-advertising.

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Introduction

Goffman's interactionist approach, which sought its theoretical assumptions about the functioning of social life in the nuances of everyday life, did not limit his gaze solely to face-to-face relationships and their implications on ritualized behavior of individuals. Comprising the importance of circulating discourses in culture for the understanding of society and its mechanisms, Goffman dedicated a book to the study of advertising and its gender representations, perceiving it as an interesting revealing device of structures and sociocultural agencies that direct the perceptions and attitudes undertaken in routine social interactions. In fact, for the author, the tools used by the advertising discourse for the construction of its message do not differ much from those arranged by his most recurrent object of analysis: the social situation (Goffman, 1979, p. 27).

In *Gender Advertisements*, published in the late 1970s, Goffman sought to perceive these ritualizations of social behavior, which were already under his scrutiny, now represented and mediated by the peculiar objectives of advertising (Goffman, 1979). Analyzing, therefore, more than 500 advertisements of various segments, the author explores the photographs arranged in the message in a general search for a "grammar of body language" (Pollay, 1978, p. 313) and, in particular, the representation of body movements that let escape differentiations and gender stereotypes. His first fundamental argument lies in the thought that "image-making is itself a production process and is therefore not to be taken-for-granted as neutral" (Kuhn, 1980, p. 315).

By following the perspective of the non-neutrality of image construction, especially in commercial and advertising narratives, this work seeks to revisit the arguments proposed by the author in *Gender Advertisements*, in an exploratory way, now in the context of cyber-advertising. Almost forty years after the publication of the book, in a context that allows the increased breadth of previously unheard voices (Lemos, 2003); that offers accessible resources for the dissemination of cyberactivism (Antoun & Malini, 2013), especially in relation to representativeness (Strozenberg, 2006), and that, consequently, claims an "advertising with reality effect" (Carrera, 2018, p. 231), is it still possible to identify traces of this gender hyper-ritualization revealed by Goffman in printed magazine ads in the 1970s? It is proposed, therefore, a journey on the author's proposal with a look at cyber-advertising and its gender representations, seeking to perceive the continuities and ruptures of this process and inserting the first steps for the construction of an in-depth analysis of hyper-ritualizations in contemporary advertising.

Images, genres and advertising in *Gender Advertisements*

Goffman's initial assumption in *Gender Advertisements* lies in the sense that any image production reveals a process of dramatization. That is, any photograph, whether for advertising or for private circulation, follows similar construction processes in which a narrative action develops; the place, as well as the models and props used, provides contextual elements; and a before and an after are still inferred at the time of reading the image. In this sense, the author already questions the supposed authenticity of family images in detriment of those with commercial purposes: "all these pictures share one important feature, namely, they are all scenes, that is, representations, whether candid, faked, or frankly simulated, of 'events' happening" (Goffman, 1979, p. 15).

The difference between the images produced for private purposes and those fabricated by advertising, then, would manifest in the representation of subjectivity exposed there: while in private photographs there is almost no effort to appear to be who you are, that is, there is no need for scenic effort to combine the subject with his own representation of himself, in advertising this effort is essential, since the model is transformed into any subject in favor of the established scene. In other words, the enunciative core of advertising is the transformation of subjects for the construction of an imaginary

moment, while private photographs only need to transform “a model into a decorative representation of himself” (Goffman, 1979, p. 17).

Moreover, what the publicists primarily want is not to represent individuals already known to the viewer, as is the case in private images. Their concern lies in the description of activities that can be recognized when performed in real life by unknown people. These people, therefore, may not want to publicize a few moments of their lives that advertising makes a point of dramatizing with a view to persuasion, removing the social constraints existing in real life and providing the viewer with the omniscient character of the one who sees everything. To this peculiar aspect of the advertising discourse, Goffman gives the name of “social license” (Goffman, 1979, p. 19).

Therefore, by representing social life, contemporary book advertising would establish the so-called “commercial realism,” a conventionalized transformation of reality created with the intention of stimulating consumption (Cavan, 1981, p. 746). In this sense, the participants of advertising representation do not need “real identities” beyond the necessary exposure of their gender, age, race and occupation (which can also be staged). They are symbolic representations of social reality and help to create a dramatization of social life legitimized by the audience (Weitz, 1980, p. 312). In this way, the public builds sense of both the reality perceived in everyday life and the commercial realism of advertising through abstract categories cognitively produced. These general categories, according to Goffman, are as important for the purpose of interpreting an advertisement as they are for the purpose of confronting a public place. Thus, what is seen in advertising is, therefore, a “parasite” sense to the social competence acquired in group behavior, that is, commercial realism ensures that its audience mobilizes its knowledge about the perceived social world “by reducing ambiguity and opening up scenes to allow a clear view of what is transpiring” (Smith, 2010, p. 177).

Formed by discourses, therefore, social reality would be both raw material for advertising production and would be constituted by it, but Goffman does not delve deeper into this interchangeable influence and the possible heterogeneity in the levels of power of one over the other. On the contrary, the author seems to want to make evident the impossibility of advertising to produce social scenarios that differ greatly from those already existing in everyday interactions. According to his perspective, the rituals arranged in society’s culture are expressions used to produce meaning and make situations recognizable for the construction of relationships. In this sense, even the advertising objective would be similar (Goffman, 1979, p. 84).

The hyper-ritualization provided by advertisements would be, within this perspective, a way of intentionally choreographing everyday rituals to avoid ambiguities. Since interactive behaviors already carry shared social signs; ceremonies full of meaning; attitudes and postures adorned in situations of co-presence, representing them would be a way of ritualizing what is already ritualized per se. Hence the need for the prefix “hyper.” This amplification, is essential to the discourse of advertising, since without it the symbolic effects of its staging would be dislocated and would not make sense. Idealizing consumption as a social exchange, advertising places itself as a cultural institution that conducts symbolic thought, and therefore needs to provide who watch it with a visual and pertinent confirmation of what it places on the scene.

Constituting itself, then, as an expansion of everyday interactional actions, hyper-ritualization makes advertising, according to Goffman, an ideal object for the analysis of gender representations, its central objective in the book. Although he recognizes that something as accessible and easily recognizable as advertising images should not be an exact mirror of male and female behavior, since “the world portrayed in ritual is not a picture of the way things are but a passing exhortative guide to perception” (Goffman, 1979, p. 3), the author believes that the ads offer a valuable source of exaggerated and stylized representations that are versions of those found in the social world perceived by the public. That is, “gender displays in ads in a sense edit out all the noise and dull stuff of everyday life, leaving the crystalline forms of gendered conduct” (Smith, 2010, p. 177).

The idea of Goffman's gender representation ("Gender Displays"), in fact, can be interpreted as an unfolding of the notion of "frame", presented in another previously published study². If the analysis of the frame involves the understanding of the social senses through the study of society and its structures, and the representation of gender refers to the conventionalized descriptions of the construction of the masculine and feminine, one can understand that the analysis of the frame was extended to the context of advertising. That is, although multiple meanings can be addressed from the advertising representations, the images "frame" the message in a singular perspective. It is from this focus given to gender symbols that advertising falls, almost inevitably, on stereotypes (Lawton, 2009, p. 6-7).

When analyzing the various advertising images in search of understanding this phenomenon, Goffman describes six categories that can guide the analysis of gender representation in commercial ads: relative size; feminine touch; function ranking; the family; the ritualization of subordination; and licensed withdrawal. According to his perspective, under investigation, these expressions become small ritualistic illustrations of behaviors that represent an ideal conception of the genders and the relational structure they engender among themselves, since they indicate, in an idealized way, the profile of actors in the social situation. Veiled by the sign of naturalness, therefore, these expressions reveal the performative nuances that involve life in society: "Commercial photographs, of course, involve carefully performed poses presented in the style of being 'only natural'. But it is argued that actual gender expressions are artful poses, too" (Goffman, 1979, p. 84).

In describing, therefore, the categories proposed by the author, this work illustrates them with images of cyber-advertising³, conveyed and reproduced in the digital context and, above all, on social networking sites, more specifically Facebook. There are almost 70 ads published in the period from 2013 to 2016, of various brands and products, which help to compose the look on cyber-advertising and its gender hyper-ritualizations, exposing the relevance, also, of the Goffmanian proposal for the advertising and imagery analysis in the contemporary world.

Gender hyper-ritualizations in cyber-advertising

In proposing to analyze the gender hyper-ritualizations in the contemporary advertising context, one perceives the necessary articulation of the concept that is used here: cyber-advertising. Although the term is being discussed both in the context of consumer rhetoric (Atem & Azevedo, 2013; Atem & Tavares, 2014) and in the problematizations in relation to the humanization of brands (Carrera, 2018), here we consider cyber-advertising those discursive materialities of contemporary advertising, which even without anchoring in the digital environment, are affected and transformed by its assumptions.

Cyber-advertising, therefore, in this context, is an appropriation of the powers of this current cultural conjuncture, which is hybridized with the new technologies for the creation of new strategic practices of persuasive enunciation. It is attributed as a "rhetoric beyond the verbal language, but articulating the verbal with the various nonverbal languages, thus 'speaking' with the bodies, not only with instrumental rationality" (Atem & Tavares, 2014, p. 137). In this sense, it makes use of the emergence of individualities publicized by digital visibility for the creation of targeted, subjective and personalized contents. Thus, in an updated and even deeper way, it continues to "constitute the identity of its audience, which will make offering the reader - in a reflective way, this time - the supposed image of its own 'desire'" (Landowski, 1992, p. 105).

The understanding of cyber-advertising as part of a transformation of contemporary sociocultural practices, then, presupposes its engagement in what is understood as cyberculture (Lévy, 1999).

² The author published the book *Frame Analysis: An essay on the organization of experience* in 1974, shortly before *Gender Advertisements* was published.

³ Concept developed by REC - Consumer Rhetoric Research Group, led by Prof. Dr. Guilherme Nery (UFF).

Understood as “a new relationship between technique and social life” (Lemos, 2008, p. 15), contemporary culture establishes new forms of sociability by allying itself to the suggestions and developments of digital technologies. By allowing the interweaving of these technologies to the minutiae of life in society, revealed in the daily life of social relations, culture is seen in transformation, whose evidence is also translated into advertising constructions impregnated with stimuli to participation and technological interaction.

Thus, advertisements in the form of posts on social networking sites, for example, suggest a *modus operandi* of impact on the audience differentiated from those presupposed in mass media, as well as enable response and immediate reactions that were previously unfeasible (Carrera, 2018). Within this perspective, would these ads be more complex around the ritualization of gender, since they anticipate the participation and more instantaneous claim of audiences?

Faced with this question, therefore, it is proposed here an analysis of these new ways of advertising, materialized by images circulated in the digital environment and even beyond, understanding that contemporary advertising, in any vehicle, is not immune to net-activism (Di Felice, 2018), to cultural reconfigurations based on digital technologies (Lemos, 2008) and the demands of a social life immersed in cyberculture.

However, with the intention of closer methodological articulation, it was analyzed here only advertising images conveyed on social networking sites, specifically on Facebook⁴, understanding that these environments are grounded by the stimulus to interaction and, therefore, would require even greater brand management for their strategies. For example, even those advertising images that had the objective of circulating in other media, such as printed and audiovisual media, as a priority, but that were also disclosed by the brand in these digital environments, are analyzed here as discursive materialities of cyber-advertising, since they are immersed in the understanding of digital as a contemporary foundation.

In addition, it was opted for the analysis of diversified brand advertisements, especially in relation to the product segment, as a way to expand the reach of an image’s constructions on gender ritualizations. Over the four year ad collection period (2013-2016), ads were chosen from the cosmetics, fashion, hygiene and cleaning, home and decoration, food and beverage, and even the financial sector, in an attempt to cover a significant number of imagery expressions of gendered hyper-ritualizations. Thus, the guiding question of the analysis proposed here is: would it be appropriate to look at cyber-advertising along the lines of the categories of gender hyper-ritualization that Goffman suggested, in Gender Advertisements, for the understanding of other sociocultural contexts?

Relative Size⁵

The first category proposed by Goffman concerns the relative size of the characters placed in the photographic scene. According to the author, the “social weight”, which consists of how much the individual has power, authority, obligations and renown, is constantly echoed in the social situations in which he places himself, and is translated particularly through the size - especially the height - in relation to the other. In this sense, the legitimation through height would be continuously shared in situations of interaction, especially in those in which size could be influential. Between parents and children, for example, biology itself would already help in this social indexing of power, establishing those who should be obeyed as a larger size.

⁴ Facebook was chosen for this review because of its global reach. Currently, it is the largest social networking site in the world. Available at: <https://exame.abril.com.br/tecnologia/maior-rede-social-do-mundo-facebook-completa-15-anos/> Accessed on 18/06/2019.

⁵ As previously described, it was sought here to illustrate the Goffmanian categories with current advertising images, in an attempt to perceive the continuities in relation to the rituals of behavior represented even in cyber-advertising. Some images, therefore, follow the pattern of the insertion of the brand logo at the end of the advertising piece, but others, by the circulation on pages of social networking sites articulated to the brand, do not do so. In these cases, the logo was placed here to facilitate the understanding of the origin of the piece.

Advertising photographs, therefore, would make use of this biological and social source of power and represent through the poses presented logic of power even between genders. Thus, the differences in size would be correlated with the differences in social weight to which the author refers, and this relationship would be “a means of ensuring that the picture’s story will be understandable at a glance” (Goffman, 1979, p. 28). The men, therefore, would predominantly be represented in an greater way in relation to women, in an effort to demonstrate female subordination to the social importance of male gender.

Considering the hypothesis of a contrary argument, especially because men are biologically more prone to greater heights, Goffman compares the representation of genders in different contexts from those commonly established, in which men and women pose as a couple or as work partners. According to the author, when women are put on the scene alongside smaller men, these men represent lower classes and, especially, are at the service of the women. This issue of economic capital, therefore, would play an important role in the characterization of interactive behaviors, both in social life and in the symbolic context of advertising (see figure 1).



FIGURE 1 - Contemporary advertising images taken from the digital environment aligned with the Goffmanian hypothesis: relative size as power representation. SOURCE - Posts on the Facebook pages of Guarana Antarctica (2015) and Campari (2013). Campari logo was inserted to facilitate understanding of the origin of the piece.

Feminine Touch

The second category proposed by the author refers to the symbolism of the feminine touch as something delicate, moving and gentle. Women, more than men, are represented using fingers and hands to outline the contours of an object or even to caress its surface. In addition, they can also represent self-touch, transmitting the idea of the female body as something delicate and precious. In this way, the subtle touch of the female hand would be a ritual to be distinguished from the more utilitarian one that grabs, holds and manipulates something. In fact, as nothing can actually be held with this touch, the face is often also used as a representative form of this “feminine touch” (see figure 2).

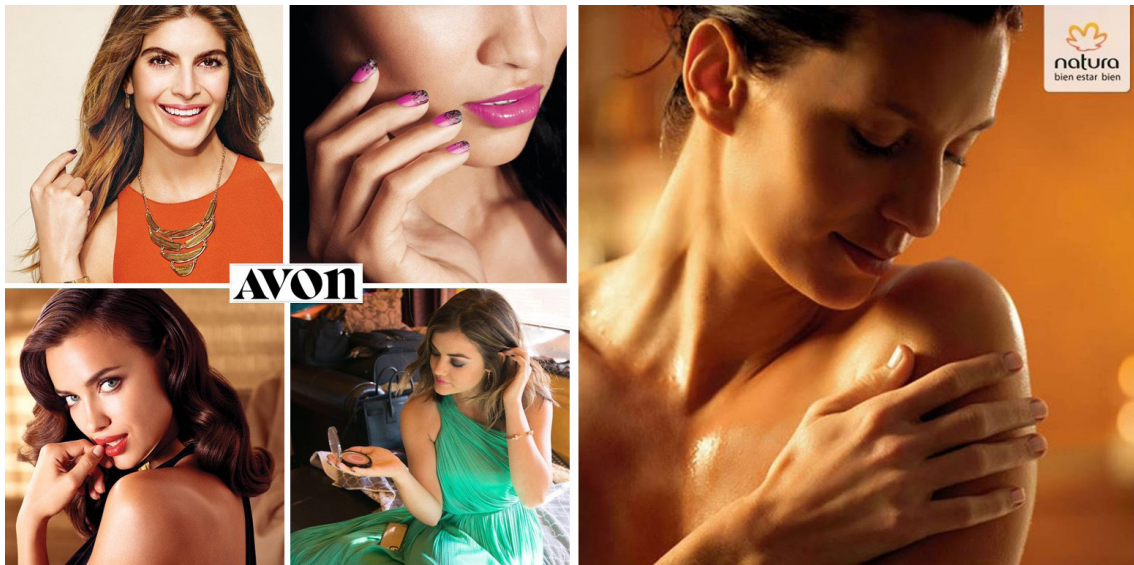


FIGURE 2 - The feminine touch: contour and delicacy through the touch of the feminine hands and face. SOURCE - Posts on the Facebook pages of Avon (2015) and Natura (2015). Avon logo inserted to facilitate understanding of the origin of the pieces.

Function Ranking

The third category of Goffman's analysis of advertising highlights that functional representations of men and women generally place men in a superior position; acting as the one who teaches a particular task. This hierarchy of functions is usually framed in specific occupational contexts, such as the executive, hospital or sports environment. The author also points out that, even in the case of advertisements of products for domestic work, whose competence is always attributed to the woman, the staging commonly employs someone male as the one who teaches about the effectiveness of the product (see figure 3).

This idea of hierarchy is also represented between adults and children, showing that generally body behavior should insert a certain childish ignorance in relation to adults in the development of activities. According to Goffman, this is a way, even, to demonstrate grace and charm in the representation of children. However, the infantilized characterization transcends the childish context and reaches other spheres, since the very notion of learning already becomes disassociated from the adult context, and infers a certain physical contact between the one who teaches and the one who learns: "These expressive features of the learning situation are reinforced by the linking of learning to age-grade subordination" (Goffman, 1979, p. 34). In this sense, as the instruction involves a certain level of subordination and deference of the apprentice in relation to the instructor, "men seem to be pictured instructing women this way more than the reverse" (Goffman, 1979, p. 34).

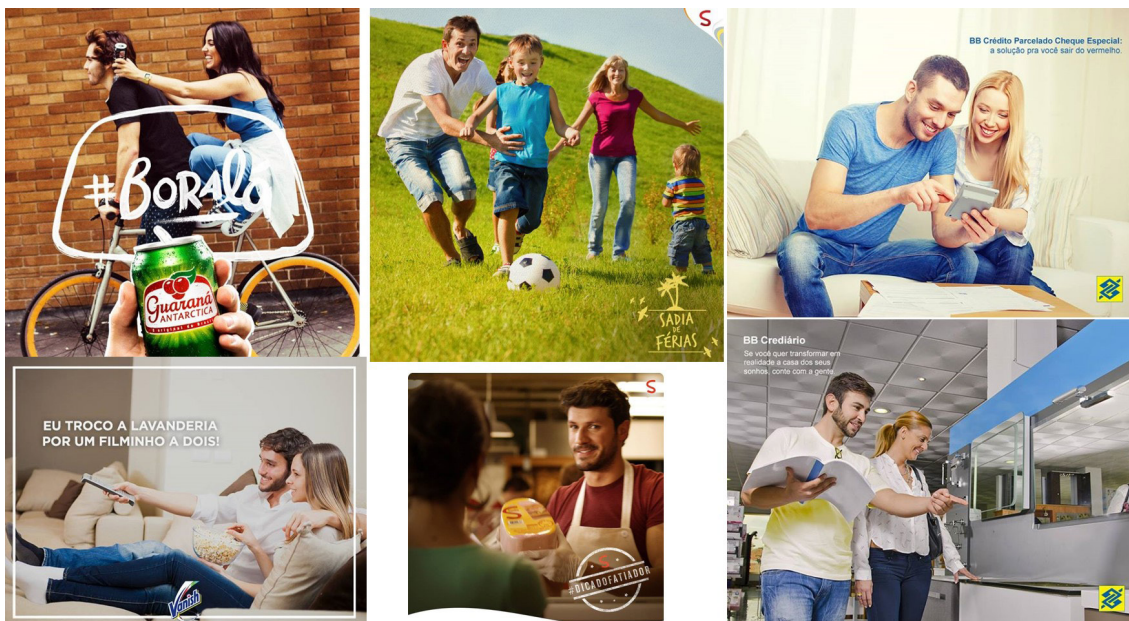


FIGURE 3 - Representative rituals of function also in cyber-advertising: Women are generally associated with the “apprentice” and men with the “teacher”. SOURCE: - Posts on the Facebook pages of Guaraná Antarctica (2015), Sadia (2016), Vanish (2015) and Banco do Brasil (2015).

Moreover, when men are inserted into contexts traditionally associated with female authority and competence, such as the kitchen, nursery and house cleaning moment, they are generally not involved in any real role, “in this way avoiding either subordination or contamination with a ‘female task’” (Goffman, 1979, p. 36). However, if they are represented as involved in some domestic task, they will always be under the analysis of “whom they would know how to do correctly”. The woman, therefore, is placed with an attentive look and a smile on her face, attesting that this activity should not be taken seriously (see figure 4). Correspondingly, when women are involved in some typically male task, the man seems to paternalize the activity, supervising it in an evaluating, condescending and concerned manner.



FIGURE 4 - When men and women “invade” each other’s place. The look of approval and the paternalisation of help. SOURCE: - Posts on the Facebook pages of Ariel (2015), Ypê (2015), Seara (2016), Sadia (2016), Suviniil (2015) and Coral (2014).

The Family

According to Goffman, the family nucleus is one of the bases of social organization most easily found in advertisements. Generally, in the context of the analysis undertaken in the book, the family is represented by at least one female and one male child, symbolizing the whole in its completeness (see figure 5). In addition, symbolic resources are employed to exhibit a certain special bond between the girl and the mother and the boy and the father; however, more frequently, there is a tendency for the mother to approach the daughter rather than the father to approach the son: “Boys, as it were, have to push their way into manhood” (Goffman, 1979, p. 38). More than that, the paternal male figure (or in his absence, the child himself) is often represented outside the physical circle of other family members, “as if to express a relationship whose protectiveness is linked with, perhaps even requires, distance” (Goffman, 1979, p. 39).



FIGURE 5 - Family representations in cyber-advertising. Continuity in the approximation of mother and daughter and father and son; in the representation of the ideal family. SOURCE: Posts on the Facebook pages of Bradesco (2014), Bombril (2016), Vanish (2014) and Seara (2016).

The Ritualization of Subordination

To bend down, according to Goffman, is one of the most classic and stereotypical ways of showing deference in social situations. On the contrary, standing upright with the head up is also the simplest way to stage pride, superiority and disdain. According to the author, the advertisements use these rituals quite often, using even some objects that reinforce these ideas of subordination and power, such as the bed and floor - which would represent places that put the individual below his interactor and, therefore, are associated with something less clean or pure (see figure 6). In addition, the attitude of lying down is also a conventional expression of being sexually available. That is: “The point here is that it appears that children and

women are pictured on floors and beds more than are men” (Goffman, 1979, p. 41).

On the other hand, therefore, being in a somewhat elevated place, physically, also symbolizes being socially elevated. In this sense, men tend to be represented more often in places above women, and this ritualization may also reveal paternalism and courtesy, which would be a male obligation in the society in question on the book (since men would be forced to give up their seats to women, for example). In addition, it is common for women to be represented with bent knees and inclined bodies and heads, which is not so routinely the case with men (see figure 6).

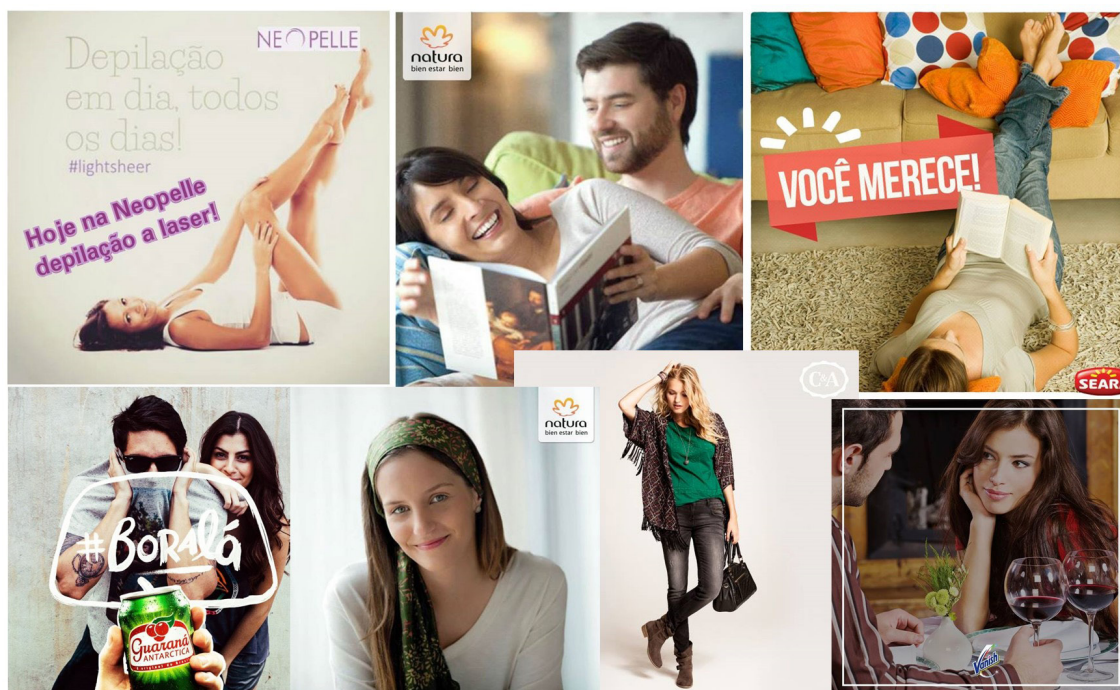


FIGURE 6 - Rituals of subordination: women below or behind men, lying on the floor, with heads and bodies inclined. SOURCE: - Posts on the Facebook pages of Neopelle (2015), Natura (2015), Seara (2014), Guaraná Antarctica (2015), C&A (2015) and Vanish (2014).

More than that, there are still other ways of representing rituals of subordination, according to Goffman. The smile, for example, is one of these ways, since it supposes cordiality and openness. Women in Western society, according to the author, can smile more and more expansively than men, and this social configuration is well absorbed by advertisements. Moreover, the lack of seriousness associated with the childish appearance (when the whole body is used as a form of play) is also an attribute directly related to women (see figure 7). Men, in advertising, are generally represented formally or with a certain informality, but not with such lightness, more so with a constant sobriety. Advertising thus “locates women as less seriously present in social situations than men” (Goffman, 1979, p. 51).

In addition to smiling, other small gestures may reveal rituals of subordination and domination between genders. According to the author, there are four fundamental behavioral arrangements that can expose, in a primary way, that there are two people involved between themselves, forming a social unit. Between them, sitting or being close to each other is already a way to demonstrate involvement, even symmetrically, without showing any social hierarchy. The second way is what the author calls ‘arm lock’, one of the main signs of involvement between a man and a woman. In this case, he reveals that women are under the protection of men (when he holds their arms). There is also a third arrangement, the “shoulder hold”. This implies an asymmetrical relationship in which the larger person shows that he

has one under his shoulders. Finally, hand in hand, which are configured as a symmetrical arrangement of association that generally symbolizes sexual potential (see figure 7).

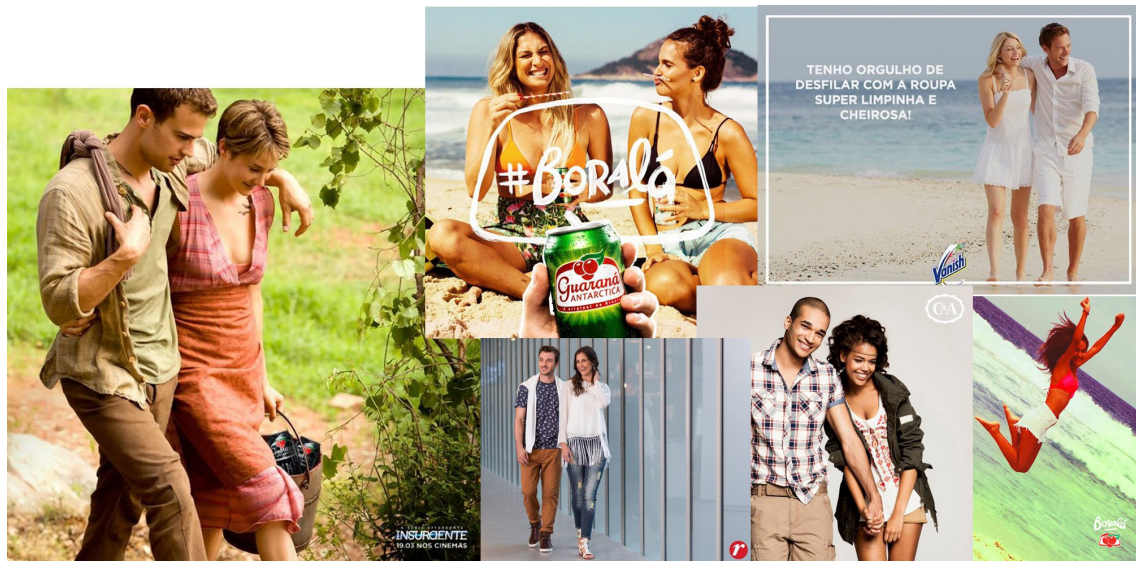


FIGURE 7 - Rituals of subordination: female smiles, body play, arms given, shoulder hold and hands held. SOURCE: - Posts on the Facebook pages of Guaraná Antarctica (2015), Vanish (2014), Renner (2015) and C&A (2015).

Licensed Withdrawal

According to Goffman's analysis, women, more than men, are represented in movements that psychologically remove them from the social situation, leaving them disoriented and possibly dependent on the protection or goodwill of others who are or could be present. In these cases, the emotional response is the loss of control over facial expression, leading mainly to coverage of the mouth by the hands. These emotions can be exemplified by fear, shame, remorse, uncontrolled laughter, etc. In addition, slightly biting the fingertips or touching one finger lightly against the other can also be a ritualistic demonstration of anxiety, worry, and detachment from the situation, as well as averting one's gaze, or appearing mentally distant from the scene (see figure 8). All these attitudes are more routinely associated with the female gender.



FIGURE 8 - Female detachment and signs of emotional dependence: hand on face, fingers together and distant look. SOURCE: Posts on the Facebook pages of Avon (2015) and Vanish (2014).

Although it has been exhaustively replicated by several researchers and their distinct contexts (Kang, 1997; Lawton, 2009; Lindner, 2004; McLaughlin & Goulet, 1999; Wei, 2010), Gender Advertisements also suffered criticism, mainly due to the methodological choice for Goffman's analysis. His openly exploratory sample could make biased conclusions on the advertising context of the time, representing only a small part of the images that would be interesting to prove his hypotheses. That is, "if you collect enough samples you acquire the evidence to illustrate just about any point you might care to make" (Gitlin, 1981, p. 156). In this sense, while contributing interesting interpretations of gender representations, Goffman would end up offering "a highly partial and even superficial account of how actual advertisements work as representations, both in general and in particular" (Kuhn, 1980, p. 316).

Yet, for other authors, Goffman's study demonstrates more the author's creative and idealizing capacity than in fact a general paradigm for the analysis of advertising. Thus, its contribution would be, most likely, a model built to be replicated (Mcgregor, 1995), since it lacks studies asserting its validation (Pollay, 1978). This validation, therefore, should, above all, give account of the dated character of the analysis of Gender Advertisements, since the author does not bring any problematization regarding the photographs studied and their temporal conjunctures: "obviously, pictorial conventions, advertising conventions, or sexual conventions have changed in this century, but photographs from the 1930s are used with photographs from the 1970s, without comment on any differences" (Cheatwood, 1979, p. 385).

In addition, the gap in contextualization encompasses other spheres, especially those that comprise the subjects involved in the production and consumption of advertising images. In the context of reception, the author would assume as a presupposition the legitimization of gender representations and stereotypes adopted, neglecting the existence of other subjects that could offer resistance and counterpoints (Hunt, 1980). At the peak of production, Goffman would fail to discuss important aspects of the functioning of photographic production in advertising, omitting the influence of the discursive network that involves its constructions of meaning (Cheatwood, 1979, p. 385).

Goffman admits that he uses the photographic images of advertising as tools for his discoveries and interpretations, and not as evidence. Furthermore, the author recognizes the idiosyncratic nature of his observations, but considers it an inevitable result of content analysis, which is based on the analyst's point of view (Pollay, 1978). However, it can be said that what he describes as gender representations

in advertising causes important cultural assumptions emerge, generating diverse scientific efforts for their validation. Since it was published, the book has served as a basis for discussions about gender in advertising and its various manifestations and effects of meaning.

Mee-Eun Kang's 1997 study, "The Portrayal of Women's Images in Magazine Advertisements: Goffman's Gender Analysis Revisited", is one of the most important updates to Goffmanian analysis in other contexts. The research aimed to comparatively discuss the behavioral patterns associated with gender in advertising in 1979 (analyzed by Goffman) and 1991. Using a random sample, Kang's analysis tries to get rid of methodological criticism of Goffman's deliberative choice, trying to present a scope that could, in fact, create a generalization on visual images of advertising, and not just prove an assumption.

The results of Kang's analysis revealed that little change occurred between the gender representations in advertising in 1979 and 1991. While some categories gained little relevance in the ads studied, such as Relative Size and Function Ranking, others remained prominent or even more evident. According to her perspective, the process of transformation in advertising images is slow, especially with regard to the change in degrading representations of female gender roles. The cultural changes transferred to advertising would therefore be manifested at the superficial level, while the underlying ideological basis would remain untouched.

Katharina Lindner (2004) also used Gender Advertisements as the basis for her study: "Images of Women in General Interest Fashion Magazine Advertisements from 1955 to 2002". The focus of her research is the contrast between the representation of women in a general interest magazine, *Time*, and a women's fashion magazine, *Vogue*, trying to see if the media context would influence the content of images. According to its results, advertising in *Vogue* represented the female gender in a more stereotypical way than the ads published in *Time*, particularly in relation to the Relative Size, Function Ranking and Movement categories. The latter was created by the author to demonstrate the association between freedom of expression and power.

Other studies sought to apply Goffman's categories within differentiated geographic and cultural contexts, in an attempt to see if gender representations transcended the Western American conjuncture. Hovland et al. (2005), for example, sought a comparative analysis between images of women and men in American and Korean advertisements. According to the authors, by proposing a non-verbal study of advertising, Goffman allowed a universalization of its assumptions, avoiding possible problems of linguistic interpretation. In its results, the lack of prominent differences between the representations in the two contexts stands out, which, according to the authors, may characterize a supposed westernization of Korean gender stereotypes (Hovland et al., 2005, p. 896-897).

In the Chinese context, Wei (2010) was able to identify interesting contrasts in the patterns of gender behavior advertised through fashion magazine ads. According to the study, in China, the representation of western women does not correspond at all with Goffman's results in Gender Advertisements. As the ideal image of the Chinese woman is passive, quiet and chaste, the western woman is represented in the opposite way: active, powerful and self-confident. Instead of bending her knees, as in the advertisements analyzed by Goffman, the Western woman in Chinese advertising is predominantly with her legs upright, her head held high and her gaze straight to the camera. In addition, they do not put their hand in their mouths while laughing, even if this behavior is considered to be lack of politeness among Chinese women (Wei, 2010). Undoubtedly, the cultural difference plays a key role in the images of women within this framework.

Other studies have tried to go even further in analyzing the representations of men and women in advertising, such as those that sought to perceive the relationship between gender and race (Baker, 2005; Wright et al., 2007; McLaughlin & Goulet, 1999). Wright et al. (2007), for example, compared the images attributed to genders in magazine contexts for the general public and those intended for specialized audiences, directed to minority groups. According to their results, the advertisements published in

mainstream journals were based more commonly on gender stereotypes than those directed to minorities. McLaughlin & Goulet (1999) also achieved interesting results when they compared advertisements in magazines aimed at the black public with those aimed at the caucasian public. According to the authors, other stereotypes seem to play an important role when crossing gender and race. For example, female ideals of affability and delicacy, which Goffman generalizes, are not related to black women, who are represented as antagonists, aggressive and strong (McLaughlin & Goulet, 1999, p. 63-64).

In the context of the digital environment, some authors have sought to perceive the influences and effects of gender representation in advertising from different starting points. Tortajada, Araúna and Martínez (2013), for example, sought to demonstrate how adolescents engage in what Goffman calls hyper-ritualization: what resources they use to present themselves; what similarities these representations have with those conveyed by advertising; as well as how the gender identities of these adolescents are shaped through interactions in the environments of social networking sites. Knupfer (1998) sought to identify gender stereotypes in advertising banners on the web, reaching the conclusion that the patterns attributed to print advertising were, in fact, transferred to the context of digital ads. The author notes that men are represented in these banners in dominant positions, being in control of situations, while women are placed as submissive, emotional and helpful, and the same representation is apparent in magazines.

Gender representation can transcend even the images of women and men and also characterize the products. As Guthrie (2007) noticed, in “Bottles are men, glasses are women: religion, gender, and secular objects”, it is common to represent objects with human characteristics in the whole media context, including advertising. However, when there is this transference, generally the representation of objects also obeys behavior regimes based on gender stereotypes. That is: “Male objects typically are public, official, and independent, while female objects are domestic, familiar, and dependent” (Guthrie, 2007, p. 18). Using Goffman’s assumptions to support his point of view, therefore, the author argues that it is possible to perceive ritualistic nuances of gender, in a stereotypical way, in the characterization of objects in advertising, as he concludes:

The same portrayal may be accomplished by nonhuman actors. Coffee, for example, generally conceived as strong and masculine (e.g., Taster’s Choice is marketed in a jar modeled on a male torso), may be made by a rectilinear machine identified as ‘Mr. Coffee’ In contrast, tea, conceived as weaker and feminine, sometimes has been made by a curvilinear machine identified as ‘Mrs. Tea’ (Guthrie, 2007, p. 21).

In Brazil, some studies have also undertaken analyses based on Goffman’s work on gender and advertising. Corrêa (2012), for example, investigates two television advertisements to understand how the discourses on motherhood concretize and update the roles, emotions and places intended for fathers and mothers in contemporary times. Santos (2013) problematizes the construction of the feminine gender by drag queens, postulating that the predominant codifications in the advertising media are stylized and repeated, in the same way as the performatic acts by drag queens, signaling the perception of a ritualized language standardized in relation to gender.

In turn, Rocha (2001) also dedicates an article to the construction of female identity in advertising. According to the author, the female identity is always classified in a counterpart relationship with the man. The place in the classification system and the position in the hierarchy will indicate a space to be covered with values that, together with other meanings, help to build the identity model for women in advertising. And this classification does not place women, in all their moments of life, in a single place in the classification system. In other words, “first, as Goffman showed, in front of the male world, but (...) the classification is also given in front of the various types of women. The woman’s identity will also differ from the notion of a girl or girl” (Rocha, 2001, p. 28).

Concluding remarks

Although the methodological scope of Gender Advertisements has been widely applied and discussed in advertising communication over the years, its analytical proposal cannot be neglected. In studying the representational dynamics in advertising, the author offers important questions about the rituals of behavior both in the commercial context of advertisements and in the midst of those daily and everyday interactions. In this sense, the nuances of the gender attitude are especially worthy of further exploration because they serve as raw material for the construction of the brand self (Carrera, 2018), whose formatting should face fundamental legitimizing principles for the audiences with whom they interact in the digital environment.

In what way, therefore, does the brand insert verbal and non-verbal elements to the discursive production of itself in social network sites that offer clues of gender characterization? Is it important for the brand to delimit these characters or is it not necessary to do so? These questions reveal yet another interesting problem for the understanding of their strategies: the relevance or not of their authenticity in these cases. If there is an understanding that the validation of the public is important for gender representations in advertising, since they take the rituals of social life as a resource, it can be said that the perception of authenticity is something significant even because it transmits “the illusion of the reality of ordinary life in reference to a consumption situation” (Stern, 1994, p.388). In fact, it can represent more than an important role; it can be fundamental:

authenticity assessments seem to be primary filters for any brand or product information conveyed in the advertisement. That is, one might speculate that it is unlikely brand benefits would be evaluated if the advertisement did not first pass the authenticity test (Chalmers, 2008, p. 442).

If, therefore, the question of authenticity is relevant to print advertising, how is this phenomenon transferred to the interactions of brands on social networking sites? Since they engage in conversations with the intention of simulating individual-individual contact, is it possible that authenticity reaches greater importance? In addition, what are the characters undertaken in the construction of their persona in these environments, and that are triggered at the time of interaction, which help to produce this perception of gender authenticity?

In this sense, this work sought to present the first steps for the construction of a deeper investigative path, aware of its exploratory character and the problematizations identified by the scientific community regarding this type of approach. Thus, the objective here was the insertion of initial discussions about gender hyper-ritualizations in cyber-advertising, aiming at the construction of a theoretical-methodological scope that encompasses significant and representative samples of cyper-advertising images that accurately reveal the dynamics of gender representation in contemporary media.

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