

Sexualidade feminina em revista(s)

Female sexuality in magazines

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ABSTRACT

This paper results from an investigation on the discourse of female sexuality carried by women's magazines in the years 2005 and 2006. 'Claudia' and 'Mulher dia-a-dia' were the documents analyzed through a qualitative investigative approach. The data construction was undertaken through critical discourse analysis, and female sexuality was approached from a constructivist perspective. The main results showed that the discursive conventions present in the reports gave shape to dual positions on contemporary Western sexual dynamics, such as: adoption of symmetrical sexual practices versus continuation of asymmetrical sexual practices; female sexual autonomy versus female sexual dependency; activeness versus passiveness; female pleasure versus male pleasure. Thus, we argue that sexuality remains doubly informed by hegemonic standards in force within society.

Key words: Female sexuality. Media. Discourse. Periodicals.

RESUMO

Este artigo é resultado da investigação dos discursos da sexualidade feminina veiculados por revistas para mulheres no período de 2005 e 2006. 'Claudia' e 'Mulher dia-a-dia', foram os documentos analisados em uma abordagem qualitativa de pesquisa. A construção dos dados ocorreu por meio da análise crítica de discurso, sendo a sexualidade feminina abordada com base em uma leitura construtivista. Os principais resultados evidenciaram que as convenções discursivas presentes nas reportagens materializaram posições duais sobre a dinâmica sexual contemporânea e ocidental, como: adoção de práticas sexuais simétricas versus vigência de práticas sexuais assimétricas; autonomia sexual feminina versus dependência sexual feminina; atividade versus passividade; prazer feminino versus prazer masculino. Afirmamos, com isso, que a sexualidade permanece duplamente informada por padrões hegemônicos vigentes na sociedade.

Palavras-chave: Sexualidade feminina. Mídia. Discursos. Publicações periódicas.

RESUMEN

Este artículo es resultado de la investigación de los discursos de la sexualidad femenina difundidos por revistas para mujeres en el periodo de 2005 y 2006. "Claudia" y "Mujer día-a-día" han sido los documentos analizados en una aproximación cualitativa de pesquisa. La construcción de los datos se ha efectuado por medio del análisis crítico del discurso, encarándose la sexualidad femenina a partir de una lectura constructivista. Los principales resultados han puesto en evidencia que las convenciones discursivas presentes en los reportajes materializan posiciones duales sobre la dinámica sexual contemporánea y occidental como: adopción de prácticas sexuales simétricas en comparación con vigencia de prácticas asimétricas; autonomía sexual femenina en comparación con dependencia sexual femenina; actividad en comparación con pasividad; placer femenino en comparación con placer masculino. Afirmamos, con esto, que la sexualidad permanece doblemente informada por padrones hegemónicos vigentes en la sociedad.

Palabras clave: Sexualidad femenina. Medios de comunicación. Discursos. Publicaciones periódicas.

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALIZATION

This paper aims to investigate how magazines targeted at women convey female sexuality. It presents data from a research study completed in 2007, in which the analyzed documents were extracted from the magazines 'Claudia' and 'Mulher dia-a-dia', published in 2005 and 2006. Both magazines had a wide circulation at the moment of the investigation and convey contents of women's interest. The report released by the company Unilever (Etcoff et al., 2004) considers, in a global understanding, that "women's interest" encompass magazine reports on beauty, wellbeing and the relation between these elements, strengthening the discourse of those who attribute to the means of communication the power to affect people's individuality. By approaching the female perspectives highlighted by the media, the research that originated this paper revealed that beauty and physical appearance are the most relevant aspects, considered as imperative by women and rewarded by the society's sanction.

In this paper, we perform an exercise of discourse analysis with the two above-mentioned magazines, showing that communication acts in a preponderant way in contemporary society, with repercussions on social life and, above all, on subjectivity (Thompson, 1998). This unquestionable power is related, among other factors, to the technical means of communication, responsible for the configuration of values and symbols to the public that uses their services. They feed the advertising market, define images, dictate standards and sell products, composing a mosaic that ends up integrating the way we perceive ourselves and the way we are in the world.

Studies (Fujisawa, 2006; Caldas Coulthard, 2005; Mira, 2003; Monteiro, 2000; Medrado, 1997) about specific technical means of communication, like television and magazines, also demonstrate how paradoxical the messages released to the society by these vehicles are. They simultaneously disseminate emblematic discourses of new times and others that reify established conceptions and beliefs, as well as educational and eroticized discourses, satisfying the sociocultural transformations of society and also strengthening stereotypes that guarantee conservatism.

If, on the one hand, their importance in people's daily life is a fact, on the other hand, the means of communication take advantage of this daily life and extract from it the necessary matter to create an identification with the readers – they generate demand and remain in a universe of competition. Thus, they reconstruct the daily dynamics in their own way, making it become, almost always, a great spectacle.

According to Melo (2000), in the 1990s, there was in Brazil an editorial change promoted by the mainstream media. Newspapers and magazines of national circulation enlarged the spaces destined to themes like behavior, sexuality, health and reproductive health, and invited the participation of male and female readers. Nowadays, they are called to position themselves about public policies

and services, and even about the creation of sections focusing on consumer rights. Such changes derive from a conjunction of factors which, according to the author, are: market's interests, editorial evolution, a more critical behavior on the part of society, and the opening of themes from the social and political agenda to organized segments of the society.

In the case of the female magazines, the inflow of the World Conference on Women (WCW), held in Beijing, in 1995, was expressed as a historical event that is added to the above-mentioned changes and corroborates them. The Platform for Action of WCW1, of which Brazil is signatory, presents, in Chapter J, elements for the debate about the relation between women and the means of communication. This chapter presents some objectives: (a) expansion of women's access to these media and their participation in the media's expression of ideas and decision-making process; (b) access to the new communication technologies; (c) promotion of a balanced female image, not stereotyped, in these media.

In the scope of the Platform for Action of WCW, the area "women and the means of communication" is considered strategic to the strengthening of women, although it has registered the lowest number of initiatives and political advances (Melo, 2000). Chapter J reaffirms the need to carry out studies about the theme, and argues that they must be accompanied by research and inspection², so that, with a set of information and new knowledge, public and private agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGO) can be subsidized in their interventions related to women's development.

This paper presents the following sequence of themes: conceptual aspects about gender and female sexuality; methodological issues, which clarify the path that was taken; discussion of the results and conclusions.

Conceptual aspects about gender and sexuality

Sexuality is discussed here based on its process of denaturalization and reconstruction, in the way it is approached by some authors, such as Bozon (2004), Foucault (1999) and Giddens (1993), who do not limit it to sexual behaviors or practices. These scholars expand the analysis of the cultural aspects, of the political and social dimensions that involve sexuality, separating it from the biological reproduction of the species. Thus, they distance themselves from the paradigm of the biomedical sciences. To Bozon (2004, p.15), the non-naturalist view "underlines, at the same time, the flexibility, expressiveness and mobility of the sexual sphere in contemporary times and its inevitable dependence on the social process that constructs it"³.

Two positions delimit the debate about sexuality: essentialism and social constructivism. The essentialist theory attributes to sexuality innate or natural aspects and considers it immutable, framing it in the biological order. In this reading, the primacy of conducts, acts and social relationships determined by the sexual dimension persists, which means signaling that men and women have different attributes due to their anatomical-physiological characteristics. This logic links sexuality to the body and reduces it to biological functions, naturalizing it and suggesting that all subjects share it as a universal condition.

Unlike essentialism, in which the medical-scientific and psychoanalytical rationality predominates, social constructivism congregates approaches that question the universality of sexual instincts. In this case, the orientation, the meanings and the notion of sexual experience or behavior cannot be generalized. Such aspects would be sustained by a set of meanings articulated to other references, like: kinship and gender systems, age classifications, social origin, religious beliefs, among others.

¹ Information obtained from the website The United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. FWCW. **Platform for Action Women and Health.** Available from: <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/health.htm>>. Accessed on: Sep 12, 2004.

² The Brazilian Advertising Self-Regulation Code (5/22/1980), a self-discipline instrument for the commercial advertising activity, in Section 1 – Preamble, article 7, recognizes that advertising exercises a strong cultural influence on large masses of the population. Due to this, it regulates the monitoring and inspection of the advertising activity. Information obtained from the website of *Conselho Nacional de Autorregulamentação Publicitária* (CONAR – National Council for the Self-Regulation of Advertising), available from: <<http://www.conar.org.br>>.

³ All the quotations in this paper were translated into English for the purposes of this paper.

The constructivist approach takes the understanding of sexuality to the dimension of culture. This suggests the production of specific explanations about the theme, associated or not with reproduction. Such reading also enables to treat sexuality as a subjective and collective construction that happens according to the specificities of a historical period and of a determined environment (Heilborn, 1996).

Besides the two perspectives identified above, the current debate about sexuality in the Human and Social Sciences enables to draw four statements. First, sexuality is researched and analyzed as a system articulated to other subsystems, constituting a field of knowledge under construction and a field of investigation which has some legitimacy. Second, there is a kind of competition concerning the definition of sexuality. Third, theoretical positions related to the theme enable to identify that the link between sexuality and reproduction is as socially constructed as the reading in which sexuality is totally isolated from the reproductive process. And fourth, female sexuality is a development of the different approaches; it is not a loose and separate discussion.

In this paper, we define female sexuality considering the relation between gender and social identity subsystems, according to a constructivist reading. These parameters were adopted because they refer to subject construction, ordering a determined way of looking at how women live and demonstrate their sexuality.

According to Butler (2003), the gender category is not fixed and immutable, but temporary and performative, allowing, with this, the denaturalization of the signification practices involved in the apprehension of what is female and male. This situates heterosexuality and phallogentrism in the scope of power regimes and discursive fields. In this way, gender is delimited as a category of organization of social relations whose central element is the idea of hierarchy. Paradoxically, the gender category consecrates the critical discussion about the naturalized idea of the conceptions of man and woman. These are neither fixed nor connected with the notion of sex. In other words, the gender category points to the non-continuity between physical sex and social sex, and it has been used by diverse fields of knowledge (Heilborn, 1996).

By differentiating the biological dimension from the social one, the gender category shows that the attributes that constitute female sexuality have been historically constructed in an asymmetrical way and in opposition to the male ones. However, the gender discussions allow stating that it is not sexual difference that institutes hierarchical relations in an asymmetrical way between men and women, but the manner in which each society values and signifies such biological differences. From this derive representations about what is expected from the female and from the male, from their behaviors and attitudes, even sexual ones.

Materials and methods: learning about the path

We used the qualitative approach in the research that originated this text (Minayo, 2007). We constructed the data by means of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This methodological modality aims at apprehending the subtle perception, at valuing what was said and what was left unsaid, what is between the lines and the detail that are present in the discursive practice. Its attention is not centered on proving that some questions are true or false, because the purpose of the analysis is not to explain facts. Its logic is to expose the perspectives and processes through which the facts can be viewed, as the discourses design a field of effects of meanings, and not only one specific effect.

The research material is composed of 12 issues of the magazine 'Claudia' (Editora Abril, R\$ 8.60) and 12 issues of the magazine 'Mulher dia-a-dia' (Editora Alto Astral, R\$ 4.90), both published on a monthly basis in the years 2005 and 2006. The analysis includes the headlines in the cover of the magazines and reports published in 'Claudia' and 'Mulher dia-a-dia'. We consider that the covers are indicators for the selection of reports, as they act as large signs that disseminate the content and the form that the reader will find in the body of the text. According to Caldas Coulthard (2005), headlines are syntheses of the approached subjects; in addition, they are persuasive and self-promotional. The selected material is justified by the argumentation of Orlandi (2001, 1999), who assures that Discourse Analysis does not aim at completeness, that is, at horizontal analysis, nor at completeness in relation to the empirical object, because it is inexhaustible. The expected

completeness is the vertical one, as it enables in-depth analysis and relevant theoretical consequences, due to the fact that it does not treat data as mere illustrations.

The choice of 'Claudia' occurred in view of its long permanence in the market and because it was the pioneer in the sphere of women's press when it inaugurated, in 1961, the date of its creation, a new style of publishing fashion, beauty, cooking and decoration (Buitoni, 1986). 'Claudia' brought a specialized editorial and proposed practical matters related to daily life, full of representations about women. Its circulation is of 471,700 copies and its net circulation is of 374,210 copies. Its public is composed of women (86%) of upper middle class (44%), belonging to the age group 18-39 years (52%)⁴. It focuses on the adult, contemporary woman who likes to take care of herself and to feel beautiful and loved.

Unlike 'Claudia', the magazine 'Mulher dia-a-dia', when the research was carried out, was in its first year of circulation (it was launched in March 2005). We will talk about it in the past tense, because at the end of 2006 it had already been withdrawn from the market. The circulation was of 44,340 copies and the net circulation, 13,326 copies. Its public was composed of women (79%) from lower middle class (42%), belonging to the age groups 20-29 years (22%) and 50 years and older (19%)⁵. It focused on diverse themes of women's interest, like fashion, beauty, health, behavior, family, wellbeing, profession, among others, acting like a guide to the female universe. As it was a new publication in the market, 'Mulher dia-a-dia' made a counterpoint to 'Claudia' in many aspects, like, for example, it could not be subscribed and could be found, at the time, only at newsstands. These attributes valued even more the importance of its cover. 'Mulher dia-a-dia' also cost less and its price was more accessible than 'Claudia's'.

First, we performed the textual analysis of the headlines and reports, describing them (microanalysis). To do so, we focused on the vocabulary, pronouns, verbs and adjectives that were employed. Based on the analysis of these linguistic elements, observed as a whole in the texts selected from each issue, and also in their interaction with the others, it was possible to identify the relationship established between magazine and reader, as well as the places and subjects destined to women and to female sexuality, in order to apprehend the meanings of the discursive practice in light of the social practice (macronalysis).

Results

Considering the level of detail of the textual analysis, we decided to present the analysis of some texts and the discursive formation of the magazines without, however, exhausting the process of data construction. 'Claudia' and 'Mulher dia-a-dia' institute a pattern of discursivity that marks the form in which female sexuality is disseminated. It is by its identification that we start data discussion.

On the scene: 'Claudia' and 'Mulher dia-a-dia'

The discursive practices of 'Claudia' and 'Mulher dia-a-dia' are not homogenous, as the magazines present different trends. The type of discourse that most outstands in both magazines indicates the social space designated to the magazines and readers, as well as the pertinent social values, that is, the social place of text production. Therefore, the magazines build differentiated relationships with the readers, and it is by means of these relationships that the themes are conveyed.

'Claudia' establishes horizontal ways of interacting with its readers and uses a set of linguistic resources. One of them is direct interlocution, implicating the readers in the texts and inviting them to receive the information. The presence of the treatment pronoun "você" (you), of the personal pronoun "nós" (we) and of the possessive pronouns "seu", "sua", "nossa", "nosso" (yours, ours), both in the headlines and in the reports, are a recurrent and prevalent datum: - "*Que tal [você] começar uma coisa nova? Oportunidades se abrem quando [nós] conquistamos um território*

⁴ Information obtained from the website of Editora Abril, which publishes the magazine: <<http://publicidade.abril.com.br/homes.php?MARCA=13>>. Accessed on Apr 02, 2003.

⁵ Information obtained from the website of Editora Alto Astral: <<http://www.editoraaltoastral.com.br>> Accessed on Jun 03, 2006.

desconhecido” (How about you start something new? Opportunities open when we conquer an unknown territory) (May, 2005); “*Nossos filhos globalizados. As perspectivas que surgem aqui e lá fora. Os seus estão bem preparados?*” (Our children are globalized. The perspectives that emerge here and abroad. Are yours well prepared?) (August, 2005).

It is important to highlight that elements of equality and democracy are transmitted by the inclusive pronoun “*nós*” (we), which also symbolizes a discourse targeted at common people, as Fairclough (2001) argues. The pronoun “*nós*” (we) suggests, thus, that the magazine assumes a social position that is similar to that of the reader, sharing situations and constituting identification relations.

Another expression of this association of corresponding relations is the phrases structured in the form of questions: “*A aventura espiritual do sexo tântrico. Será que vai ser bom para vocês?*” (The spiritual adventure of tantric sex. Will it be good for you?) (May 2005). “*Por que o cabelo mexe tanto com as nossas emoções*” (Why our hair affects our emotions so much) (September 2005). The use of this construction indicates the fact that ‘Claudia’ considers that its readers have some information and recognizes that they have conditions to comment its questionings. It is important to mention that the relation of proximity instituted by the magazine with the reader is reaffirmed by the association of different resources – questions and pronouns – in the enunciations, since it delimits the partnership trend that is present in its discourses.

The magazine also uses interdiscourse to impregnate communication with a sense of exchange and to establish a relation of symmetry - “*Entrevista Eve Ensler, Dos monólogos da vagina ao desespero com a barriga, uma viagem pelo corpo da mulher*” (Interview with Eve Ensler, From the vagina monologues to belly despair, a trip through women’s body) (May 2005). To deal with subjects like the female body and esthetics, ‘Claudia’ resorts to the author of the play *The Vagina Monologues*, Eve Ensler. The magazine uses this set of formulations, which requires the reader’s previous knowledge of a theatre event, so that she understands the message that is subliminally placed.

In the same way, the issue of November 2005 presents: “*A mulher de 30 e o amor. O que está acontecendo com nossas Bridget Jones*”. (30-year-old women and love. What’s happening to our Bridget Jones). In this enunciation, the interdiscourse retrieves a British film of the genre romantic comedy (2001) to question and suggest that the Brazilian women who read ‘Claudia’ – hence the inclusive pronoun “*nossas*” (our) – remain without an affective relationship, differently from what happened to the film’s leading character. Furthermore, the interdiscourse points that the public of ‘Claudia’ has access to different means of communication and is informed about the social events of their reality. It also reveals a partnership between the communication subjects and shows the social distribution of power through language, as information and cultures can be recognized and shared.

Unlike ‘Claudia’, the discursive practice identified in ‘Mulher dia-a-dia’ indicated a hierarchic feature between the magazine and the reader. This was instituted, among other resources, by the imperative verb form. Verbs that denote orders - ‘*acabe*’, ‘*perca*’, ‘*conheça*’, ‘*entre*’, ‘*descubra*’, ‘*saiba*’, ‘*seduza*’, ‘*faça*’, ‘*fique*’ (end, lose, know, enter, discover, seduce, do, stay) – were part of the magazine’s texts. The magazine assumed the position of a protagonist that preordered the discourse universe of its public and put it as conducted people. Its image was of a spokesperson for the information that was not available to the readers and that was objectively imperative to them.

In this perspective, the imperative verb was associated either with advices - “*Lição de conquista! Aprenda com as estrelas da novela América*” (Conquest lessons! Learn with the stars of the América soap opera (September 2005), or with numbers - “*9 hidratantes tudo de bom. Escolha o seu e faça um carinho em seu corpo*” (9 amazing moisturizers. Choose yours and caress your body) (June 2005). It is important to highlight that advices and quantities were recurrent in the enunciations of ‘Mulher dia-a-dia’: “*12 dicas para dar um show de sedução!*” (12 tips to give a show of seduction!) (September 2005); “*10 lições para criar filhos felizes*” (10 lessons to raise happy children) (December 2005).

If “tips”, “lessons” or “guides” ensured to the magazine the image of expert in women’s demands, the numbers granted accuracy and reliability. In addition, these expressions recovered,

symbolically, the idea of functionality, self-applied actions and infallible way, provided that the readers followed the steps presented by the magazine. In this sense, the enunciation “*Pense como campeã e VENÇA na vida*” (Think as a winner and SUCCEED in life) prescribed indefectible and easy attitudes; besides, it ordered the reader to assume a propositional mental posture so that she could achieve success, suggesting that she had not achieved it yet.

In the same July issue (2005), the direct discourse of the actress Eliane Giardini - “*Eu não sou uma pessoa de ficar de braços cruzados, esperando as coisas acontecerem*” (I’m not a person who stays with my arms crossed, waiting for things to happen) – brought the metaphor “arms crossed”. This referred to her personality, which is determined and active. Moreover, her image appeared on the cover of the magazine and referred to the character Neuta, of the soap opera ‘América’, of great projection at the time, a symbol of strength, courage and entrepreneurship. These elements in the same textual surface strengthened the sense that the public of ‘Mulher dia-a-dia’ should develop its protagonism.

Such characteristics were present both in the magazine and in its models, and stimulated identification with the reader, as the direct discourse reproduced the original words of celebrities and delimited different voices – theirs and the magazine’s voice. Ultimately, it was the celebrities themselves revealing aspects of their daily life to the reader. The public figure’s discourse brought a private discourse, which favored the creation of bonds of proximity and was different from the magazine’s discursive trend.

Then, we have “*Novidade! Histórias de mulheres que alcançaram o sucesso!*”. (Breaking news! Stories of women who achieved success!). The noun “news” showed, again, that competence and success were recent attributes of the ‘female universe’; thus, they were reasons for desire and learning, even to the reader. Symbolically, she was associated with the image of the ‘women’ of ‘Mulher dia-a-dia’, to be stimulated and taught how to be capable. Despite the fact that the two last enunciations were about the same semantic field, there was in them an explicit counterpoint: the ‘magazine women’ already occupied the place of winner, while the reader still did not.

Although the discursive practices in ‘Claudia’ and in ‘Mulher dia-a-dia’ present specific trends, the similarities reside in the conveyed subjects. Therefore, we should observe that the same thematic domain can be presented distinctly, depending on the form it is framed in the text, on the relationship established with the reader and on the social class at which it is targeted.

Female sexuality in ‘Claudia’ and in ‘Mulher dia-a-dia’

The magazines delineate a “universe” that they consider as being female, which has already been extensively discussed by many female scholars in different decades (Caldas-Coulthard, 2005; Widholzer, 2005; Swain, 2001; Bassanezi, 1996; Sarti, Moraes, 1980; Friedan, 1971). The questioning regards the essentialist reading that is present in the notion of “female universe”, which naturalizes, reproduces and maintains the social hierarchy between men and women. In several moments of the analysis, explicitly or implicitly, the construction of the “female world” is carried out in opposition to the “male world”, and vice-versa. This opposition delimits distinct signs between men and women which are even antagonistic to both, recalling the binary gender construction (Heilborn, 1999). It is according to this set of elements that delimit the ‘female universe’ in the two magazines that we situate the discourses about female sexuality.

‘Claudia’ presents a structure to display the subjects that is repeated in the issues, with little variation. These are divided into large blocks, comprising five themes: sexuality, subjectivity (personal fulfillment and self-esteem), private sphere (children and finances), fashion and beauty (self-care). The magazine emphasizes: beauty, female image, body, love relationship between men and women, personal fulfillment, female condition, children and, with more emphasis, sexual taboos and sex.

In the headline “*Mais amor. Histórias improváveis com final feliz mostram a força da paixão*” (More love. Improbable stories with happy endings show the force of passion) (‘Claudia’, June 2005), the adverb of intensity “*mais*” (more) signals both the constancy of the subject in the magazine and the reader’s interest in the theme. Such meaning is, transversally, reaffirmed by the

enunciation of the issue of December 2005: “*Sim, existe amor após a separação. Nossa repórter pesquisa e comprova*”. (Yes, there is love after separation. Our reporter researches and proves it). By means of this, the magazine answers affirmatively the question of its public, suggesting that love relationships mobilize the production of the magazine and demand investigative actions about the theme on the part of the team.

Furthermore, ‘Claudia’ uses the symmetric discursive practice to submit this theme to discussion, a theme that is one of the female values viewed as the most active nucleus of mass culture. Love is the highlight in all the magazine’s issues and is associated with the practical values that are fundamental to that culture (Morin, 1997). Precisely due to this, and because they recover dimensions of the daily routine, the female values (affirmation of private identity, wellbeing, love and happiness) generate identifications and stimulate imitation, consumption and the conduct promoted by the vehicle of communication.

The so-called “*Operação resgate para recolocar VOCÊ em primeiro lugar*”. “*Não, não é egoísmo. É essencial!*” (Rescue operation to put YOU back in the first place. No, it’s not selfishness. It’s essential!) turns directly to the reader, by means of the treatment pronoun “*você*” (you), and alludes to the fact that she has many attributions. The metaphor “rescue operation” signals that it is important that the reader of ‘Claudia’ is recovered and released from the situation in which she is. This meaning is stressed by the red arrow that precedes “*Você*” (you) and indicates, figuratively, to where the attention must be directed. Therefore, it reproduces an interlocution when it answers that the woman taking care of herself “is not selfishness”, because this care is targeted at the other: family, children, the house or the work, as the adjective “*primeiro*” (first) suggests.

Contradictorily, the discourse “*O lanche saudável para a escola*”. “*Nesse menu visual, seus filhos escolhem o jeito mais saboroso de escapar da onda de obesidade que assola o Brasil*” (The healthy snack for school. In this visual menu, your kids choose the tastier way of escaping from the wave of obesity that ravages Brazil) makes the woman’s attention go back to the other person which, in this case, is a reason for concern and for work. The magazine designates her as a mother, by means of the possessive pronoun “*seus*” (your), and mentions as one of her attributions: the care with what her children eat, the promotion of food habits, and her food choices. In a simplistic way, it reproduces the common sense according to which the woman is responsible for taking care of what the family or the children eat. Again, the woman occupies, in the magazine’s discourse, the position of subject, as she is even held responsible for the absence of actions targeted at herself or at the others.

“+ *bonita!*” (+ beautiful!) precedes enunciations that are listed and organized by markers: [1] “*Os segredos das experts: dermatologistas, professoras de ginástica e nutricionistas revelam como cuidam da pele, quais seus exercícios preferidos e o cardápio ideal*” (The secrets of the experts: dermatologists, gym teachers and nutritionists reveal how they take care of their skin, their favorite exercises and the ideal diet); [2] “*Massagens que modelam o corpo, diminuem a barriga, afinam a cintura, reduzem os pneus*” (Massages that model the body, reduce the belly, narrow the waist, reduce the buttock). The graphic sign “+” suggests that the reports will intensify the beauty that ‘Claudia’s readers already have.

In the first enunciation, the noun “experts” acts as a seal that guarantees the information: they are specialists who are discussing the matter; consequently, professionals presenting the most adequate way of taking care of esthetics and food habits, which attributes a status of veracity to the report. Corroborating this statement, the preposition “*das*” (of the) leads to the personal testimonies. This reveals particular aspects that are not revealed about the experts’ lives, and presents women’s testimonies destined to the readers, that is, women “talking” to women. In addition, we highlight that, in this enunciation, the daily routine becomes relevant, and what used to be circumscribed to the private domain becomes public – and the magazine is responsible for such exposure.

In the second, resources are offered so that the reader is able to trigger an action which, in this case, consists of shaping the body, according to an implicit standard, to make it become more beautiful. All the verbs - *modelar, diminuir, afinar, reduzir* (to model, to reduce, to narrow) – refer to the act of adjusting, and give to the reader the notion of reducing measures as a possibility of the massage.

These verbs, polysemically, associate massage results with those of surgical interventions. Anyway, both techniques deal with an investment made by the woman to obtain the desired body. The metaphor “*pneus*”⁶, pejoratively, alludes to fat and leads to the esthetic care that is necessary to make the woman become even more beautiful.

In the issue of March 2005, the magazine asks: “*Ainda existem tabus sexuais em pleno século 21? 12 ótimas respostas*”. (Do any sexual taboos remain in the 21st century? 12 great answers”. However, the enunciation leaves clues about the magazine’s position by utilizing the adverb “*ainda*” (translated here as the verb “remain”) in the construction of the text. That is, it reveals surprise in view of the existence of sexual taboos in current times and offers to the reader a set of answers that it considers to be qualified. Then, we have the adverb “*MAIS:*” (MORE:) it connects the first enunciation to the second: “*Por que não podemos ver a sexualidade de ALEXANDRE, O GRANDE, com os olhos de hoje*”. (Why we can’t see the sexuality of ALEXANDER THE GREAT with today’s eyes). Reaffirming such structuring, the graphic sign – colon – enables the second enunciation to develop what was mentioned previously, giving continuity to the subject, as if it were only one text.

The intertextuality – “Alexander, the Great” – refers to the title of the movie that was in theatres at that time and to the history of the king of Macedonia. It also refers to one of today’s sexual taboos: male homosexuality. In this sense, the magazine explains that, when it approaches sex or sexual relationship in the other issues, it does it according to the heterosexual orientation. ‘Claudia’, in a subtle way, gives visibility in its discourse to the theme of homosexuality, which is generally hidden in the magazines for women, that is, it takes the theme to the female public. Specifically in relation to sex, this magazine differs from ‘Mulher dia-a-dia’, which privileged it and maintained it, together with ‘pleasure’, as a recurrent theme in the analyzed issues.

In “*Acabe com suas dúvidas sobre sexo e seja mais feliz na cama*” (Solve your doubts about sex and be happier in bed) (March 2005), ‘Mulher dia-a-dia’ established, with the use of the imperative, the interlocution with the reader and assumed the position of protagonist. In a categorical way, it stated that the reader had doubts and was happy in her sexual life; however, by means of the adverb of intensity (“*mais*”), it indicated that she could be happier. Thus, tacitly, the expressed meaning was that the reader did not enjoy all the possible intensity that sex could offer due to her doubts, and the magazine was in charge of elucidating them.

Some of these doubts were: [1] “*Os homens pensam mais em sexo do que as mulheres?*” (Do men think more about sex than women?); [2] “*Por que muitos homens só se preocupam com o próprio prazer, sem dar muita importância para o que a parceira está sentindo?*” (Why do many men only worry about their own pleasure, without giving much importance to what their partner is feeling?); [3] “*Existe alguma forma de a mulher chegar ao orgasmo mais rápido?*” (Is there any way for women to reach orgasm faster?); [4] “*Com a chegada da menopausa, o prazer da mulher diminui?*” (With the arrival of menopause, does women’s pleasure decrease?)

The questions regarding the male universe [1 and 2] showed intensity (adverb “*mais*” (more)), individuality (adjective “*só*” (only)) and ownership (adjective “*próprio*” (own), in relation to sex and to the themes that comprised its semantic field, unlike those strictly directed at women. Concerning the female universe, although figurative in the phrase, the adverb of intensity “*mais*” and the adjective “*rápido*” (which form, in English, the word “faster”), gave to sexual pleasure a connotation of difficulty [3], strengthened by the verb “*diminuir*” (decrease). While, to men, sex was associated with meanings of presence, amount, intensity and singularity, to women, it was related, semantically, to sexual satisfaction, but in a lower degree and quantity compared to men.

In the enunciation “*Orgasmo sem Segredos*”. “*Você merece este prazer*” (Orgasm without secrets. You deserve this pleasure) (April 2005), the preposition (“*sem*” – without) meant absence and, due to this, reported to the semantic field of the explicit. Therefore, it denoted that the pleasure of sexual excitement, as well as sex, was something confidential. Thus, the report proposed to disrupt the

⁶ In Brazilian Portuguese, the word “*pneu*”, which literally means “tire”, is used metaphorically to refer to the excess of adipose tissue that is formed in the lateral of the buttock.

interdict, by publicizing it. The text signaled, at the same time, that the readers lacked that information and that sensation (“*você merece este prazer*” - you deserve this pleasure).

If, at an initial moment, the meaning was deprivation of knowledge and pleasure, at another moment, it was possibilities of information and alteration of women’s position and experience in the sexual relation. Furthermore, sex was raised to the condition of indispensable and useful information and, due to this, the progress from “not knowing” to the position of active women brought delight as a reward.

‘Mulher-dia-a-dia’ also projected beauty and the body as subjects liked by the magazine, referring to the female image. The title “*Especial*” “*Plástica já*” “*Melhorar o corpo está ao alcance de todos. Saiba tudo sobre o assunto!!!*” (Special Plastic surgery now Improving the body is at everybody’s reach. Know everything about this matter!!!) (May 2005) guaranteed a status to the headline by calling it “*Especial*” (Special); besides, it presented it as exclusive to the reader. Plastic surgery was promoted as an immediate procedure (adverb “*já*” – now), accessible, which would improve the body of any person, moving the signification process from the idea of a restricted procedure, due to its high cost, to produce another one, that plastic surgery was “*ao alcance de todos*” (at everybody’s reach).

After the discourses about esthetic care, the text “*cabelos de estrela*” (star hair) evidenced, at least, two types of hair: “star” hair and non-star hair. The utilized metaphor transferred attributes to the hair, qualifying them positively, called the woman beautiful or famous actress and made her become a reference to be imitated for having “star hair”. The continuation of the enunciation - “*Com a escova progressiva*” (With progressive brush) – guaranteed the formula to obtain “star hair” and defined it as straight, because this technique aimed to straighten the hair. The association between beautiful, long and straight hair was implicit in other constructions, as well as the homogenization dictated by the standard established by the magazine.

‘Mulher-dia-a-dia’, in turn, in the enunciation “*Moda, horóscopo, saúde, filhos*”. “*Tudo que você procura está aqui!*” (Fashion, horoscope, health, children. Everything you’re looking for is here!) (May, 2005), defines that the magazine has all the qualities that are possible to be offered to the reader. However, it reduces the women’s issues to the themes approached by it - “*Moda, horóscopo, saúde, filhos*” (Fashion, horoscope, health, children) -, attributing to the reader the requirement of being informed.

In ‘Mulher dia-a-dia’, sexuality was more strictly related to sexual activity, eroticism and sensuality, that is, to sex. In some moments, the magazine reduced personal fulfillment to sexual freedom and the possibility of having pleasure. ‘Claudia’, however, signals, in a subtle way, the association between sexuality and female condition, as well as the feelings deriving from the place occupied by women due to their traditional attributions in society, like care and the importance given to the affective relationship.

In spite of the thematic similarity, the magazines’ discourses signal different stages of affective and sexual relationship, and converge to the apology of a feeling that predominates in mass culture, which is “synthetic love”. The term was coined by Morin (1997) to designate affective bonds originated in sexual attraction and in the affinity of souls in the figure of the couple. In this conformation, the encounter of man and woman symbolizes a total and nuclear feeling.

“Synthetic love”, implicitly praised in the magazines, represents a kind of nature that is, at the same time, mythological and realistic. Mythological because it is the idealization of the couple’s relationship, proposing that all conflicts can be overcome. And realistic, because it portrays the reality of love in the contemporary style. Thus, we observed that the promotion of “synthetic love” coincides with the idea of heterosexual relationship, based on affection and consecrated in marriage. Both magazines presuppose, with this, a scenario of social acceptance in which sex is liberated but, above all, stimulated.

Main remarks

‘Claudia’ and ‘Mulher-dia-a-dia’ covered common themes; however, the former emphasizes a discourse of partnership, while the latter, a pedagogical discourse. These characteristics contribute

to compose the meaning of the text (Orlandi, 2001), revealing one of the stratifications that is characteristic of cultural products, which is the social class at which they are targeted.

The partnership discourse constitutes an enunciation attributed both to the magazine and to the reader. To the reader is granted the possibility of expressing herself and, to the magazine, the position of informant and commentator. It is in this way that 'Claudia' transmits values and a way of 'being a woman' and 'living', persuading the reader subliminally. Its position is that of offering possibilities, without providing tips, advices and recipes. In the same way, it creates a representation of modernity and detachment in its discourses, so that it can be understood by the modern woman who is the reader of 'Claudia'.

In turn, the pedagogical discourse systematically uses formulas in the imperative, having as a common resource advice and quantification. Asymmetry in interlocution was a characteristic of the discursive practice of 'Mulher-dia-a-dia', revealing both a reader that maintained herself in the condition of learner and one of the magazine's objectives, that is, disseminating values and stimulating desires. According to Orlandi (2001), the use of the imperative is peculiar to any discourse in which there is 'indoctrination', which is present in religious texts and, also, in publicity ones.

The discourses privileged by 'Claudia' and 'Mulher-dia-a-dia', contradictorily to the latter, are those that praise women's position of subject in the relationship with the other person. These discourses would allow women to experience their sexuality in a free, autonomous, satisfactory and pleasant way. Both magazines sustain the importance of female protagonism, remarkably the sexual one. Clearly, it is manifested that the right to govern oneself is also related to self-knowledge, on behalf of sexual ideals.

We consider that the discourses of 'Claudia' and 'Mulher-dia-a-dia' practically circumscribe the debate about sex to the presence or absence of sexual or affective pleasure. If, on the one hand, this limits the discussion, on the other hand, it reveals that pleasure is important for women's lives and that it is one of the elements of female sexuality. Anyway, the magazines perpetuate the classic framing of "Love and Sex", identified in female magazines and in studies about this means of mass communication (Bassanezi, 1996; Buitoni, 1986). From this point of view, sex becomes, in the reports, representative of the female transformations in society and, above all, responsible for producing wellbeing and happiness.

However, the discourses exposed in the magazines also signal aspects of conservatism, conveying notions and values that fall into a moralism that we suppose would already have been overcome. In addition, the discursive conventions of the magazines materialize dual positions about the contemporary Western sexual dynamics, such as: adoption of symmetric sexual practices versus existence of asymmetric sexual practices; female sexual autonomy versus female sexual dependence; activeness versus passiveness; female pleasure versus male pleasure; spontaneity versus prescription.

We would like to highlight that 'Claudia' and 'Mulher dia-a-dia' manifest a broader process of change and permanence, which neither derives from nor ends in the diffusion of the symbolic forms of information and knowledge, but it becomes its spokesperson. Characteristic of the historical dynamics of society, this process reissues new regulations directed at the exercise of sexuality, thus contributing to contemporary forms of subjectivation and esthetics. However, the new brings, in its interior, remains of a reality that gave origin to it and that is maintained in women's representation and practices, reaffirming their place in society and their sexual identity.

COLLABORATORS

The author Luciana Patrícia Zucco participated in the elaboration of the paper, in its discussion and in the writing and revision of the text. The author Maria Cecília de Souza Minayo participated in the bibliographic review, in discussions and in the revision of the text.

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Translated by Carolina Silveira Muniz Ventura

Translation from **Interface - Comunicação, Saúde, Educação**, Botucatu, v.13, n.28, p. 43 - 54, Jan./Mar. 2009.

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