

### 38 - WONDERFUL WOMAN: REPRESENTATION OF FEMININE "PUMPED" BODY IN CONTEMPORANEITY

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doi:10.16887/89.a1.38

#### Introduction

In 2017 the character of the Comics, Wonder Woman has gained a version for the cinema. Widely circulated, was a box office success and received numerous positive reviews in relation to film production. However, the suitability of the screens in relation to the construction of the character in the HQ did not follow, from the point of view of "aesthetic" representation of the heroine of the comic. In general, princess Diana, especially in the versions from the 1980's, presented a picture body muscular, "pumped", which intensified in the years 1990 and 2000.

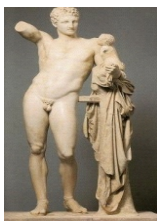
In this sense, this article presents a discussion about the corporeal representation of the heroines of the comics, having as specific analysis the character Wonder Woman. Most of the studies that deal with the subject of body image and feminine aesthetics tend to centralize their analysis of the "thinness" or "perfect" body shapes, based on the so-called "lean body with curves". However, when it comes to the universe of comics, most heroines are portrayed with muscular features, peculiar physical strength and sometimes "brutalized" body expressions, very close to the male characters

The paper is divided into two parts. The first part addresses the issue of female bodily beauty, commenting from ancient Greece to the new dimensions of the beautiful female body in the contemporary world. The second part draws attention to the character of comics, Wonder Woman, highlighting the issue of the female body "healed" and the role of the heroines of comics. In this item, we also highlight the importance of the industry in the construction of aesthetic standards of body and beauty.

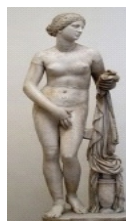
#### Beauty, body and the feminine: from Greek to contemporary forms

Created in 1941 by William Marston, an American psychologist who, in the 1930s and 1940s, advocated the issue of gender equality and sexual freedom. According to Lepore (2017), the character's idealizer was inspired by Greek-Roman mythology in relation to the body. However, it is important to understand that the body of the woman in ancient Greece was linked to the ideal of "beauty" conceived by men, that is, the Greek female bodies, for example, were elaborated from the male imaginary.

Another question to be considered is that the ideal of Greek beauty combined harmony with the parts, indicating a mathematics that defined proportional sizes millimetrically acceptable to affirm that that body was, in fact, beautiful. A good example is the similarity between the bodily forms of men and women portrayed in Greek sculptures:



Hermes and Dionysos  
marble, from Praxiteles  
Archaeological  
Museum of Olympia



"Aphrodite of Cnidus"  
Roman copy of a Greek of the century I  
of Praxiteles, the first  
artist to carve a woman

The exhibition of the young, beautiful body and of well-defined anatomical forms brought closer to Greek society at the time the human existence of divinity. This fact is easily observed in the literature where there is abundant material or of the arts where there is predominance of the naked bodies in the existing sculptures and today preserved in museums world-wide as well as in the archaeological sites discovered in the own Greece. According to Tucherman (2004, p.27),

The gymnasium itself was this statement that the body belonged to a unit, the Polis, where it could, from a public display and constant training, be shaped in an artistic way. This is why the human figures of the Parthenon are all young, exhibiting perfect bodies and naked, with serene expressions, contrasting, for example, with the Zeus of Olympia, carved a few years earlier, more individualized and showing signs of age and fear. The gods are ready; the men are making themselves.

Then, in the context of the Roman Empire, despite the strong influence of the culture and the Greek civilization conquered, the exhibition of the corporal exuberance happened to be covered. The realization of gymnastics, which was the precursor of the model of calisthenics very widespread in the twentieth and twenty-first century, was not practiced because the number of Greek gymnasts was considered immoral. In Greece the ostentation and manifestation of the body were a demonstration of power and social status in Rome, such attributes tinged values of strength and survival as in the symbolism of gladiatorial fights.

With the consolidation of Christianity, the dimensions of corporeity went from the expression of worship to the beautiful or force to materialize the source of sin and consequent repression of its exteriorization. The level of equality in importance between body and intellect was broken. Throughout the Middle Ages the Christian doctrine expanded. The formation of national monarchies between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, especially in Western European countries, further strengthened the power of the Church. The period was marked by the repression of feelings and expressions. The female body, previously relegated to a role of secondary importance, in the medieval context personified the incitement to sinful lust, for its origin of the rib of the first man created the image and likeness of God, reason and guilt for original sin.

If in the classical antiquity the body was considered of the same biological nature, unisexuado, since for the Greeks the development of the penis was given from a greater corporal heating in degrees reaching therefore greater "perfection" and in average age the feminine body was synonymous with the instrument of seizing the soul of man by the devil, we have a distinction between the bodies of man and woman from the Renaissance (XV-XVI century) and the Illuminist period (XVII century) the binary question. From the end of the eighteenth century onwards (in the context of the industrial revolution), the concept of the productive body emerged, which according to Silva (1996, 246),

the body is no longer the one that strives or not to be happy and fulfilled, which is noble or vassal, that is punished or that is saved. The body of the individual is the concretization of the labor force, a fundamental commodity in this new order [...].

The imperative necessity that the body was properly prepared in a utilitarian way made it grow, from there the importance of Physical Education as we perceive today. There was a clear and purposeful approach of medicine, of physiology, of the legitimization of the scientific process aimed at building a knowledge that embraced such values by preparing and training the individual for the growing and emerging capitalist market. The twentieth century pointed at the beginning of the crisis of the body coming from the end of the previous period and the question of subjectivities and new guidelines for what it is to be young and the problem of the body. At the beginning of the new period, humanity experienced great transformations in the context of large industries, changes in the urban setting and in social relations.

The mass media as well as the technological advance had a direct impact on the dissemination of information and events around the world. Television has taken a leading role in this area far beyond the representation of mere entertainment, becoming a huge vehicle of influence in public opinion both in terms of consumer habits through advertising, advertising and other cultural industry tools as well as a political influence and especially in what concerns education through the information conveyed that the masses of viewers were reaching. It provided the viewer with a new perspective of experiences and sensations: the "twentieth century toy made possible the apprehension of multiple senses and the imprisonment of the audience from scenarios that emphasized what the character was for the vision, for the hearing, in sensory perceptions." (BARBOSA, 2010, p.47). Even so, the subjectivities of body patterns already gave clear signs of change, as Tuchermann pointed out:

The experiences of art, especially in this second half of the twentieth century have already realized the deformations conceived and dreamed up in the idea of human body. Science, especially from its techniques of genetic manipulation, produces as victorious experiences hybrid and monstrous figures, and cyberculture, along with the ethical questions regarding the political use of cyberspace, of outer space, in a particular way, seems to resume or reopen another cycle of Great Navigations, proposing to the aliens questions similar to those provoked in the encounter with blacks and Indians in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. (TUCHERMANN, 2004, p.82)

Historically, conceptions about the body culture of movement have been influenced to the point of distorting philosophical theories, forming interpretations driven by ideological interests. The foundations of the cultural construction of the body as a sum of the lived experiences as well as their full possibilities of physical and mental development in harmony were gradually left out.

HQ's and the corporeal representation: the wonder-woman and the body "healed"

The care with the body becomes mandatory as a form of acceptance of the social group to which it belongs independently of the specific values spread within this group of people even if you take into consideration any other marker or indicator. Novaes (2013) thus states:

Of the privilege of a few, beauty becomes the need of many. Not a beauty at all, but a beauty built according to some well-defined standards, dictated by the market itself, which defines the body of fashion (NOVAES, 2013, p. 17).

For such values to be propagated on a large scale, thus perpetuating generations and more generations of consumer powers, the most obvious way to achieve this goal is the use of mass media such as television media, cinema, digital media and the comics. The codification of the imaginary signs by the readers, can't be taken as a pure and simple reproduction without imbued values or intentionality of actions. They present a way of being, power, being and being that makes the reader experience sensations of a life that does not belong to him materially, but which in some ways leads him to fulfill his expectations of an existential possibility beyond what seems possible.

In this sense, the character of the Wonder Woman comics and their corporal representations in the last decades has gained "healed" or "pumped" forms, both to respond to the potentiality of the viewer consumers and to call attention to the transformations of the beauty ideology of the Feminine body. "Healed" bodies with great muscular definition are associated with the healthy body, which is not always real, as well as the practice of physical activity in the most varied modalities. The body appearance that escapes this social norm like being overweight, for example, already associates this image with a lazy or sloppy person. Being the body responsible for our initial arrival in any environment or social situation before we are evaluated, we have that "the image precedes the subject, limiting it to what is exposed, circumscribed to the ideals of idolatry to pleasure and immediate happiness". (LOPES and MENDONÇA, 2016, p.22)

In this perspective, the "making" of the female body would respond to the dynamics of a certain context and, in this case, the production, scriptwriters and others responsible for the conception and conduction of the plot involving superheroes would respond in the process of staging what the public and the cultural industry understood how.

The importation and imaging incorporation of the bodies seen in California's Muscle Beach thus gained adherents. The initial impulse of a million-dollar consumer market was awakened. Coupled with the strong appeal of television and especially the images of the bodies of the hero's protagonists of the action films of the 1980s, the habit of worshiping the body has gone through the symbolic goals of vanity, power, materialization of empowerment through body image.

The exploration of this new bodily bias can be seen by the changes in body aesthetics presented by the character's image over time since its inception in the year 1941. Actress Linda Carter, who played the character in the television series that won the world in 1976, managed to materialize a body pattern that reverberated what was found in the HQ. A longiline body, with a low percentage of apparent fat, low BMI and without the accentuated muscular definitions characteristic of an Amazon, trained in the war arts, of hand-to-hand combat and sculpted based on an intense dynamic of physical exercise. Wonder Woman should be powerful without ever being masculinized in a culture that associates muscles with the demeaning of femininity.

From the end of the 1980s, when the feminine rise to a new level of political equality won by the feminist movements

the body image of the character in the comics came to externalize the power and strength in the body exuberance. The stories in the comics happened to have a figure at that moment, besides being lean, with a bigger muscular volume in their legs, these yes more according to the history of the own personage. In addition to powerful quadriceps there was also some development of the shoulders and pectorals.

Gal Gadot, the current protagonist of the character, superficially modifies this phenotype (as we can see in the image below) but maintains a huge body difference compared to that presented by Linda Carter. It is clear the evidence of the valences of strength and muscular resistance located in the imaging presentation of this body composition, significant of an aesthetic and corporal pattern that responds to the one proposed by the HQ.



Fonte: <https://www.coisasjudaicas.com/2015/07/gal-gadot-e-mulher-maravilha.html>

All this imagery construction is associated with the premise of youth and their body radiate life energy, especially in the predominance of scenes with ambiances in brightly colored settings where the Apollonian body and its myth for the proximity of the reader with respect to the comics and their subjective construction of individual perception. The capture of the images in close up makes, in the films of Wonder Woman both as protagonist as well as supporting (Justice League) with which these bodies jump from the screen to a subliminal intrinsic psychic intimacy that will lead to behavioral changes according to the standards of the norms social policies. Civita (1973) on the temporalization of fictional images and their relationship with the social thought structure that governs societies states that:

The temporalization of the images of the fiction says of another structure of social thought, that has regulated the behavior of the subjects in these last decades. The image of the juvenile age permeates the imaginary of the individuals, configuring the mythological narrative of Apollo. Apollo, god of light and beauty, had the task of every morning to transport the car of the sun to the top of the sky. And the whole earth was filled with light. Twelve hours later, the golden car was drawn by its mighty horses behind the distant mountains; then the darkness with its black cloak enveloped the earth. Once a year the sun disappeared for sad months. And Earth plunged into the icy shadows of winter. This is because Apollo traveled with the gilded car to the country of hyperboreans, a land of light and joy (CIVITA, 1973: 210).

In this sense, from the corporeal images derived from the media spaces (and therefore from the cultural industry), it presents a conception of body, form, youth and beauty constructed by the Greek myths and which, today, becomes the ideal form to be achieved. Regarding the feminine, the Wonder Woman case is interesting because, as she is portrayed in the HQ's of innumerable different forms (muscular or not), in the screens of the cinema and television, the actresses preserved the lean and longiline body. Whether it's in the HQ's, in the movies or in the television series, the female body portrayed responds to the cultural industry: either approaching the female body as healed and pumped (HQ's) or maintaining curves and thinness. It is important to remember that such corporeal representations come from a cultural industry that is mostly led by men, white, of high purchasing power and who has in his imaginary a certain conception of "woman" from the aesthetic point of view.

#### Final considerations

In this brief article we seek to approach the construction of the female body from the aesthetic dimension exposed by the cultural industry, having as the guiding point of our analysis the representations of the heroine of the Wonder Woman comics. This character, created in the early 1940s, has since had a varied aesthetic representation, responding to the periods or decade in which it was inserted. From the 1980s onwards, with the dimension of "health generation" and assimilation of "healed" bodies, the character has undergone alterations for both comics, film and television series. The interaction between society and the cultural industry, coupled with the processes of bodily transformation from practices in gymnasiums, for example, are elements that corroborate to the changes or new conceptions of beautiful body or body healed female.

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is present a brief discussion about the representations of the female body, emphasizing the heroines of the comics, especially the Wonder Woman. This question is fundamental to understanding the representative changes of the female body over time, drawing attention to the masculine aspect of the female beauty body from Ancient Greece, spanning through Ancient Rome, the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Enlightenment, still, the nineteenth century and the impact of the industrial revolution on the conceptions of body. In the twentieth century and the threshold of the twenty-first century the taxation processes of certain female body patterns is linked to the perspective of the cultural industry, inaugurated especially with the advent of television media in the mid-twentieth century. From the methodological point of view, the bibliographical research on feminine corporeity, the studies on the woman-wonder in the HQ's. In addition, we seek to analyze the role of physical education in the process of elaborating methods in order to respond to the perspectives of modeling the female body conceived by the cultural industry.

**Keywords:** body, female, comics, physical education.

**Résumé:** Le but de cet article est de présenter une brève discussion sur les représentations du corps féminin, en insistant sur les héroïnes des bandes dessinées, en particulier la Wonder Woman. Cette question est fondamentale pour comprendre les changements représentatifs du corps féminin au fil du temps, attirant l'attention sur l'aspect masculin du beau corps féminin de la Grèce antique, qui s'étend de la Rome antique au Moyen Âge, de la Renaissance et des Lumières. encore, le XIXe siècle et l'impact de la révolution industrielle sur les conceptions du corps. Au XXe siècle et au seuil du XXIe siècle, les processus de taxation de certains schémas corporels féminins sont liés à la perspective de l'industrie culturelle, inaugurée notamment avec l'avènement de la télévision au milieu du XXe siècle. Du point de vue méthodologique, la recherche bibliographique sur la corporéité féminine, les études sur la femme-merveille dans les quartiers généraux. De plus, nous cherchons à analyser le rôle de l'éducation physique dans le processus d'élaboration de méthodes afin de répondre aux perspectives de modélisation du corps féminin conçu par l'industrie culturelle.

**Mots-clés:** corps, femme, bandes dessinées, éducation physique.

**Resumen:** El objetivo de este artículo es presentar una breve discusión sobre las representaciones del cuerpo femenino, enfatizando las heroínas de las HQ's, especialmente la Mujer-Maravilla. Esta cuestión es fundamental para la comprensión de los cambios representativos del cuerpo femenino a lo largo del tiempo, llamando la atención sobre el aspecto de la concepción masculina del cuerpo hermoso femenino a partir de la Grecia Antigua, pasando por Roma Antigua, Edad Media, Renacimiento e Iluminismo y, aún, el siglo XIX y el impacto de la revolución industrial en lo que se refiere a las concepciones de cuerpo. En el siglo XX y el umbral del siglo XXI los procesos impositivos de determinados patrones corporales femeninos están vinculados a la perspectiva de la industria cultural, inaugurada especialmente con el advenimiento de los medios de televisión a mediados del siglo XX. Desde el punto de vista metodológico, se partió de la investigación bibliográfica sobre corporeidad femenina, los estudios sobre la mujer-maravilla en las HQ's. Además, buscamos analizar el papel de la Educación física en el proceso de elaboración de métodos con el fin de responder a las perspectivas de modelación del cuerpo femenino concebidas por la industria cultural.

**Palabras clave:** cuerpo, femenino, cómics, educación física.

**Resumo:** O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar uma breve discussão sobre as representações do corpo feminino, enfatizando as heroínas das HQ's, especialmente a Mulher-Maravilha. Esta questão é fundamental para a compreensão das mudanças representativas do corpo feminino ao longo do tempo, chamando a atenção para o aspecto da concepção masculina do corpo belo feminino a partir da Grécia Antiga, perpassando por Roma Antiga, Idade Média, Renascimento e Iluminismo e, ainda, o século XIX e o impacto da revolução industrial no que tange as concepções de corpo. No século XX e limiar do século XXI os processos impositivos de determinados padrões corporais feminino está atrelado à perspectiva da indústria cultural, inaugurada especialmente com o advento da mídia televisiva, em meados do século XX. Do ponto de vista metodológico, partiu-se da pesquisa bibliográfica sobre corporeidade feminina, os estudos sobre a mulher-maravilha nas HQ's. Além disso, procuramos analisar o papel da Educação física no processo de elaboração de métodos com o intuito de responder às perspectivas de modelação do corpo feminino concebidas pela indústria cultural.

**Palavras-Chave:** corpo, feminino, quadrinhos, educação física.