

SEX, SATIRE, AND CENSORSHIP

LYGIA PAPE'S *EAT ME: GLUTTONY OR LUST?* (1975/1976)

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The Crusade Against Pornography

In March 1982, during the final years of the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–1985), then-President João Figueiredo made headlines for his radio and television announcements of a new “crusade against pornography.”¹ At the time of Figueiredo’s proclamation, pornographic movie production was on the rise in Brazil, accounting for 59% of all film production in the country (Johnson 1993, 363). This was despite a 1970 censorship decree enacted by the Brazilian dictatorship that had come to power via a U.S.-backed military coup in March 1964, that had outlawed pornography outright (Fausto and Fausto 2014, 271).² Even so, by the late 1980s, national Brazilian cinema had become synonymous with hard-core pornography productions (Shaw and Dennison 2014, 90; Quinalha 2017, 1). Given this state of affairs, one might wonder how pornography achieved such a meteoric rise in the country despite strict censorship laws? The answer lies in the regime’s history, as well as its inconsistencies and contradictions.

When military president General Artur da Costa e Silva came to power in 1967, he enacted an iron-fisted approach to law and order. He issued the draconian Institutional Act Number Five (AI-5), a decree that dissolved Congress and state legislatures, suspended the constitution, gave the president dictatorial powers, institutionalized repression against dissidents, and imposed wide-ranging censorship. His successor, General Emílio Médici, who replaced him in 1969, executed the AI-5, initiating the most repressive period of the dictatorship, known as the *anos de chumbo* (years of lead, 1969–1974). During this period, the regime imprisoned and tortured dissidents and sponsored gruesome assassinations and disappearances.

¹ This essay is adapted from a chapter of my doctoral dissertation, *Gendered Subjectivity and Resistance: Brazilian Women’s Performance-for-Camera, 1973–1982* (2019). I would like to thank my doctoral supervisors Dr. Anna Indych-López and Dr. Claire Bishop for their guidance on this project, as well as Tie Jojima, for sharing her insights into the history of Brazilian pornography with me. “Cruzada contra a pornografia” (“Figueiredo convoca a nação para combater pornografia” 1982, 4). All translations by the author, unless otherwise noted.

² Fearing that leftist President João Goulart was a Communist sympathizer, the U.S. supported the Brazilian military coup with training and material support.

After Médici enforced the AI-5 in 1969, censorship of all kinds of so-called “subversive” material increased. In 1970, the Decree-Law no. 1.077 was enacted, deeming anything that “offended morality and proper behaviour,” such as depictions of nudity or sex, as subversive, dangerous, and immoral (Risério 2010, 243–44; Shtromberg 2016, 8).³ The justification, according to the Minister of Justice Alfredo Buzaid (quoted in Risério 2010) was that such materials would stimulate “licentiousness, insinuate free love, and threaten to destroy the moral values of Brazilian society”⁴ (243–44). Erotica and pornography were lumped together with homosexuality and transgenderism, all viewed by the regime as part of a broader threat to national security (Quinalha 2017, 31). “Traditional family values,” which were also in line with conservative Catholic values, were seen as uniting Brazilian society against these perceived threats, underscoring the ways that patriarchal heteronormativity structured the authoritarian disciplinary apparatus. As political scientist Sonia Alvarez (1990) has argued, the dictatorship enshrined “traditional womanhood [as] a cornerstone of authoritarian ‘order and progress’” (55).

Yet, as art historian Elena Shtromberg (2016) points out, despite the dictatorship’s authoritarianism, its policies were “neither united nor consistent” and “riddled with myriad contradictions” (7–8). In fact, despite its anti-pornography laws, the censors were highly bureaucratic, and their approach was arbitrary and inconsistent. In reality, pornography and erotica had persisted in various forms—both clandestine and legitimate—throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Lamas and Reis Junior 2018, 37–62).⁵ One early genre of Brazilian pornography was the *revistinha de sacanagem* (dirty comics), cheaply-printed, black-and-white illustrated booklets depicting explicit nudity and sex, which circulated underground throughout the 1960s.⁶ By the 1970s, higher-quality pornographic magazines and movie reels replaced them, clandestinely imported into the country from northern Europe in “neutral” packages to circumvent customs (Lamas and Reis Junior 2018, 39).

When General Ernesto Geisel came to power in 1974, he adopted a more moderate position toward political repression than Médici, instituting the political programs of *distensão* (relaxation, 1974–1979), and *abertura* (opening, 1979–1985)—the latter a policy continued by Geisel’s successor Figueiredo, who was elected in 1979—in an attempt to slowly re-democratize the country. Under Geisel, some restrictions were loosened: though erotic materials were still highly regulated, they were allowed to circulate more freely. This led to what historian Ben Cowan (2019) has described as a virtual “explosion of pornography in the 1970s.”⁷

One of the major contradictions of the state’s approach to censorship of sexually explicit content, was the proliferation of a cinematic genre known as *pornoanchadas* (sex comedies). Blending bawdy comedy with sexual parody and a trashy, lewd aesthetic, the dictatorship conveniently overlooked them because they were not critical of the regime and they did not depict explicit sex or nudity, though both were suggested.⁸ Because of their success at the box office, they also enjoyed a cosy relationship with the state-funded production company, Embrafilme, which financed some of them under its loan program. Produced cheaply and with poor

³ “Contra a moral e os bons costumes.”

⁴ “licenciosidade, insinuarium o amor livre e ameaçariam destruir os valores morais da sociedade brasileira.”

⁵ I use the terms pornography and erotica somewhat interchangeably, though they can be distinguished: generally, pornography shows more explicit nudity and sex, while erotica is more sensual and suggestive (Steinem 1978, 53–54, 75).

⁶ Finotti (2010, n.p.)

⁷ One example of this resurgence of porn was the return of *Playboy* magazine, which had been banned in 1970, but permitted back on newsstands in 1975. However, it was renamed *Revista do Homem* (Men’s Magazine) by the censors and its photographs no longer explicitly depicted nudity (Risério 2010, 244).

⁸ Some well-known *pornoanchada* titles are *Os paqueras* (The Flirts, 1969), *A superfêmea* (The Superwoman, 1973), and *Bacalhau* (Codfish, 1975). The term came from *chanchadas*, a cinematic genre of musical comedies from the 1930s–1950s (Shaw and Dennison 2014, 91–94).

production values, *pornochanchadas* were largely filmed in São Paulo's red-light district, the *Boca do Lixo* (Mouth of Garbage). They catered to the heterosexist male gaze and ultimately conveyed conservative values: for instance, most of their plots were resolved in marriage (Dennison 2011, 232). Despite their popularity, by the early 1980s, regulations restricting foreign films and explicit nudity loosened. As Brazil was inundated with Hollywood pornography, audiences lost interest in *pornochanchadas*, and the *Boca do Lixo* filmmakers shifted to making hard-core pornography.

Lygia Pape and the *Eat Me* Film, 1975

It was against this backdrop, that in 1975 Brazilian artist Lygia Pape (1927–2004) created a short experimental film titled *Eat Me: a Gula ou a Luxúria?* (Eat Me: Gluttony or Lust), and the following year, a related art installation of the same title (fig. 1). Both contained erotic images and sexual themes, and were faced with varying degrees of censorship by the Brazilian regime. Despite Pape's apparent interest in gender and sexuality in both works, she explicitly denied that they had a feminist message. In this essay, I closely analyse both works, as well as Pape's own writing, to historically situate them within the Brazilian socio-cultural and political context within which they were made, including the contradictory history of Brazilian pornography. Despite Pape's explicit disavowal of feminism, I argue that the *Eat Me* film and installations represent a feminist critique of the heteronormative and patriarchal discourses undergirding the Brazilian dictatorship, as well as the

Fig. 1 – Lygia Pape, *Eat Me: a Gula ou a Luxúria?* (Eat Me: Gluttony or Lust), 1975. 16mm film in colour with sound, 9 mins. © Projeto Lygia Pape. Photograph by Gillian Sneed, taken at the exhibition *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, U.S.A. (September 15 – December 31, 2017).



Brazilian mass media's commodification of women and sex, especially in advertising and *pornochanchadas*. I contend that by satirizing commercials, pornography, and erotica, Pape "cannibalizes" these mass media forms as part of her broader strategy of resisting the dictatorship's conservative sex and gender ideologies.

Lygia Pape arrived in Rio de Janeiro in 1952 at the age of twenty-five, where she took art classes at the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM/RJ) with printmaker Fayga Ostrower (1920–2001) and painter Ivan Serpa (1923–1973).⁹ By the mid-1950s, she began to establish herself in the *Carioca* art scene. She initially participated in the Concrete art movement, a style of analytical geometric abstraction that emerged in Brazil in the early 1950s, joining the Rio de Janeiro-based *Grupo Frente* in 1954, along with other artists including Lygia Clark (1920–1988) and Hélio Oiticica (1937–1980).¹⁰ Pape and the other Carioca artists then formed a splinter movement called Neoconcrete art (1959–1961), a form of geometric abstraction that emphasized organic expression and sensorial experience over the strict dogmatic rationalism of Concrete art. During this period, Pape created prints and sculptures exploring geometry, Gestalt, and phenomenology.¹¹ With the rise of the Brazilian dictatorship in the mid-1960s, the Neoconcrete artists shifted toward dematerialized and participatory art practices that challenged the regime's strictures. By the late 1960s, many visual artists began working in a variety of new media (including Super-8, 16mm, and 35mm, and slide shows known as "audio-visuals") (Cruz 2016). The emerging interest among artists in time-based media developed out of the experimentalism of Neoconcrete art, its focus on the body, and its shift toward conceptual practices.¹²

Around this time, Pape began to collaborate with Cinema Novo filmmakers, before starting to make her own short films between 1967 and 1975.¹³ Cinema Novo was a realist film genre of the 1960s that focused on the Brazilian popular classes and their ways of life.¹⁴ Over time, Cinema Novo became more mainstream, and by the 1970s, it became associated with high-budget films sponsored by the state-run Embrafilme Company. Backlash came in the form of a younger generation of experimental filmmakers who developed a cinematic style known as "Cinema Marginal" or "Udigrudi" Cinema, which challenged the cinematic forms of their predecessors.¹⁵ These new films were characterized by subversive themes, low budgets, and poor production values. Like *Pornochanchadas*, many Marginal films were produced in the *Boca do Lixo* district, and both genres valorised poor production values and representations of marginalized groups not often seen in mainstream films (such as people of colour and gays); they also sometimes overlapped in content, as in *O pornógrafo* (The Pornographer, 1970), a Marginal film about a fictional porn magazine editor (Dennison 2011, 231). Marginal filmmakers like Júlio Bressane and Rógerio Sganzerla socialized and collaborated with visual artists like Pape and Oiticica, who in turn became interested in experimenting with film. Later, video art emerged in Brazil when it became available in the 1970s.¹⁶ In 1974, several Carioca artists (excluding Pape) gained access to a single shared camera and created new videos in response to an invitation to participate in an exhibition at the ICA Philadelphia.¹⁷

⁹ Pape married chemist Günther Pape in 1949 at the age of twenty-two. She had two daughters: Cristina (b. 1952) and Paula (b. 1958) (Crockett 2017, 168–75).

¹⁰ The São Paulo Concrete group, the *Grupo Ruptura*, was formed in 1951. The *Grupo Frente* was led by Ivan Serpa, and included Aluísio Carvão, Rubem Ludolf, César Oiticica, Carlos Val, Décio Vieira, and Franz Weissman.

¹¹ Gestalt was a school of psychology that emphasized the perception of a whole pattern over its individual components. Phenomenology was a philosophy that theorized of subjective experience. Both theories influenced Concrete and Neoconcrete art practices (Amor 2016, 71–90).

¹² This point has been made by André Parente (2007, 31), Simone Osthoff (2010, 81), and Christine Mello (2008, 78–80).

¹³ Pape did the graphic design and titles for several Cinema Novo films, including Nelson Pereira dos Santos's *Mandacaru Vermelho* (1961) and *Vidas Secas* (1963), and Glauber Rocha's *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (1964). Her own first short film, *La Nouvelle Creation*, won an award at the Expo-67 World's Fair in Montreal in 1967. Her other films included: *O Guarda-Chuva Vermelho* (1969), *A Matemática e o Futebol* (1971), *Mário Pedrosa: PT Saudações* (1978), and *Catiti-Catiti* (1978), and five Super-8 films: *Wampirou*, *Arenas Calientes*, *Wanted*, and *Carnival in Rio* (all 1973). She also created a video on Brazilian folk art titled *A Mão do Povo* (1974) for a solo exhibition at CAyC, Buenos Aires (Bentes 2015, 337; Pape 1983a, 43–44).

¹⁴ Cinema Novo was influenced by Italian Neorealism and the French New Wave.

¹⁵ "Udigrudi" is a mocking way of pronouncing "underground" in Portuguese (Dunn 2017, 92).

¹⁶ A limited number of Brazilian artists conducted early experiments in video in the late 1960s and early 1970s, including Analívia Cordeiro, Gabriel Borba, Rubens Gerchman, José Roberto Agui-

lar, and Antonio Dias. In 1974, Pape presented her first video *A mão do povo* at CAyC, Buenos Aires. However, video was not widely accessible to most artists in Brazil until the mid-1970s, due to its expensive cost (Mello 2008, 84–86).

¹⁷ The Carioca video group was led by Anna Bella Geiger, and included Sonia Andrade, Fernando Cocchiarale, and Ivens Machado (who joined in 1974), and Letícia Parente, Miriam Danowski, Ana Vitória Mussi, and Paulo Herkenhoff (who joined in 1975).

¹⁸ The screaming was Yoko Ono's voice, from one of her musical tracks with the Plastic Ono Band (Pape 2001, 91).

¹⁹ "Caldo de feijão; feijão sem caldo; feijão com caldo; sempre as Conchas Cook."

²⁰ Other examples include Paulo Herkenhoff's video *Estômago embrulhado/Jejum/Sobremesa* (Upset Stomach/Fast/Dessert, 1975), depicting the artist eating newspaper articles about censorship, and Sonia Andrade's video *Feijão* (Beans, 1975), in which the artist eats a bowl of beans in front of a television tuned to the Globo Network, both of which I discuss elsewhere (Sneed 2019, 115, 143–155).

²¹ By the 1970s, the Globo Network garnered the highest ratings of any other national network. Between 1968 and 1985 Globo maintained a 60–80% share of viewers in all major cities (Rosas-Moreno 2014, 22; Shtromberg 2016, 107).

²² In 1950, only 200 households owned a television; by 1965, there were 3 million spread across the country (Reis 2005, 272).

²³ The regime initially tolerated a joint venture between Globo and Time-Life that violated foreign ownership restrictions, delaying the enforcement of those rules for four years (1964–1968); Globo then used government loans to repay Time-Life (Straubhaar 2001, 140).

In 1975, at the tail end of Pape's foray in experimental film, she created *Eat Me: a Gula ou a Luxúria?* in 1975. The nine-minute, 16mm colour film opens with a close-up of a man's mouth, moustached and painted with lipstick, as he sensually sucks and expels a ruby-coloured jewel with his tongue. A soundtrack of a female voice moaning sexually accompanies this sequence as the jewel turns blue. The film then cuts to a woman's mouth erotically sucking on a hot dog, before returning to the male mouth as he expels the blue jewel and swirls saliva with his tongue around the open cavity, appearing almost vaginal. Shots of the male and female mouths performing different actions evoking sexual acts and consumption and ingestion—inhaling/exhaling smoke, sucking the hotdog, writhing their tongues suggestively—alternate with increasing speed while off-screen voices rhythmically chant the phrase "a gula ou a luxúria" (gluttony or lust) in various languages, including German, English, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. The sound of a woman's moaning culminates in an orgasmic scream.¹⁸ The audio of a "Conchas Cook" ladles commercial abruptly interrupts this shrieking, with a female voice stating in Portuguese: "bean soup; beans without soup, beans with soup; always Conchas Cook."¹⁹

Representations, like this one, evoking mass media genres (like advertising) and eating and gluttony gained particular currency in Brazilian film and video of the 1970s.²⁰ At the time, many artists were turning to film and video to critique the monopoly of the country's leading media conglomerate, the Globo Television Network (*Rede Globo*), and its complicity with the dictatorship.²¹ Following the coup, the military government understood television's potential to prop up the regime: it was a useful tool for transmitting and managing political information, encouraging a sense of national unity across the country's disparate geographic regions, and expanding the consumer economy through advertising.²² The Globo Network complied with the regime's censorship and promulgated its propaganda by promoting "positive" messages of national integration, modernization, and developmentalism (Shtromberg 2016, 99–102). As such, most Brazilians viewed Globo as a "mouth-piece of the dictatorship" (Rosas-Moreno 2014, 22). It was also affiliated with U.S. economic interests, such as the U.S. Time-Life Company, which initially provided technical expertise and financial support to the network.²³ Artists turned to time-based media like film and video to invoke and contest Globo's complicity with the regime and its U.S. interests, and as media historian Lidia Santos has argued, to resist state power more broadly (Santos 2006, 167).

Images of eating and ingestion were also linked to the resurgence in the late 1960s and early 1970s of the postcolonial theory of *antropofagia* (cultural cannibalism), which originally emerged as a decolonizing cultural strategy in May 1928, when the poet and catalyst of Brazilian modernism Oswald de Andrade (1890–1954) published his "Manifesto Antropófago" (Anthropophagous Manifesto) (Andrade [1928] 2004, 3,7). His interest in *antropofagia* was based on the cannibalistic rituals of the Tupinambá Indians that inhabited Brazil at the time of the European conquests. De Andrade was fascinated by their ceremonial practice of capturing and eating their prisoners, which they believed enabled them to absorb their enemy's strength and

assimilate their identities (Clastres 2015, 226–30). Building on this historical practice, his “Manifesto Antropófago” asserted a new conception of antropofagia, in which European cultural and artistic influences would be “cannibalized” to make them authentically Brazilian, rather than derivative (Lagnado 2015, 112). In its first, modernist phase, then, antropofagia emerged as a tactic of the Brazilian avant-garde to adopt European artistic and literary styles, while still asserting cultural agency in the face of pervasive European cultural hegemony. It also served as a nativist instrument for Brazilian artists to celebrate their own “authentic” *Brasildade* (Brazilian identity).²⁴

After its initial conception as a cultural theory in the 1920s, antropofagia re-emerged in the late 1960s as an influential anti-authoritarian and anti-imperialist political strategy during the harshest years of the Brazilian dictatorship by artists associated with the Brazilian popular music and arts movement of Tropicália. Influenced by the “Manifesto Antropófago,” these artists drew on the concept of antropofagia to assert a form of *Brasildade* that resisted the dictatorship’s nationalism and critiqued U.S. economic and cultural interventions in the country (Asbury 2009, 27; Basualdo 2007, 15). They did this through the assimilation and transformation—or “cannibalization”—of cultural forms to subvert them from within (Dunn 2001, 121). Though the Tropicália era had passed, by the mid-1970s, antropofagia still dominated in the Brazilian cultural imaginary as a metaphor of political resistance, and Pape returned to the theme several times in her art practice.²⁵ Her anti-authoritarian anarchism and receptivity to Leftist ideas also cemented her stance against the dictatorship.²⁶ In fact, just two years before she created the *Eat Me* film, she had been imprisoned and tortured by the military police for her dissident activities.²⁷ Given Pape’s radical politics and the film’s references to eating, it can be read as drawing on the metaphor of antropofagia as a mode of critique. For instance, Pape’s evocation of “gluttony” and “lust” in the film’s title recall Christianity’s Seven Deadly Sins, and as such, the work can be interpreted as a critique of the religious disciplinary values intrinsic to Brazil’s pervasive Catholic culture (Machado 2006, 98, 142).²⁸

More importantly, the film compares consumerism to hunger and sexual desire. It could even be said to “cannibalize” television by “consuming” the language of marketing in order to critique the dictatorship’s collusion with mass media propaganda entities (like Globo) and U.S. economic interests. In part, this “cannibalization” is achieved through the film’s high production values and its tightly controlled framing and pace of montage, resulting in a slick aesthetic that recalls television.²⁹ Its saturated colours also lend an eroticism that also mimics the language of advertising and underscores what one critic described as “the use of eroticism as a vehicle of consumption.”³⁰ Pape equates cannibalistic “eating” not with decolonization or cultural appropriation, as it had been mobilized by Oswald de Andrade during the modernist period, but rather with the ways capitalist media exploit sexuality to stimulate the lust for consumer goods.

The titular term “luxúria”—translating as “lust” in English—also has connotations with the words “luxury,” “decadence,” and “excess,” thus evoking consumerism and

²⁴ De Andrade was a member of the white, bourgeois, urban artistic elite, and wrote the Manifesto for a similar demographic (Rolnik 1998, 139).

²⁵ Pape’s previous work, *Roda dos Prazeres* (Wheel of Pleasures, 1968), an interactive installation in which participants were invited to “taste” different colours from a circle of bowls containing coloured liquids, spurred her interest in the sensual pleasures of the mouth. Her later 16mm, black-and-white film *Catiti-Catiti* (1978) explicitly addressed the history and myths of cannibalism with a plot that followed a protagonist (played by Luís Otávio Pimentel) who eats continually (Candela 2017, 10; Ferreira 2017, 49).

²⁶ Pape described her politics as such: “I’m intrinsically an anarchist . . . I have this terrible inclination not to respect rigid structures. I cannot abide power and hierarchies . . .” (Pape [1997] 2017, 23).

²⁷ Pape participated in the anti-dictatorship “March of the One Hundred Thousand,” on June 26, 1968 in response to increasing police repression of student protests. Later, she provided logistical support to political dissidents, who turned her in when they were arrested. In February 1973, she was arrested, imprisoned, and tortured for several months. Under pressure from her husband Günther Pape, who had connections with military personnel, she was given a military trial and was barely acquitted by a jury of four to three (Candela 2017, 11; Crockett 2017, 171–72; Mattar 2003, 79–80).

²⁸ Pape’s interest in the confluence of the Christian sins of gluttony and lust with sexualized mass media representations of women’s bodies echoes an erotic *Nova Objetividade Brasileira* painting by Teresinha Soares, titled *Pecados Mortais* (Deadly Sins, 1968), which may have influenced *Eat Me* (Gotti 2015).

²⁹ *Eat Me*’s 16mm film stock boasts a rich colour quality and a crisp image, and the film’s editing is systematic: the timing of the cuts was mathematically determined (Pape 2001, 91).

³⁰ “... o uso do erotismo como veículo de consume” (“Mulher-Objeto: da fome ao sexo, da gula a luxúria” 1976, n.p.)

³⁰ The film's titular phrase, "A gula ou a luxúria" (gluttony or lust), came from Pape's earlier sculpture *Caixa das Formigas* (Box of Ants) that she had exhibited in 1967 in the *Nova Objetividade Brasileira* exhibition at MAM/RJ. Intended as a critique of the institutional space of the museum, it comprised an open mirrored box, on the bottom of which was drawn a bull's eye of three black circles: on top of this was placed a small piece of raw meat along with live ants. Above the circle appeared the words: "a gula ou" (gluttony or), and below it: "a luxúria" (lust), which according to Pape, referred to the relationship between "sexual devouring and hunger" (devoração sexual e da fome), concepts that she returned to in *Eat Me* (Pape 1998, 28–29; de Moraes 1995, D5).

³² Vanessa Rosa Machado (2006, 361) suggests that Pape may have utilized the "Conchas Cook" advertisement for its association with women's traditional roles as cooks and because ladles have a "suggestive" feminine form.

³³ I thank Luisa Valle for pointing out the meaning of this double-entendre to me. Maggie Kilgour (1990, 7) has also highlighted the fact that in many cultures, eating and consumption are often used as metaphors for sexual intercourse.

³⁴ According to Pape ([1998] 2017, 44), the *Eat Me* film was projected within the *Eat Me* installations, but should be considered an independent work.

advertising.³¹ By "cannibalizing" commercials, Pape reveals how the literal "consumption" of food and objects mimics sexual acts (such as the suggestive image of a mouth sucking a sausage), as a critique of the "consumption" of products in consumer culture. According to art historian Claudia Calirman, the abrupt interruption of the soundtrack of the Conchas Cook ladle advertisement over the sexual moaning of the pulsating female voices at the end implies "an interrupted sexual consummation," replacing a consumer product with sexual satisfaction (Calirman 2014, 25).³²

Pape also marshals images evoking gluttony, desire, and excess to resist the dictatorship's conservative values around gender and sexuality. Its alternating close-up shots of a female mouth (that of Pape), and two male mouths (those of artists Cláudio Sampaio and Artur Barrio), which are bearded, but also wearing lipstick, present gender as fluid and non-binary. The title is also a play on words—"to eat" ("comer") is a double-entendre; it is also slang for "to fuck."³³ By directly addressing the viewer to "eat me," Pape also implicitly invites them for sex, a provocation which can be read as a tactic for claiming agency over her sexuality. This also parallels a common tactic used in *pornochanchada* titles: employing double-entendres to bypass the censors (such as the use of the verb "dar," in titles like *Eu dou o que ela gosta* [I Give Her What She Likes, 1975]: "dar" means "to give," but also suggests sex) (Shaw and Dennison 2014, 92). Representations of excess and gluttony were also common in *pornochanchadas*, particularly in scenes depicting gluttonous pre- or post-sex overeating in films like *Essa gostosa brincadeira a dois* (This Tasty Game for Two, 1974). Such scenes, according to Brazilian cinema studies scholar Stephanie Dennison, "celebrate a state of barbarity that functions as a challenge to the ethos of the dictatorship" (Dennison 2011, 236). Pape also used excess to challenge and undermine the regime's norms. Pape described the film as "an attack on the mass media," but explains that the censors "read [it] as pornography," and for this reason, it was banned from distribution in cinemas for three years (Pape 2001, 91). Though it shared much in common with the more "accepted" genre of *pornochanchadas*, the film's privileging the female gaze and sexual agency was probably what made it so intolerable to the censors.

The *Eat Me* Installations, 1976

In addition to the film version of *Eat Me*, there were also two iterations of an installation with the same title created a year later, one at Galeria Arte Global (GAG) in São Paulo, and one at MAM/RJ, both of which treated themes around gender and sexuality and which were also censored to varying degrees.³⁴ The first *Eat Me* installation was presented as a part of Pape's exhibition *Lygia Pape: Obras* (the first solo show of her career), in May 1976 at the now-defunct GAG. Owned and operated by the Globo Television Network, its goal was to promote contemporary Brazilian

art and young artists (Shtromberg 2016, 99–102). As a part of the gallery’s programming, Globo Television reported on its exhibitions during primetime national broadcasts, right before the most competitive timeslot of the eight o’clock *telenovela* (“novela das oito”) (Enciclopédia Itaú Cultural, s.v. “Galeria Arte Global”).³⁵ Like the film, Pape intended the *Eat Me* installation as a critique of the objectification of women in consumer culture and the mass media, but through the use of actual objects and spaces that hybridized a sales showroom and a nightclub (Pape 1983b, 47).³⁶ Pape divided the white cube space into two sections lit with coloured lights: one room was red and one blue. In the middle of each coloured space were cube-shaped display cases, which presented small paper sacks (the size and shape of popcorn bags), imprinted with a lipstick “kiss” and signed by the artist (figs. 2, 3). Pape filled these sacks with what she called “Objects of Seduction”—perfumes, nudie calendars, aphrodisiac lotions, pubic hair, magic recipes, peanuts (believed to be a male aphrodisiac), and what she described as “feminist texts.”³⁷ Each bag was for sale for one cruzeiro a piece (Pape 1983b, 47).

In addition to the projection of the *Eat Me* film inside the gallery, the GAG show also included an auxiliary element outside the exhibition space: a thirty-second video of what Pape ([1998] 2017) describes as “a frankly pornographic mouth” (44), which was broadcast on the Globo Television Network. While it is unclear what exactly the video looked like, or how many days the ad actually aired, Pape (1976, 6) insisted that by “penetrating” people’s homes through the mass media, she was displaying a virtual exhibition.³⁸ Moreover, by appropriating a television commercial, Pape effectively “cannibalized” it by absorbing its form and reformulating it. She infiltrated the actual broadcast circuits with a sexy image as an ironic critique of the ways real advertisements exploited lust to sell products, an act made even more radical by undertaking it on the Globo Network, the official communication arm of the dictatorship.³⁹

The GAG exhibition was supposed to run for about two weeks (May 11–28, 1976), but the authorities closed it within a day, censoring it for its allegedly pornographic content.⁴⁰ Since GAG was directly tied to the television network, it was under more intense scrutiny from the censors than other experimental art galleries. The network claimed that audiences complained about the immoral and pornographic content of the film via letters and telephone calls to the station (Trizoli 2018, 269).⁴¹ Ironically, it was precisely pornography that Pape sought to appropriate in order to critique it—not for its eroticism, which she playfully endorsed—but rather to expose the direct links between the sale of women’s sexuality and the sale of products.

The second and longer iteration of the *Eat Me* installation took place at MAM/RJ from August 12–30, 1976, in what was called the “experimental space,” which was larger than GAG and black instead of white.⁴² Along one wall of the gallery were three small booths, structured with draped black plastic and lit with red spotlights (fig. 4). Inside each booth, Pape placed the sacks containing the Objects of Seduction on low black platforms. The sacks in the first room contained coloured perfume bottles, makeup, and hand mirrors; those in the second room contained

³⁵ Of the four Globo telenovela timeslots, the 8pm slot was the most widely viewed (Rêgo 2003).

³⁶ Because I was unable to locate photographic documentation of this show, my description of this installation is based on contemporaneous exhibition reviews.

³⁷ I have been unable to discern which specific “feminist texts” were included in the sacks, but they are mentioned in Francisco Bittencourt (1976, 3).

³⁸ I could not find a visual record of this work, and thus cannot analyse it visually beyond Pape’s description. It was likely from the same footage of the sexy mouths used in the *Eat Me* film.

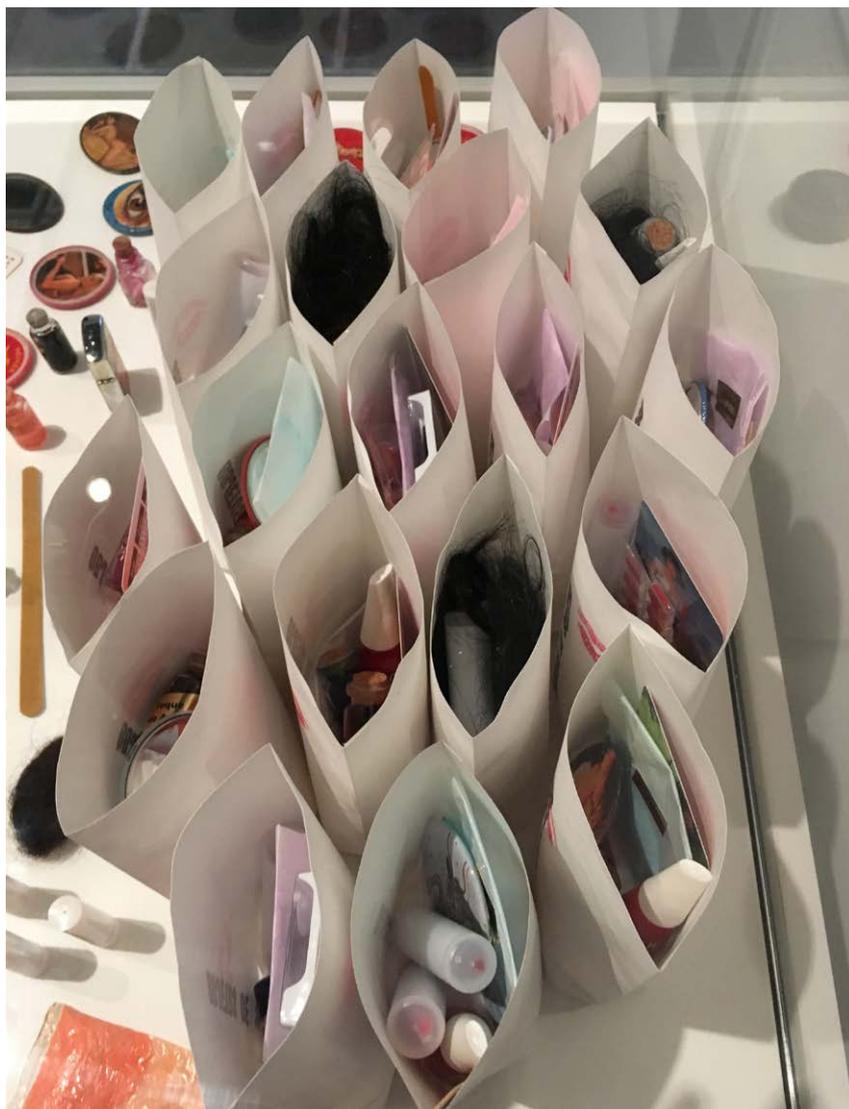
³⁹ Pape also claimed that the video had a viral effect and it actually influenced real advertisements on the channel (Pape 1977, 8–9).

⁴⁰ This was not the first time that art containing explicit nudity had been censored by the authorities. When Brazilian artists Wesley Duke Lee and Nelson Leirner presented their Happening, *O Grande Espetáculo das Artes* (the Great Spectacle of Arts, 1963), in the João Sebastião bar in São Paulo, which included a striptease show and a series of erotic prints on the walls that audiences had to use flashlights to see, it was shut down by the police (Calirman 2012, 38). In a later performance titled *O Corpo é a Obra* (The Body is the Work, 1970), Antonio Manuel attended the opening of MAM/RJ’s “Modern Art Salon” completely nude, which was also blocked by police (da Costa 2005, 86).

⁴¹ See also Vilma Homero (1988, 6), and Wagner Barreira (1988, n.p.).

⁴² My description of the MAM/RJ *Eat Me* installation is based on photographs. The São Paulo show was held in May 1976, and the MAM/RJ show—originally intended to be held in October 1975—was held two months later from August 12–30, 1976.

Lygia Pape, *Objetos de sedução* (Objects of Seduction), original items: 1976, refabricated items: 2017. Paper bags, dentures, false eyelashes, mirrors, perfumes, and other cosmetic items. © Projeto Lygia Pape. Photograph by Gillian Sneed, taken at the exhibition, *Lygia Pape: A Multitude of Forms*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, U.S.A. (May 21 – July 23, 2017).



Figs. 2, 3 – Lygia Pape, *Objetos de sedução* (Objects of Seduction), original items: 1976, refabricated items: 2017. Paper bags, dentures, false eyelashes, mirrors, perfumes, and other cosmetic items. © Projeto Lygia Pape. Photograph by Gillian Sneed, taken at the exhibition, *Lygia Pape: A Multitude of Forms*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, U.S.A. (May 21 – July 23, 2017).



Fig. 4 – Installation view of *Eat Me: A Gula ou a Luxúria?* (Eat Me: Gluttony or Lust), Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, 1976. Photograph by Maurício Cirne. © Projeto Lygia Pape. Image in: Lygia Pape, Luis Otávio Pimental, and Mário Pedrosa, *Lygia Pape, Arte Brasileira Contemporânea*, edited by Afonso Henriques Neto (Rio de Janeiro: Edição Funarte, 1983), p. 38.

hair, cigarettes in the shape of lipstick, and calendars with photos of sexy women; and those of the third room contained peanuts and “feminist texts” by Brazilian women authors.⁴³ On the back wall of each room hung neon signs spelling out the words “Eat Me: a Gula ou a Luxúria”—one in green, one in yellow, and one in red—creating a glow that critic Frederico Morais (1976) described as a “mix between a motel, a nightclub, [and] a cabaret.”⁴⁴ Evoking peep show booths, the little rooms conjured the spaces where sex is bought and sold.

Opposite the booths were three large glass-covered, cube-shaped display cases, inside of which Pape presented an array of quotidian and erotic things, all brand new and neatly arranged as if for sale, including twenty shiny red apples dotting a bed of curly-haired wigs, an artful array of objects including a corset, a curved hairpiece, a pair of dentures, fake nails, fake eyelashes, nylons, and other “clichés of seduction.”⁴⁵ These were all flanked by rows of neatly aligned circular mirrors, posters of nude women, and “literature for men.”⁴⁶ As with the film and the black booths, these display cases created an ironic equation between economic consumerism and physical consumption (eating and sex/gluttony and lust).

While Pape had previously “penetrated” the private spaces of people’s homes through a television advertisement, in the MAM/RJ version of the work, she infiltrated public space with a film projected on the external wall of the museum, depicting herself sexily beckoning spectators to enter with her index finger. Two photographic stills of this film depict the artist standing before a red curtain and in a green velvet blouse, her head cocked slightly to the side, smiling playfully at the camera, her hand thrust forward with her index finger erect and curling toward her, as if seductively beckoning the viewer.⁴⁷ The exterior projection faced a busy highway outside the museum and was quickly censored for “interfering with traf-

⁴³ Pape included the feminist texts as a “contradiction” (Bittencourt 1976, 3; Pape 1983b, 47).

⁴⁴ Frederico Morais (1976, n.p.).

⁴⁵ Lygia Pape quoted in Bittencourt (1976, 3).

⁴⁶ Bittencourt (1976, 3).

⁴⁷ I have not seen the film, and I do not know if it is extant. Curator Glória Ferreira (2017, 50) compares Pape’s image to a prostitute summoning a client to a brothel.

⁴⁸ I determined the set-up of the space (including my assumption that the chairs facing the wall were intended for film screenings) from installation photographs. The film's screening schedule is unknown.

⁴⁹ "... Lygia revela o que se esconde atrás deste falso brilhante do consumismo—a sociedade patriarcal."

⁵⁰ "este projeto referem-se a mulher-objeto e seu uso no consumo: ... que impregna a visão da sociedade de consumo de massa em moldes patriarcais."

⁵¹ "... a exposição não tinha um discurso ideológico assim direto no sentido de ser uma transação feminista, porque eu tenho sérias dúvidas sobre essas posições."

⁵² For instance, curator Paulo Herkenhoff (2016) has acknowledged that many Brazilians think the discussion of feminism "is inappropriate in the context of Brazilian art" (190). (Here Herkenhoff is speaking of a general anti-feminist bias in the Brazilian art world at large, not about his own views). Feminist curator Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda (2002) has also written, "Historically, it has always been uncomfortable for Brazilian women to hold public commitment to feminist struggles" (321–31).

fic" (Ferreira 2017, 50). An identical image of Pape beckoning spectators to enter was positioned inside the show, hidden behind a curtain at the entrance. It is likely that Pape also projected the *Eat Me* film inside the gallery near the display cases, on a wall in front of two rows of chairs.⁴⁸

As with the previous installation at GAG, these moving image projections inside and outside the museum connected its interior and exterior spaces, an arrangement which Pape claimed was grounded in her Neoconcrete roots and fascination with the moebius strip (a half-twisted, looped strip with one continuous surface) (Pape [1998] 2017, 44). Yet, a more obvious reading is that it represented her exploration of the dichotomies between public and private spaces, and revealed her observations about which aspects of women's sexuality must remain hidden and which could be made explicit during the regime, thus gendering the moebius strip's formal thrust.

Uneasy Feminisms

Ultimately, both the *Eat Me* film and its two related installations functioned as a critique of the objectification of women and the exploitation of sexuality in Brazilian advertising, and other mass media forms like *pornochanchadas*. Frederico Morais (1976) even described the project as revealing "what is hiding behind consumerism's false shine—patriarchal society,"⁴⁹ and Pape (1976) explained that the project referred to "the woman-as-object and its use in consumerism: ... which permeates consumer society's vision in patriarchal ways"⁵⁰ (6). Yet, despite her use of language evocative of feminist thinking, Pape (1983b) did not label herself this work as feminist. Instead, she claimed that she did *not* intend it as a "feminist transaction, because I had serious doubts on these positions"⁵¹ (47).

Pape's disavowal of feminism was probably due to a number of factors, including Brazilian stereotypes that feminism was doctrinaire, aggressive, and man-hating, and moreover, imperialist (Alvarez 1989, 21; Trizoli 2012, 410–20). Pape (1976, 6) saw herself privileging instead phenomenological sensory experience, and she likely felt that her own light-hearted play with eroticism and desire was at odds with a dogmatic feminist argument, views rooted in the broader histories of feminism in Brazil. Though there had been women's movements in the country since the turn of the twentieth century, the concept of "feminism" remained contentious in the country until recently.⁵² After a "first wave" struggle for improved educational access and suffrage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a "second wave" emerged in the 1970s in response to oppression and economic instability under the dictatorship (Miller 1990, 10–26; Sarti 1989, 75–90). This women's movement materialized from two branches of the anti-authoritarian resistance struggles: a broad umbrella of Marxist and Leftist political organizations and dissident groups and the progressive sec-

tors the Catholic Church, which formed an unexpected coalition in opposition to the regime (Hollanda 2003, 17). Even so, many Brazilian women rejected the term “feminism” because they associated it with the U.S. and viewed it as a tool of “Yankee imperialism” (Alvarez 1989, 21, 62). In fact, all sectors of Brazilian society—the Right, the Left, and the mass media—stereotyped self-labelled “feminists” as privileged *petites bourgeoisies*, frustrated man-haters, or lesbians, in turn revealing the pervasive homophobia of this era (Fisher 1993, 204; Trizoli 2012, 473). The dictatorship deemed feminism subversive, and members of the working classes and the Left suspected it was a bourgeois attempt to weaken the labour movement (Fisher 1993, 204).

As such, Brazilians initially dismissed U.S. and European second-wave feminist texts when they arrived in Brazil. Though Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949) was first published in Portuguese in 1960, male Leftist intellectuals deemed this work by the “wife” of Jean-Paul Sartre as too “cerebral.”⁵³ When Betty Friedan visited Brazil in 1971 to release the Portuguese translation of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), the press mocked her as an ugly, bourgeois, man-hater, and many sectors of society derided the book.⁵⁴ It was not until the late 1970s that these texts became more widely read, mainly among Brazilians living in exile abroad.

Instead, many Brazilian women read Brazilian authors who addressed feminist themes in their writing, but who did so while assiduously avoiding the negative stereotypes and connotations of U.S. and European feminism. These included Rose Marie Muraro (1930–2014), Heleieth Saffioti (1934–2010), Carmen da Silva (1919–1985), and Heloneida Studart (1937–2007). As local women who had gained visibility writing for popular magazines and newspapers, and who distanced themselves from foreign brands of feminism, they were well liked among Brazilian women, especially the white urban middle classes. Under the auspices of Marxism and anti-imperialism, they incorporated ideas from both de Beauvoir and Friedan in their writings, all the while disavowing an overtly “feminist” label (Trizoli 2012, 471–72).

By the mid-1970s, Left-wing, middle-class feminists and working-class women joined forces in the fight against dictatorship, and they eventually began to reject the idea that gender struggle had to be subordinated to class or democratic struggle (Alvarez 1989, 61; Sarti 1989, 75). In 1979, the government granted amnesty to exiled dissidents, allowing them to return to Brazil. This provided more space for feminist mobilization, because returning exiles brought with them U.S. and European feminist politics and theories, which were received with less resistance than before (Alvarez 1989, 25, 40). These feminists encouraged the women’s movement to be autonomous from the overarching Leftist umbrella groups in which they were previously subsumed, finally permitting a broader feminist mobilization in Brazil in the 1980s (Fisher 1993, 205).

Even so, the Brazilian art world still did not fully embrace feminism.⁵⁵ As Simone Osthoff has pointed out, “issues of gender have never been high on the [Brazilian] artistic-political agenda” (Osthoff 2010, 76).⁵⁶ While Brazilian women artists’ own

⁵³ *The Second Sex* first circulated in Brazil (in French) in the 1950s, prior to the Portuguese-language edition being published in 1960. Although de Beauvoir was in Brazil with Sartre for about two months in 1960—where she attended intellectual circles and gave a few lectures and interviews to newspapers—it was not until the 1970s that *The Second Sex* became more commonly read (Candiani 2018; Borges 2008, 5).

⁵⁴ Rose Marie Muraro, editor of Editora Vozes, which published *The Feminine Mystique* in Brazil, invited Friedan to the country. Friedan gave several talks in Rio de Janeiro, which the press reported on negatively: Rio’s leading newspaper, the *Jornal do Brasil*, described Friedan as appearing like an “aging transvestite,” and a female reporter described her as “ugly” (Hahner 1990, 189).

⁵⁵ For an overview of the resistance toward feminism in Latin American art, see Fajardo-Hill (2017, 21–22).

⁵⁶ “. . . questões de gênero nunca terem sido uma prioridade na agenda artístico-política.”

⁵⁷ Some examples include Tarsila do Amaral, Anita Malfatti, Maria Martins, and Mira Schendel. This fact problematizes Linda Nochlin's (1971) famous question, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" (22–39).

⁵⁸ In 1991, Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda presented her essay, "O Estranho Horizonte da Crítica Feminista no Brasil" (The Strange Horizon of Feminist Criticism in Brazil), at the Ibero-Americanist Institute Presussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, November 20–24, 1991, which she later published. In the late 1990s, artists, critics, and scholars organized a series of feminist debates about Brazilian art history at the Museu da República in Rio de Janeiro (Osthoff 2010, 78, fn. 12). Roberta Barros (2016, 14) has pointed out that in the scholarly field of literary studies in Brazil, feminist theories faced less resistance.

⁵⁹ For instance, in a review of the MAM/RJ *Eat Me* installation, critic Francisco Bittencourt (1976, 3) highlighted the work's critique of sexism in advertising and society, while placing the blame on women themselves.

⁶⁰ "arroubo feminista"

⁶¹ See, for instance Nelson (2012, 40), Calirman (2014, 19), Lamoni (2015, 71), and Barros (2016, 121–25).

⁶² *A Mulher na Iconografia de Massa* resulted from twelve months of scholarly and sociological research by Pape, and was completed with funding from the Funarte Foundation (Fundação Nacional de Artes) in Rio de Janeiro in 1977. It also echoes the title of an exhibition in which Pape had participated, titled *O Artista Brasileiro e a Iconografia de Massa* (The Brazilian Artist and Mass Iconography), curated by Frederico Morais in April 1968, which explored the impact of mass media on Brazilian artistic production (Gotti 2015).

resistance to feminist readings of their work reflects this persistent cultural taboo, it also stems from legitimate critiques and regional differences. Their hesitance to fully embrace an explicitly feminist position was understandable given the repressive conditions of the regime. Also, some Brazilian women felt that while in the U.S., women artists were side-lined by macho art movements like Abstract-Expression, in Brazil, many twentieth-century women artists thrived and rose to great prominence.⁵⁷ Furthermore, they did not want their work pigeonholed as solely "women's art" or as "feminine" (Osthoff 2010, 77). It was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s that Brazilian artists and critics began to more explicitly confront feminism(s) and adopt a feminist label.⁵⁸

Hence, despite the obvious feminist messaging of the *Eat Me* film and installations, because of Pape's own refusal, feminist analyses of the work have been limited. At the time the installations were first shown, only male art critics reviewed them, acknowledging the gendered theme, but through a misogynistic logic that both critiqued feminism and denied that Pape was a feminist.⁵⁹ Surprisingly, it was not until 1992 that anyone referred to *Eat Me* as an overtly "feminist" artwork, when the journalist Angela Pimenta (1992) described it as a "feminist ecstasy"⁶⁰ (2). In recent years, several authors have begun to position Pape's art practice within the broader context of feminist art.⁶¹ For instance, art historian Claudia Calirman (2014, 19) has argued that while Pape adamantly refused the feminist label, she contributed to the feminist canon. Pape, she maintains, was "able to question traditional gender roles and introduce topics related to women's constructed identity in Brazilian art without any overt engagement with the discussion of gender" (Calirman 2014, 19). This seems to be wilfully blind: Pape is explicitly dealing with gender. Pape not only represents non-binary gender and gender fluidity in the *Eat Me* film, but she also criticizes the Brazilian mass media's objectification of women in the installations. In contrast to Simone Osthoff (2010), who has argued "there is no approach or feminist theory connecting [Brazilian women's] works" (75), I argue that Pape's ideas can be squarely framed within feminist discourses on gender.

The Woman in Mass Iconography

As further substantiation of this argument, we can turn to a research project Pape undertook in 1977 titled *A Mulher na Iconografia de Massa* (The Woman in Mass Iconography), which directly relates to the ideas in the *Eat Me* film and installations.⁶² Pape's thesis-like project, comprising over fifty pages of "poetic" text, infographics, and photographic documentation, developed a visual archive of representations of women in mass media (billboards, advertising, etc.) in and around the urban centres and outlying favelas of Rio and São Paulo, in order to examine how such images were constructed and consumed. It reads like a second-

wave feminist critique of representations of women in the mass media, recalling U.S. and European feminist writings, including de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, as well as the writings of Brazilian feminists Studart and Muraro.

By way of example: Friedan and de Beauvoir discuss the "othering" and "objectification" of women in society and cultural representations, ideas that Pape also rehearses in her text. Echoing Friedan's argument ([1963] 2013, 242–76), that the mass media constructs women's identities, Pape maintains that the Brazilian mass media transforms women into mythological figures, thus coercing them to accept as normative the idealized beauty represented in telenovelas, films, and women's magazines (Pape 1977, 23). While it is unknown if Pape had read de Beauvoir or Friedan, she was likely aware of Studart and Muraro, who wrote for popular women's magazines at the time. Studart's *Mulher Objeto de Cama e Mesa* is even mentioned in a 1976 review of *Eat Me* at MAM/RJ by Frederico Morais, so it likely Pape was aware of the book.⁶³ Much like Pape's equation in *Eat Me* of women's bodies with products for sale, Studart (1974) writes in *Mulher: Objeto da cama e mesa*, "Like soap, shampoo, fashionable dress, women must be consumed"⁶⁴ (28). Studart's concern with the use of women's sexuality to sell products directly aligns with Pape's critiques.

Although Pape did not include any feminist texts in the bibliography for *The Woman in Mass Iconography*, she did include Rose Marie Muraro's *A automação: e o futuro do homem* (Automation and the Future of Man, 1968).⁶⁵ While not explicitly feminist in terms of its focus on the Information Age, Muraro's book (1968, 121–22) does include a section on women's sexual liberation, and the books she published directly before and after were overtly feminist, even while strongly informed by socialism and essentialism. Her previous book, *A Mulher na Construção do Mundo Futuro* (Woman in the Construction of the Future World, 1966), argues that because of women's "inherent" maternal instincts, they are especially positioned to create a more egalitarian society; and her subsequent book, *Libertação sexual da mulher* (Women's Sexual Liberation, 1970), a critique of capitalism, argues that within the era of technological innovation, mass culture's harmful effects can only be overturned through gender equality and sexual liberation.

I hypothesize that Pape had read both *A Mulher na Construção do Mundo Futuro* and *Libertação sexual da mulher*, and that they impacted her feminist provocations in the *Eat Me* works. Like Muraro (1966, 58), Pape (1977, 25) writes about "mass culture" and its nefarious effects on women and their roles in society. In *Libertação sexual da mulher*, Muraro (1970, 48, 64) critiques representations of women's representation in the mass media, complaining they function merely as erotic objects for men's pleasure, a critique that Pape also makes in *Eat Me*. Muraro (1970, 57) also anticipates Pape's equation of sexual consumption and market consumption in *Eat Me*.

Yet, given these similarities, it is surprising that Pape repeatedly insists that these views are not "feminist." For instance, on the ways patriarchy oppresses women,

⁶³ Morais (1976, n.p.).

⁶⁴ "Como sabão, xampu, roupas da moda, as mulheres devem ser consumidas."

⁶⁵ Pape's bibliography lists European theoreticians of semiotics and phenomenology, such as Umberto Eco, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean Baudrillard, and Roland Barthes. The text also demonstrates affinities with cybernetic and information theories, such as Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* (not listed on the bibliography).

⁶⁶ "Sem nenhum preconceito feminista, a sociedade de massa e seu caráter patriarcal, confere a alimenta essa postura de ser de segunda linha para a mulher . . ."

⁶⁷ “Não há aí nenhum travo de feminismo, somente que o arcabouço mantem a mulher presa de uma postura que até mesmo nos lazeres permanece a mesma: subsidiária dos desejos masculinos.”

⁶⁸ “Há dois tipos de feminismo: um antigo . . . que põe a mulher contra o homem . . . Mas há outro que usa a opressão da mulher dentro de uma luta mais global e sintetiza dialeticamente essa luta pela justiça. É nesse sentido que eu me coloco.”

⁶⁹ “Há hoje em dia, uma tendência mistificante de falar em essências e de teorizar sobre os caminhos ‘naturais’ da mulher.”

⁷⁰ In some ways, it anticipated the later Brazilian Movimento de Arte Pornô (Porn Art Movement, 1980–1982), an avant-garde performance and poetry group that used explicit nudity and sex to promote “pansexuality,” an open form of sexuality that rejects normative sexual orientations and gender binaries (Kac 2013).

she writes: “Without any feminist preconception, mass society and its patriarchal character confers and feeds this position of women being second string”⁶⁶ (Pape 1977, 27, 29). On women’s social relationship of subordination to men, she states: “There is no aftertaste of feminism, only that the framework keeps the woman trapped in a position that even in leisure remains the same: as a subsidiary of male desires”⁶⁷ (Pape 1977, 27). However, Pape’s approach is very much in keeping with feminist politics in Brazil at the time, in which feminists attempted to distance themselves from U.S. feminism. Even Muraro (1972) was hesitant to identify as an outright feminist until the early 1970s, and then she was careful to distinguish what “type” of feminist she was, stating, “There are two types of feminism: an older one [which] . . . pits woman against man . . . [and] another, which sees women’s oppression within a more global social struggle and dialectically synthesizes that struggle for justice”⁶⁸ (45).

It is likely that Pape, like Muraro, wanted to avoid what was perceived as “bad” (imperialist) U.S. feminism because she did not want to alienate her male colleagues and collaborators, and thus focused instead on media theory, semiotics, and Marxism to structure her feminist arguments. Pape may have also taken issue with the biological determinism of writers like Muraro (1966, 70–71) who equated the “feminine” with essentialized characteristics like maternity and sensitivity. Similarly, French-Brazilian feminist critic Sheila Leirner (1980) commented on her dissatisfaction with essentialist approaches in Brazil to analysing women’s art, writing, “There is now a mystifying tendency to speak in essences and to theorize about the ‘natural’ ways of women”⁶⁹ (49), a critique with which Pape likely agreed.

Given Pape’s ludic treatment of erotic imagery in the *Eat Me* film and installations, I speculate that she sought a less essentialist, more sex-positive feminism, especially given Muraro’s (1970, 80) condemnation of pornography as the outcome of the social repression of male sexuality. In her play with gender and satirizing of pornography and erotica, Pape questions the gender binary and challenges sexual mores as part of her broader strategy to resist the heteronormative and patriarchal values promoted by the dictatorship and mass media. Pape’s brand of feminism embraced gender fluidity and women’s sexual agency, but critiqued the ways the mass media objectified their bodies and instrumentalized female sexuality to sell products. This was a nuanced feminist position at the time, one that was difficult to articulate in the face of the purist positions of U.S. second wave feminism.⁷⁰ Pape’s proposals in the *Eat Me* film and installations were intolerable to the dictatorship’s disciplinary apparatus, which could only interpret her imagery as pornographic, rather than as a subtle critique of mass media images of women, and for these reasons the state censored it in its various forms.

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