

On being big and not being seen: the woman in precious

*Sobre ser grande e não ser vista:
a mulher que há em preciosa*

*Sobre ser grande y no ser vista:
la mujer que hay en preciosa*

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Abstract: This text is part of a theoretical and research endeavor that moves us towards the problematization of the relationships between cultural artifacts, discourses, and modes of subjectivation. This is a reflection on the poetics of the images from the movie "Precious" which portrays an obese woman from a poor neighborhood in New York. We adopt, as methodological procedures, film analysis in conjunction with Michel Foucault's propositions about problematization, that is, to put under suspicion the forms that lead us to think and understand the world as we understand it. Thus, we chose to discuss and problematize the issue of the feminine in relation to obesity, which, together with feminism and cultural artifacts, are our central arguments in this text. We construct our discussions considering the theoretical contribution of Michel Foucault, Guacira Lopes Louro, Alfredo Veiga-Neto, Rosa Maria B. Fischer, among others and other authors. At school, Preciosa is too big for her table; in the restaurant, they deduce that their portion will always be the greater; at home, is humiliated, violated and disrespected, everything seems to suggest an absolute and indissoluble personal chaos. Human conditions and their traps invite us to turn our gaze to the aesthetic standards considered acceptable and that make the life and existence of Claireece a place of solitude.

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Keywords: Gender. Feminism. Fatfobia.

Resumo: Este texto é parte de um investimento teórico e de pesquisa que nos movimenta em direção à problematização das relações entre os artefatos culturais, discursos e modos de subjetivação. Trata-se de uma reflexão acerca da poética das imagens do filme "Preciosa", que retrata uma mulher obesa de um bairro pobre de Nova Iorque. Adotamos como procedimentos metodológicos a análise fílmica em conjunto com as proposições de Michel Foucault acerca da problematização, ou seja, colocar sob suspeita as formas que nos levam a pensar e entender o mundo como entendemos. Assim, escolhemos discutir e problematizar a questão do feminino em relação à obesidade, que, em conjunto com o feminismo e artefatos culturais, são nossos argumentos centrais neste texto. Construímos nossas discussões considerando o aporte teórico de Michel Foucault, Guacira Lopes Louro, Alfredo Veiga-Neto, Rosa Maria B. Fischer, entre outros e outras autoras. Na escola, Preciosa é grande demais para sua mesa; no restaurante, deduzem que sua porção será sempre a maior; em casa, é humilhada, violentada e desrespeitada, tudo parece sugerir um caos pessoal absoluto e indissolúvel. As condições humanas e suas armadilhas nos convidam a voltar nosso olhar para os padrões estéticos considerados aceitáveis e que tornam a vida e a existência de Claireece um lugar de solidão.

Palavras-chave: Gênero. Feminismo. Gordofobia.

Resumen: Este texto es parte de una inversión teórica y de investigación que nos mueve hacia la problematización de las relaciones entre los artefactos culturales, discursos y modos de subjetivación. Se trata de una reflexión sobre la poética de las imágenes de la película "Preciosa", que retrata a una mujer obesa de un barrio pobre de Nueva York. Adoptamos como procedimientos metodológicos el análisis fílmico en conjunto con las proposiciones de Michel Foucault acerca de la problematización, o sea, poner bajo sospechas las

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formas que nos llevan a pensar y entender el mundo como entendemos. Así, elegimos discutir y problematizar la cuestión del femenino en relación a la obesidad, que, en conjunto con el feminismo y los artefactos culturales, son nuestros argumentos centrales en este texto. En el caso de las mujeres, la mayoría de las veces, la mayoría de las veces, En la escuela, Preciosa es demasiado grande para su mesa; en el restaurante, deducen que su porción será siempre la mayor; en casa, es humillada, violada y irrespetada, todo parece sugerir un caos personal absoluto e indisoluble. Las condiciones humanas y sus trampas nos invitan a volver nuestra mirada a los patrones estéticos considerados aceptables y que hacen la vida y la existencia de Claireece un lugar de soledad.

Palabras clave: Género. Feminismo. Gordofobia.

Introduction

We can say that obesity has become a problem. It has been discursively constructed as such, which implies thinking that discourse is not only speaking, it is this need to understand, to explain, and to frame knowledges and subjects with what is being spoken (FOUCAULT, 2012). Different discourses in distinct times constitute obesity and make us look at individuals and classify them. According to the Brazilian Society of Endocrinology and Metabolismⁱ,

obesity is characterized by the excess accumulation of body fat in the individual. The same institution affirms that, when diagnosing adults, the most common parameter is the body mass index (BMI), which is calculated by dividing the patient's weight by the square of his or her height—this is the standard used by the World Health Organization (WHO), which identifies normal weight when the BMI is between 18.5 and 24.9.

The use of this definition of obesity can be used to think about its conditions of emergence based on what Foucault (2012) refers to as the “order of discourse”. What we mean is that the discourses produced about obesity speak about a particular period of history and are constructions aiming to normalize and regulate subjects, their bodies, and their understandings about health. Medicine dedicates itself to establishing the “parameters” of what is obese, activating mechanisms of organizing what is real in their relationships with knowledges, strategies, and practices. Ultimately, what is at play are these effects of discourses and knowledges over subjects.

The obesity definition above refers to another organization to construct its arguments of authority, the World Health Organization (WHO), which also provides a classification associating obesity to health and to the control demanded of individuals. According to WHO, obesity is a disease resulting from the excess of fat in the human body.

39% of adults aged 18 years and over were overweight in 2016, and 13% were obese. [...] Overweight and obesity are defined as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that may impair health. [...] Obesity is a BMI greater or equal to 30ⁱⁱ.

Hence, obesity is constructed as a problem of individual health, of public health, of dietary behavior, of the relationship with physical activity, and of psychiatric disorders, thus related to the functions of medicine, of families, and of schools.

Interested in the relationships between thought and truth, Michel Foucault (2012) takes a historical perspective to establish a correlation between the forms of thinking and knowing and the construction of truths and of subjects, placing the body as an important discursive element in the games of truth regarding the modern subject. This is the theoretical perspective underpinning this article, observing the subjects in their articulations with the discourses, crossed by relations of power-knowledge—the post-structuralist perspective inspired by the works of Michel Foucault. Based on this author, we aim to problematize the subject to invest in what Foucault (1995, p. 7) affirms: “One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that's to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework”. Thus, it is not enough to declare that obesity is a problem, we are interest in thinking about the effects of this truth-discourse in the constitution of subjects, especially regarding how these effects are being extended to the cultural artifacts, which also take part in teaching modes of being in the world.

What is being criticized is that since modernity we are being led to ask ourselves “who am I?”. To answer such question, we feed a need to knowledge constantly invested in the desires, the experiences, and the bodies. Increasingly, the body is taken into consideration to answer this question. The meanings we construct about ourselves and about others are relentlessly shaped by subjects who take the body as the raw material of the identification and affirmation of one’s self. Hence, we defend that the discursive constitutions of the body, of life, and of man affect the modes of subjectivation, especially regarding the construction of the obese female body—of the fat woman—to affirm that we understand that the interference and the action over this body is not natural, but the result of the discursive action over subjects, singularly emergent in the history of modern thought and in what we define as healthy, beautiful, and attractive.

If we pay attention to television news reports, to newspaper articles, and to academic papers from the fields of cosmetology and physical education we can notice the sense of denouncing being invested in these cultural artifacts, insistently resorting to. the overweight increase which has affected society in the last few years. More than employing graphs to prove this increase, these sources have dedicated themselves to pointing out the causes of this individual and societal problem, such as a lack of physical activities associated to changes in dietary habits and the relationship of children with forms of play which abandon games involving regular physical activities in favor of sitting in front of televisions, computers, and cellphones. From this logic of construction, these artifacts activate individuals and institutions such as family and school to act over bodies from childhood to adulthood, placing the body as the center of our attention, control, and vigilance, and establishing desirable ways of inhabiting the world.

It was the will to problematize these constructions and relationships between thought, body, and subjects which led us to choose the film “Precious” as inspiration. The titular obese young woman from a poor New York neighborhood touches our deepest feelings. We could begin this text by addressing several other aspects which call our attention in Claireece Precious Jones—the film’s main character—but obesity is what affects us the most,

personally and academically, at this moment. First, because the labels which speak about bodies and subjects trouble, fixate, and imprison us, affecting us all, obese or otherwise, making us live a time of weight control, engaged in physical activities, concerned with health, diets, medication, surgery, and medical treatments affecting our emotional-sexual relationships. The personal sphere interferes and guides us in the forms of knowing, researching, and writing, as Guacira Lopes Louro (2007) indicates, making our research and our investigation interests speak about our forms of being in the world.

Another motivation for writing this article pertains to our interest in researching the relationship between cultural artifacts, especially cinema, and the constitution of subjects and of subjectivities, since this relationship produces modes of address, images, meanings, and knowledges which are activated to understand the film, while, at the same time, guiding and educating people's lives, "thus teaching modes of being in the culture they inhabit", as Fischer (2002, p. 153) affirms. While organizing this writing, we seek to initially observe the image of the obese black woman constructed by the film to think about the investment on the female body which has organized our society and, finally, about how obesity is discursively constructed.

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Precious Woman

Playing with the film's title, we want to entice the thought: what is the "precious woman" valued by our society? To answer to this provocation we could analyze the film, considering all the discussion possibilities elicited by it even to our professional lives, as educators present in the schools of the city of Juiz de Fora, Brazil, teaching students from the final years of Elementary School. But what moved us, initially, were the representation of the character Precious, the plot, and the drama which sprung from the film. The whole story is centrally marked by the obese body which organizes the character's drama in not dealing well with how this body is spoken of and about, looked at, and disturbed. Her body provides her with a place and an understanding of herself in the game of meanings which historically and socially constitutes us.

Fernando Hernández (2007) makes us think about the importance of connecting a theme and our history. According to this author,

when we say that "something has to do with another thing" we are referring to the things surrounding a theme, to a problem which troubles, questions, affects us; a problem to which we get close by searching for alternative ways to investigate the versions which were built regarding the phenomena we take as objects of our interests (HERNÁNDEZ, 2007, p. 95).

We can establish a dialogue between Hernández (2007) and Elizabeth Ellsworth (2001). Ellsworth (2001), by analyzing modes of address as something pertaining both to film

and to education, uses this term—modes of address—to affirm that it is something which happens between the film and the audience, in an effort towards social change based on the answer to two questions which are presented by films: Who does the film think I am? Who does it want me to be?

For the film to happen and for it to happen in us, each of us, watching it, is required to complete what we are seeing and hearing with our stories, experiences, and meanings. By doing this action and entering the film, we are filling a void between the screen and ourselves, between the social and the individual, in such a way that by doing and thinking about it, we are speaking and looking at ourselves, no longer at the film. Ellsworth's (2001) point is relevant to this article because it relates to both our interest in the film and to the reflection we are proposing based on the film's reception in different educational moments which we are articulating to think about obesity, the female body, knowledges, and subjectivities. By doing this, we are associating the classic aesthetic meaning of the film to its educative function, understanding education as something broader which concerns the constitution of subjects based on the education of their look.

When we watched the film with teachers of different body constitutions, we could notice the overweight body appealed to people, who attributed to it a sense of difficulty, abandonment, negligence, and subjects' lack of love for what they are, for their own bodies. The film contributed to this address by portraying the character's falls, difficult mobility, sad facial expressions, anxiety in how she eats—situations which relate and corroborate what we usually hear about and see in other cultural artifacts which associate obesity to a lack of physical exercise and to an unbalanced diet.

We have worked with the relationship between cinema and educative processes analyzing films in the processes of educating subjects and their looks based on two aspects: the political and the poetical (FERRARI; CASTRO, 2012). In the political aspect, we argue that films build—in the articulation between images, situations, and speeches—their messages, their discursive efforts, their logic. However, we always have the freedom to build something of our own, unique, by filling this empty space between the screen and ourselves. When we do this, we give the film an individual reading which relates to the social, the historical, and the cultural contexts which constitute us; and this is what we call the poetic aspect of films. The poetics of "Precious" also acts in us and in the teachers watching the film, who were already previously addressed since these were exhibitions at teacher training courses.

It is not any body which is placed as the film's protagonist, but the body of a black woman, obese, whose large dimensions are noticed wherever and however she goes. She is looked at, judged, and analyzed simultaneously by the characters composing the film and by the audience watching it. Her story is made of a series of exclusions understood as resulting from her obesity, among which a lack of love or of a romantic experience, as well as other's indifference leading to a lack of friendships. A meaning which is constructed in relation to what we commonly find in our times regarding thin bodies being included, valued, and accepted and the obese bodies being excluded, devalued, and not accepted. This leads to movements of discursive and pictorial resistance in favor of the acceptance of bodies not

limited to their thinness, to their physical and dietary efforts and controls, under the argument that we can be in the world in different shapes, sizes, weights.

The teachers, asked to speak about the film or from it, activated looks and discourses educated by power relationships in which the scientific is strong, for example the medical discourses which attest a rising global concern with health being supplanted by obesity as the cause of a public health problem. Since 2003, the World Health Organization (WHO) has considered obesity as a global epidemic.

However, this discourse is accompanied by a sexist aspect which marks our society and stimulates an even more prejudiced and discriminatory look which befalls mostly the female body, being judgmental and less accepting of obesity for women. Women are more affected by discourses of obesity associating health to beauty, body to physical attraction, which simultaneously establish beauty criteria while judging the bodies which deviate from this norm of valued body.

Not accidentally, Precious associates her lack of love and friends to her obesity. As Rogério José de Almeida (2013, p. 16) affirms, “obese women are frequently excluded from social contexts such as work, school, leisure, sports, among others, and deprived of developing several activities, i.e., of inhabiting the same spaces as thin people”. Precious is pushed by other young people; she is accused of disturbing or blocking her classmates’ view; the school desk is not adequate to her body; her clothes are tight, and her body escape her blouses and pants. These situations build a sense of pity which at once places a negative judgement in those who perform the acts of pushing and refusing the protagonist’s body, but also leads the teachers who watched the film to refuse that situation to themselves, to refuse having an obese body so they can avoid the risk of experiencing similar situations. Associated to the health risks which obesity brings, we can also identify the investment in beauty and youth which obesity affects.

The desire to rethink the human conditions cannot be sidelined... Initially we thought about a body which bears deep marks tying it to prejudice and to loneliness. Thus, it becomes unavoidable to problematize the construction of bodies in our society; a society which is sexist, androcentric, and paradoxically indifferent and judgmental to what escapes the imposed standards, the vigilance of bodies. Luiz Cláudio Kleaim (2016, p. 10) affirms that:

reading a body is weaving it with signs: a name, a race, a gender, a deficiency, a sex, a sexuality—reading a body is recognizing it through language, observing it crossed by mechanisms and norms, power regimes, and biotechnologies. The author posits that we have learned from feminism that to tie a personal nature and an identity to a body is more than conferring it a gender, a sex, a sexuality; it is weaving it (our body) in the social (and sexual) division of work and in the limits of participation/exclusion of the various social spaces, from the restrained (or aggressive) gestures to silicone prosthetics, porn movies, anorexia, and bulimia...

Black, poor, big, and deeply alone, Claireece is never unnoticed... At school she is too big for her desk, in the restaurant waiters assume her dishes are always the biggest, at home she is humiliated, violated, and disrespected. Everything suggests an absolute and permanent personal chaos. The image we have is of an extremely vulnerable woman, violated and illiterate, who found herself amidst a plot of domestic violence.

Precious escapes in a dream: she dreams she is a music star, someone who attends red carpets, who is the recipient of other people's desires. The human conditions and their entrapments are at all times present and we are led to look at this encounter between the social and the individual: the condition of the black woman, completely distant from the beauty standards which are considered acceptable, making Claireece's life and existence a place of loneliness. Obesity is presented as a place of loneliness: beauty standards are armors made of iron or other impossible to mold materials. They are purposefully hard and inflexible. Precious does not fit inside them, and all of us, in a sense, do not as well. Discourses of what is healthy are present in the television and in magazines while doctors present their guides to a long and happy life in a thin, agile, and "beautiful" body in which Claireece certainly does not see herself. Presently, we live amid obese unvalued bodies and thin ones which are valued and understood as a guarantee of success, happiness, and love. However, belonging to one or the other group guarantees nothing.

Cultural artifacts

Cultural artifacts enable important problematizations for the questions which concern us. Cultural Studies explored the relationships between education and cultural artifacts, such as advertising and cinema, understanding them as artifacts which are part of a set of cultural instances which educate subjects through image. Thus, we aim to take the film "Precious" as a cultural artifact which, more than transmitting a message, acts as a cultural pedagogy producing values, knowledges, and subjects, controlling and watching over conducts and modes of being in the world.

Cinema and films construct bodies because the body is not simply a body but also what is spoken about it, its surroundings, and its accessories. With this, we refer to Silvana Goellner (2003) who affirms that the body is constructed by language to gamble in the infinite possibilities we have of transforming bodies and subjects and of what we speak, know, and do regarding them.

Hence, the film "Precious" invites us to think deeply about the construction of the female image. The female body is constantly learning in its relationship with other bodies, in its interaction with other female bodies and their codes of behavior, beauty, and gender performativity, in its relationship with the bodies constituting the family nucleus, the friendship circles, love and sexual partners, but also by means of other bodies present in television, in cinema, at school, on the internet, i.e., with an infinite number of valued and unvalued models. When facing all sorts of imagery to which we are exposed—either as consumable goods or regarding the imposition of a mode of living emphasizing beauty, youth, thinness—there is also, published in magazines, in TV advertising, in flyers, in websites, information seeking to capture us through concepts and ideologies materialized in front of us in a very incisive manner. Considering this, it is as if life had a script to be followed... Regarding these affirmations, Aracy Ernest-Pereira (2005, p. 2) affirms that

the cult of youth and of beauty, the white privilege, the fear of getting old and of death, the fashion, and the collective representations impose canons which only a small number of people can actually reach and impede the majority to feel comfortable in their own bodies and to accept their own images. The author also posits that historically this relationship is built by means of different discursive practices acting to contain bodies; in reality, we find coercion systems which forbid certain bodies—the fat one, the short one, the black one, for example—, and certain words and expressions which rudely refer to the body, such as the ones found in the doors and walls of schools' restrooms.

The idea of construction is central to us and justifies our problematizing view towards the action of cultural artifacts over subjects' lives. Our argument is that there are pedagogies at play in different spaces, and not exclusively at schools. Pedagogies which teach us the whole time to be of a certain gender, to hold certain distinguishable and classifiable sexualities; which tells how to behave, to relate, to act, and to know regarding ourselves and others.

Referring to Elizabeth Ellsworth (2001), to whom films seek to answer two questions invested in the transformation of subjects, we can consider "Precious" to be organized in the understanding of society which has educated a judgmental view of obesity as something undesirable in such a way that the actions performed by subjects in the film can find an echo in the audience, who is also familiar with these actions.

In this sense, the spectators are asked to position themselves and to review how they relate to obesity. They are also led to find affinity with the protagonist's suffering and to reassess their conduct in the social contexts they inhabit. The film reveals the person behind the obese body, exposes this person's sensations and thoughts, something which we do not commonly know in our daily personal relations. Thus, through "Precious" we can think and feel like Claireece, and when we take over these roles which the film proposes, we are being educated by another perspective, by the position of the other, of the different.

The cult of the body is almost an obligation nowadays, and it entails a diet, physical exercises, consumerism, surgical interventions, construction of a self-image in social networks, i.e., actions which paradoxically make bodies more visible and turn them into objects of investigation while silencing them. We often make an effort to hide certain parts of our bodies which are considered unworthy of being showed, and we can also verify an increase of fake profiles in social networks and of digitally manipulated images of ourselves. Thus, we create forms of admiring bodies but also spend time denying the same bodies. Regarding the current production of bodies, which surpasses the organic physiological materiality deriving from medical discourses, Maria Rita de Assis César (2009, p. 269) affirms that "[...] the contemporary body is even more plastic and malleable, since it is destined to an almost infinite number of interventions seeking to produce it as younger, thinner, more flexible, lighter, more agile, more versatile, and faster".

We could have selected another film, another theme, discussions which were less dense even for ourselves at this moment, since we recognize we are subjective amidst these discourses which call us obese. The poetics of "Precious" touches us because we have not always been fat. The film invites us to think about our body trajectories starting from the

present, from the current body, and reveals our desires for thin bodies, either our own or what attracts us in the bodies of others as criteria for romantic and sexual attraction.

Precious's story makes us rethink our own stories to teach us that the way we think the body is directly tied to the process of how we think ourselves, our identities anchored in the bodies which constitute us. We are aware of the desired and expected presence of a thin body, we are culturally taught to recognize this body by means of practices which produce effects over subjects, including or excluding bodies and people. To say that bodies are constructions, that they are tied to people's identities, that they include and exclude, and that they activate knowledges means, above all, to consider that these processes are crisscrossed by power relations (FOUCAULT, 1988).

We experience the pleasure of being seen, the delight of being desired and of having our bodies admired. The sensations of these encounter processes between bodies and subjects teach us, position us in the power relation organized by the desires and by the games of attraction. According to Rosa Fischer (2002, p. 153, emphasis in original),

the "pedagogical device of media" evidences how media operates (particularly television) in the sense of actively participating in the constitution of subjects and of subjectivities to the degree to which it produces images, meanings, and knowledges which somehow are directed towards the "education" of people, teaching them modes of being in the culture they inhabit.

Sometimes we also experience the place of the invisible body, of the body which goes unnoticed for different reasons, either because it is distant from youth (another valued aspect in our society), because it is outside of the ideal weight, or because it refers to another value system, to another fashion, taste, or way of behaving or dressing. Too visible or too invisible. However, because there is desire in us and because there is desire in Precious, something can be different.

The school

Another school, another life. In the web of relationship to which we are exposed, school has a prominent role. In the various stories we experience in our daily lives as teachers—stories of failure, of giving up, and also of resistances, mostly by those who escape the standards which school classifies as acceptable either in terms of behavior, of how one learns, of how one lives one's life, or of gender and sexuality standards—school remains as an important referential. Montserrat Moreno (1999) proposes an interesting reflection on the function of school. According to the author,

school has a double purpose: the intellectual education and the social education of individuals, i.e., the purpose of training them in their own cultural models. However, the author continues, if school is limited to that, it will have done a small favor to society; it will be no more than a reproductive machine of vices and virtues, of knowledge and mediocrity. Montserrat believes school's mission can be much different: instead of teaching what others have thought, it can teach how to think; instead of teaching how to obey, it can teach how to question, how to look for the

reasons behind things, how to begin new paths, new forms of interpreting and organizing the world (MORENO, 1999, p. 17).

School, and consequently the relationship taking place in it, speak of something fundamental in the constitution of our subjectivities: the action of others over us and how much this action, this view of the other over us, defines us. School can be this space for problematization when it helps us doubt what we think, enabling us to think differently. When she notices she had learnt how to read and write, Precious writes and her teacher encourages her, showing her that it is possible to think differently:

The Teacher walks towards Precious and says: "Write".

Precious: "I'm tired, Miss Rain".

Teacher: "If not for yourself, then for the people who love you".

Precious: "Nobody loves me".

Teacher: "People do love you, Precious".

Precious: "Please don't lie to me, miss Rain. Love ain't done nothing for me. Love beat me, it raped me, called me an animal, made me feel worthless, made me sick".

Teacher: "That wasn't love, Precious (the Teacher cries). Your Baby loves you. I love you" (PRECIOSA, 2009).

What exists inside does not necessarily correspond to the misery of feelings one experiences outside. Precious's ghetto was only external. The violence she experienced, her stepfather's abuse, and the lack of love from her mother did not stop her from loving, from showing her son the things no one had shown her.

Poetically, Precious encourages us to be better people. She fills us with hope, makes us think about possibilities, reinvention, love, and strength. Being a woman is a challenge which demands a daily positioning. We believe that, politically, that is a question which is found throughout the film "Precious". The theme of the possibility of reinventing our own lives, of becoming stronger in adversity, of becoming something which no one expected us to become.

"Precious" is not a corny film about overcoming... It is about the human strength found in every action we can take, in small, daily, and common victories which teach, motivate, and modify us. It is about the discursive forces which crossed Claireece and were unable to leave her standing in the same place.

Speaking about discourse, Foucault (2012) allows us to understand that in it we find all the crossing of experience and that the role discursive forces have in the world is more important than the content which might come from them. In the author's own words:

discourse is not simply that which manifests (or hides) desire—it is also the object of desire; and since, as history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized (FOUCAULT, 2012, p. 10).

The discourse present in "Precious", a cultural artifact, allows us to unlearn and to rethink. The images educate us and enable us to be different; thus, when we look at Claireece, we can see ourselves, our troubles, our romantic failures, our rejections... the power of the film "Precious" resides in the absence of the fantastical, as there are no surprising and

elaborate endings, such as the dreams in which the protagonist found refuge, but there is a daily life which can transform people.

Final remarks

In this article, we have focused our analysis in three aspects which interest us in inquiring how we become subjects as a result of educative processes. The first is precisely the broadening of the understanding of education and of what we consider educative processes of subject constitution. The second relates to the pedagogical devices organizing the cultural artifacts and their connections to subjects' educative processes. And the third is cinema as a challenge and a potentiality in the field of education.

Going back to the first aspect, we can refer to the Foucauldian perspective of the modes of subjectivation. As Alfredo Veiga-Neto (2003) indicates, thinking about Foucault's contribution to this field of knowledge is setting in motion a will to knowledge. Furthermore, it means recovering a Nietzschean question which organizes the whole of Foucault's work, according to Veiga-Neto (2003, p. 12): "What are others and what are we doing of ourselves?".

We were also interested, in this article, in discussing the processes of subject constitution amidst discourses, the action over oneself and over others. Looking at and attributing importance to the film "Precious" and to its protagonist was a way to think about how we are the result of educative processes happening beyond schools and beyond what usually takes place in classrooms and other institutionalized educational spaces. We work from a broader understanding of education. When we are born, we come into a world already discursively organized; thus, we are more the result of this discursive world than producers of it, even though there is no discourse without a subject.

However, affirming this does not mean we are or should remain locked to this discursively organized world. We need to make transgressions and deconstructions happen and to overcome the limits imposed by this reality. It was betting in this possibility that this article was written—as an invitation to place under suspicion that which constitutes us so we can make it different. Hence, our understanding of education is broader, considering that the ways of learning, our modes of knowing, of being, of relating to the world, to images, and to knowledges, of behaving, and of constituting others and ourselves is made through actions and knowledges in the different spaces we inhabit.

Working with the knowledges and the images which educate our view and constitute us was a way to discuss the relationship between power and knowledge in the constitution of subjects. This relationship also crosses the definitions of obesity presented at the beginning of this article, but which are also present in schools and in the pedagogical devices of the media. These discursive actions over subjects constitute obesity, and more precisely the obese woman, which is our object of interest in this article.

School takes part in this process, but the pedagogical devices involve other instances of knowledge-power such as cinema. The film "Precious" activates processes of

communication, of knowledge, and of power which organize the understanding of the film while educating subjects towards an understanding of obesity and of its reflections in the social field. School and cinema become an efficient hinge enabling the operation of the powers and knowledges which constitute them and which they teach. Obesity is a device which entails knowledges, images, medical norms, and dietary practices—a series of actions and practices which constitute and make circulate the discursive games which originate both obese and thin subjects.

Lastly, we take cinema, and a film in particular, as the trigger for a discussion by taking into consideration what Ismail Xavier (2008, p. 15) proposes about the relationship between cinema and education. According to this author, a “cinema which “educates” is a cinema which makes us think, not only about cinema, but about the most varied experiences and questions it focuses on”. In other words, the author continues, it is not a matter of “offering a certain content”, but of provoking the reflection, of questioning what is taken as nature, as unquestionable data, even though it is a construct which has a history. We decided on focusing on the discursive constructions of the obese body in order to affirm that bodies have a history, that they are history, they are historic constructions which invite us to pay attention to these advances of subjects on their bodies and, thus, to place under suspicion and to deconstruct our submission to the truth regimes which constitute us.

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Notes

ⁱ Based on the definition found in the institution’s website: <https://www.endocrino.org.br/o-que-e-obesidade/>. Accessed: 11/28/2019.

ⁱⁱ Available in: <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight>. Accessed 11/28/2019.

