

THE IDEAL BODY: BODY REPRESENTATION IN SUBJECTIVITY AND CONTEMPORANEITY¹

O CORPO IDEAL: REPRESENTAÇÃO DE CORPO NA SUBJETIVIDADE E CONTEMPORANEIDADE

EL CUERPO IDEAL: REPRESENTACIÓN DEL CUERPO EN LA SUBJETIVIDAD Y CONTEMPORANEIDAD

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ABSTRACT: This paper, through a bibliographical review, approaches the connection between the subject and the image it has of its body, covering the influence received by the media - print media, television and advertising appeals, which contribute to the massification of concepts and values about the body, which is seen as something that can be manipulated or modified, becoming a pole of deep desires and a great object of investment. The cult of the body shows itself as a characteristic of this time and is based on the daily search for physical perfection, being able to overcome any problem and meet any expectation. It also deals with subjectivity in the face of phenomenological and psychoanalytical findings, as well as its fragmentation as a result of the subject divided in contemporaneity. As to the confrontation of the issue, in what refers to the ideal body pattern, possible harm and psychological consequences of a disproportionate search are listed here.

KEYWORDS: Body. Subjectivity. Image. Contemporaneity.

RESUMO: *O presente artigo, por meio de uma revisão bibliográfica, aborda a relação entre o sujeito e a imagem que ele tem do seu corpo, abrangendo a influência recebida pelos meios de comunicação - mídia impressa, televisão e apelos publicitários, os quais contribuem para a massificação dos conceitos e valores sobre o corpo, que é visto como algo que pode ser manipulado ou modificado, tornando-se polo de profundos desejos e grande objeto de investimento. O culto ao corpo se mostra como característica desta época e encontra-se assentado na busca diária pela perfeição física, sendo capaz de superar qualquer problema e corresponder qualquer expectativa. Aborda-se, ainda, a subjetividade frente às constatações fenomenológicas e psicanalíticas, bem como a sua fragmentação como resultado do sujeito dividido na contemporaneidade. Quanto ao enfrentamento da questão, no que se refere ao padrão de corpo ideal, são aqui elencados possíveis malefícios e consequências psicológicas de uma busca desmedida.*

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Corpo. Subjetividade. Imagem. Contemporaneidade.*

RESUMEN: *A través de una revisión bibliográfica este artículo analiza la relación entre el sujeto y la imagen que tiene de su cuerpo, abarcando la influencia recibida por los medios de comunicación - medios impresos, televisión y atractivos publicitarios, que contribuyen a la masificación de conceptos y valores sobre el cuerpo, que se ve como algo que se puede manipular o modificar, convirtiéndose en un centro de profundos deseos y gran objeto de inversión. La adoración al cuerpo se muestra como una característica de este tiempo y se basa en la búsqueda de la perfección física a diario, pudiendo superar cualquier problema y corresponder a cualquier expectativa. También se aborda la subjetividad frente a los hallazgos fenomenológicos y psicoanalíticos, así como su fragmentación como resultado del sujeto dividido en la contemporaneidad. En cuanto a hacer frente a la pregunta, con respecto al estándar del corporal ideal, los posibles daños y consecuencias psicológicas de una búsqueda sin medida se enumeran aquí.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Cuerpo. Subjetividad. Imagen. Contemporaneidad.*

Introduction

Evaluating the social patterns of beauty, whose concepts have suffered countless influences, transformations and variations, during the course of the body's historicity, it is possible to identify psychological, social and cultural factors that constitute references about the behavior and subjective image of the human being. This is because beauty patterns are forces that, under the aegis of capitalism, make the body an object of consumption, which legitimizes the changes it has undergone, in a daily imposition of standards (FERRAZ; SERRALTA, 2007). In this context, the body is understood as a mutable and/or mutant construction, susceptible to interventions concerning scientific development and technological evolution through cultural promotion (GOELLNER, 2003, p. 28).

In the psychological universe of the ideal body and its subjective and contemporary representation, object of study of this work, there are discussions about the standardization of the body in daily life, imposed by society. Such discussions portray what individuals feel and desire, how they act and create, in the capitalist view, so that a form of consumption that legitimizes bodily changes may be taken.

The modern individual does not, therefore, demonstrate a naturally formed identity, but rather constructed in front of social relations. The search for the established body image, an impressive phenomenon today, entails high costs and health risks, generating stress, anxiety and dissatisfaction with the body itself (HALL, 2006, p. 75).

As regards Brazil, the adaptation to a socially imposed body standard has reached a fugacity threshold, which brings the sensation that such a structure “goes in and out of fashion”, in a rhythm similar to the trends of a certain season (GOLDENBERG, 2005, p. 70). According to data from the G1 website, in the world ranking, the country occupies the second place in plastic surgeries, second only to the United States.

Therefore, this work is justified by the importance of understanding the psychological, social and cultural factors that directly interfere with the parameters of the subjective image of people in the search for the ideal body standard. Thus, both society and the mass media impose, as a synonym of happiness and success, a standardized body model. To better understand the factors listed above, it was necessary to review the literature on the subject, which constituted the corpus of this work.

Regarding the scientific aspect, it is important to identify issues of low self-esteem, inferiority and distortion of body image, so that the person can become aware of the risks that such excessive procedures can generate in their mental and physical health (GANDRA; CÔRREA, 2018).

Having as main objective to understand the phenomenon, in front of phenomenological and psychoanalytic perspectives, this research work proposes a reflection on the ideal body and its consequences in the present time. Specifically, the objectives that the research sought to achieve were: i) to understand how women face the imposition of beauty today; ii) to describe the process of body construction in contemporary times; iii) to establish the possible consequences of social imposition on the ideal aesthetic pattern; iv) to constitute an overview of the psychological factors resulting from the search for an ideal image, as opposed to the one that actually presents itself.

Development

Body conceptions: phenomenological versus psychoanalytic vision

According to Phenomenology, the body is the proper way of being-in-the-world. The subject does not have only a body, the body is not only its dwelling, it is not something that can be undressed, unveiled, but it is the body itself, its body. According to Merleau-Ponty (2006, p. 203), quoted by Gonçalves (2014, p. 18), it is the body that opens the self to the world, putting it in a situation: “The body is our general means of having a world”.

Still for Merleau-Ponty (2006, p. 278), as quoted by Gonçalves (2014), “the body is a natural self, it is the subject of perception”. Therefore, perception is not primarily an act of

thought, but an encounter between the self and the world, which is concretized in the living body.

This experience of the body, while giving way to a knowledge about the perceived object, brings as a correlate a knowledge about the subject of perception itself. This is why Merleau-Ponty affirms that, in the perceptive act, by putting man in contact with the world, the body leads to a re-encounter with oneself and to the recognition that, after all, “I am my body”. The one who perceives (the other) and the perceived (the self) are superimposed, operating a form of consciousness inhabiting a body that is body: “The consciousness of the body invades the body, the soul spreads out in all its parts” (MERLEAU-PONTY, 2006, p. 114).

In this sense, the body is also a latent means of communication of horizontal experience, as an object in the world. The body is based on its social interactions, which are mediated by the consciousness of the world through the physical constitution in question (MERLEAU-PONTY, 2006, p. 122).

In the psychoanalytic clinic, from the beginning, Freud shows in his theorizations that the body has always been in question, a conclusion he makes when facing hysteria in the analytic scene as patients talk about what caused them suffering. It is perceived that the body assumes a clinical relevance, and it is necessary to consider it, since speech possesses the power to “affect the body and thought” (BESSET *et al.*, 2010, p. 01). The pulse, a concept bordering on the organic and the psychic, was the term used by Freud (2007; 1915), as Fernandes (2014, p. 11) points out, to explain that man, affected by the word, which has repercussions on psychic representations and leaves marks that have been registered since his birth, is not a merely biological being.

Freud presented the hysterical body as an erotic body that does not obey the laws of anatomy, a body disputed for pulsional satisfaction. Freud (1914; 1916), as Besset (2008) pointed out, instituted a subject divided by language. Inhabited by the unconscious, the subject was not born with a body, being necessary to build one.

As a vehicle or means of pulsional satisfaction, the body becomes also a vehicle or means of expression of pain and suffering. A suffering that sometimes seems to find difficulty to manifest itself in psychic terms. Thus, the body, as Freud (2007;1930) states, is one of the sources capable of causing man's malaise. Psychoanalysis, therefore, begins exactly at the point where the body and the organism separate.

Therefore, to say that Freud bases the distinction between the biological body and the psychoanalytical body is equivalent to saying, as pointed out by Joel Birman (1991), that

psychoanalysis performs a passage from the logic of anatomy to the logic of representation. The body of psychoanalysis is then a body crossed by language:

In the Freudian interpretation, the hysterical symptoms are articulated in a coherent system, based on the image of the body, and not on the structure of the body, the latter subordinated to the laws of anatomical distribution of organs and functional systems. What is important becomes how the hysterical person experiences its own corporeality, that is, how it invests the different parts of its body and interprets them as surfaces endowed with meaning (BIRMAN, 1991, p. 141, our translation).

Freud emphasizes the importance of the analyst being attentive to how the body presents itself during the session. In this way, psychoanalysis listens to the body beyond its materiality: the symptom that crosses it, the inhibition that paralyzes it, the anguish that assails it. In Lacan's (1985, our translation) understanding, "enjoyment is the property of the living body, which speaks". At first, he placed his concept in the imaginary order, through the mirror stage. A moment that favors the constitution of the I, the unified image of the body.

However, before this period, there is the experimentation of a shattered physical structure, with loose pieces that are confused between what in fact is of the subject and what would be of the other. From the look of a third party, the child establishes the recognition, in the mirror, of the body unity, making it possible to diverge the limits between the self and the other, that is, the thresholds of the physical structure itself (FERNANDES, 2014).

The body, therefore, can be understood as a set of pieces from the erogenous zones, from the somatic source of the pulse and also from the pulsional objects themselves: sinus, feces, voice and vision (LACAN, 1964; 2008). In addition, the subject's relationship with the body, Lacan points out (1964; 2008), is at the core of the analytical experience. The subject's traumatic encounter, a loss suffered, his encounter with love, is heard and seen.

According to Lacan, Coppus *et al.* (2014, p. 20), explain that the body is not one, it is an image in which the self is recognized, it is a tissue of language, marked by the signifiers we bring from the Other. It is also real, it has holes, voids that are not covered, a set of pieces, with an apparent unity, that can be released.

This makes understandable the search of man and science for knowledge and control over the body (COPPUS *et al.*, 2014, p. 20), which can be crossed by language and is condemned to incurable suffering, which has repercussions on the individual's relationship with his body (LACAN *apud* FERNANDES, 2014, p. 7).

The subjectivity in the process of body and image construction: the light of psychoanalysis and phenomenology

Psychoanalysis does not discuss identity or its deconstruction, which is of interest to it, and which it has been dealing with, refers to another dimension of the human: subjectivation (TATAGIBA, 2006, p. 24). That is, the constitution of the subject as an ever-changing self-body, driven by ever-unconscious desire:

The concept of unconsciousness, for a long time, has been knocking at the gates of psychology, asking to enter. Philosophy and literature have almost always manipulated it distractedly, but science has been unable to find use for it. Psychoanalysis took the concept seriously and provided it with a new content (FREUD, 1940; 1938, p. 306 *apud* TATAGIBA, 2006, p. 24, our translation).

Subjectivity, in all its complexity, is housed in the body as a coded place. The condition that man is a body already contains enough mysteries, since the body is the subject, and not of the subject, as already alluded to. However, Freud came to demystify the absolute dominion over thoughts, emotions and even the body, by bringing to the center of discussions, at the end of the 19th century, the concept of the unconscious and a new understanding for sexuality (TATAGIBA, 2006, p. 26).

Until Freud, the body was conceived as the place of representation of the subject and its expression, which supposes a distinct self and body. After Freud, the body is neither a thing nor an obstacle, but an integral part of the subject's totality: "My body is not something I have; I am my body", confirms Birman, adding:

Strictly speaking, there is no subject and its body, in an insurmountable duality and polarity, but a body-subject itself [...]. The separation between body and psychism is not sustainable by the Freudian reading of subjectivity (BIRMAN, 2003, p. 21, our translation).

Sigmund Freud, from his initial theoretical texts, stated that a psychic apparatus would only be constituted in the interaction with another psychic apparatus (FREUD, 1895). It was there that the importance and ascendancy of another human in the advent of the subject and in the conception of human subjectivity was enunciated for psychoanalysis. The way in which the father of psychoanalysis points out that, in the human subject, there is a lack of preparation and helplessness in the face of the threats of the external world, is highlighted. This gives the subject a total dependence on the care of another human being. We emerge and constitute ourselves, therefore, in the reflection and interaction with this other.

It is worth pointing out that the myth of Narcissus, chosen by Freud to illustrate this fundamental concept of psychoanalysis, already points to the reflection of another and its power over the subjectivity of each one of us. To approach the dynamics of narcissism as the constitution of the self through the image (in this case, the visual), Freud (1914) uses the myth in reference to the Greek legend of Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection (FREUD, 1917, p. 148). It is by the unifying and beloved image that the self is constituted. In the mythical and constitutive dialectics of the subject, the visual image is relevant. The body gains visibility and, therefore, takes form.

Jacques Lacan conceives the “mirror stage” as a moment of human evolution, in which “the child anticipates dominion over its body unit through identification with the image of its fellow man and the perception of its own image in the mirror” (ROUDINESCO; PLON, 1998, p. 194). Lacan, according to Bandeira and Postigo (2015, p. 113), also uses the term “other or Other” as what will designate a specular otherness, another imaginary, a symbolic place, the mother, the culture, in short, a concept that will realize the empowerment of the place of otherness in the advent and functioning of the human psyche.

The human being, in its initial concreteness, needs to unite with the other as equal in order to then separate in differentiation. Such events are evident in the trajectory of the undifferentiated being and the being of differentiation, since, for psychoanalysis, the subject does not exist naturally from the beginning, but is being constituted. The dual relationship, also called complementary or imaginary, initiates the process of subjectivation (TATAGIBA, 2016, p. 37).

The identification relationship is of fundamental importance to understand, in Psychoanalysis, the constitution of the self-body and the dynamics of energy distribution in investments, both in the first self (self-of-all-pleasure) and in the non-self or external objects (TATAGIBA, 2016, p. 38).

The self-body begins to formulate itself under the domain of the pleasure principle, characteristic of primary narcissism. The “self-of-all-pleasure” refers to the moment in which the child formulates itself, so that all good and pleasurable is the child, and the non-good/non-self, projects the child out of itself and constitutes it as the world (TATAGIBA, 2016, p. 38). While the good is introjected, the displeasure is projected out, thus confirming the initial dynamics of differentiation I and world.

In Phenomenology, the Merleau-Pontyano concept of the body allows us to think of the constitution of subjectivity as a process that is concretized in the body, from its experiences, its movements, its perceptions, its expressions and its creations.

In short, subjectivity is what characterizes each one, not in the sense of something that defines us in a finished, immutable or timeless way, because it is historically and socially constructed. Subjectivity is (re) built in existence, as the subject apprehends in its contact with the world, with otherness (REIS, 2011, p. 47).

In general, for Gonçalves (2014, p. 21), the alterity, from the Latin *alteritas*, which means “to be the other”, has the representation of putting oneself or constitute oneself in the place of the other, and the other in your place, that is, apprehending the other in the fullness and, above all, in their difference. Thus, in Phenomenology, the self is constituted in the relation with the other (GONÇALVES, 2014, p. 20).

From this point of view, it is possible to affirm that subjectivity is not an interiority that opposes exteriority, but it is corporeality, constituting the dynamics of bodily mediated relationships that the self establishes with the other and with society. It is from the intersection of the body itself with the world, from the dialectic tension between the self and the other, that the senses emerge in open syntheses, which constitute subjectivity.

Liquid, fluid and fragmented subjectivity

According to Bauman (2001), as quoted by Moreira and Jesus (2010, p. 326), contemporary subjectivity, postulated in a state of fluidity, is something that comes after, it is a break, a shift, based on a becoming, an unfinished subject, liquid and plastic. Still according to Moreira and Jesus (2010, p.327), Hall (2005) considers it as a fragmentary, incomplete subjectivity of mobile, multimodulated, hybrid identities in permanent deconstruction and transformation. In addition, Moreira and Jesus (2010, p. 328) point out that, for Tavares (2004), contemporary subjectivity is presented from a collective and individual perspective, as Tavares (2004, our translation) states:

The post-modern world can be considered a background that promotes psychosocial vectors. Subjectivity, from this point of view, is regulated both by the symbolic social system, which is of the order of the collective, and by the individual pulsional aspects, both in a liquid state.

Speeches that regulate the body, whether scientific, technological, advertising, medical and/or aesthetic, invade the part of the subject's symbolic-subjective life. According to Portela (2008), as Moreira and Jesus (2010, p. 322, our translation) point out: “The contemporary world determines new forms of relationship, affecting the constitution of subjectivity and, consequently, leading to the advent of a new subject”. The world, therefore, finds itself before

a subject in conflict and division, which escapes any attempt at apprehension, since it is in transformation, in metamorphosis, and in constitution (PORTELA, 2008 *apud* MOREIRA; JESUS, 2010, p. 324).

Modernity and its liquid subjectivity “diluted” everything that was – or seemed to be – solid, not putting anything in place. It assumed, therefore, an impermanence, that is, a constant change of forms, in a process that seems to have no prediction of termination (SARAIVA; NETO, 2009). Aspects that, according to Lachi and Navarro (2012, p. 35), lead us to understand that the body is not only a place of conflict and disputes of knowledge and discourses, but also a conflict of the subject with the body itself: sometimes it cultivates it; sometimes it denies it and segregates it; sometimes it appropriates itself of the other; sometimes it is appropriate for the other. It is in this game that the process of subjectivation of the subject takes place, which is called to assume a position.

Construction of body identities

Faced with the technological, social and cultural changes of postmodern times, corporeality becomes seen as an integral and inseparable part of discursive practices, having its sense of individual identity, previously unified and stable, now fragmented, composed not of a single, but of various identities (LACCHI; NAVARRO, 2012). Thus, the difficulty is no longer to discover, invent or build an identity, but how to prevent it from being too firm and sticking too fast to the body (BAUMAN, 1998, p. 114).

For Kristeva (1993), as Vilhena, Novaes and Rosa (2014, p. 259) observed, contemporary subjects constitute a universe characterized by the acceleration of changes, which no longer ensure identity stability.

The space for the inscription of belonging is the place where the battle of identification processes takes place and, together with identity and culture, is connected and supported, thus extending to the reflectivity of the subject's identity (GIDDENS, 2002). This space includes the discourses produced by culture, by society, by the technological changes of postmodern times, which become "spaces" for the inscription of belonging, that is, the place where: i) the battle of identification processes takes place and ii) the subjects identify themselves, not being left aside from the system. This configures a symbolic space in the formation of identities, of an “incarnate” self.

Body modification is therefore a project not only of a physical order, but of an identity order, as it provides a formula to bring out another version of itself.

The act of modifying the body recurrently implies a kind of constant identity rehearsal, as an expression of the (re) construction of a subjectivity that is no longer recognized in the body that announces it, a rehearsal that is attempted in the voluntary and more or less conscious reception of the symbolic properties of the objects that it embodies and that has meaning for the person who modifies himself or herself. (FERREIRA, 2008, p. 62, our translation).

The subject stands out for not having a fixed, essential or permanent identity; therefore, not being bound to a single format or configuration. The subject “assumes different identities at different times; identities that are not unified around a coherent ‘self’” (HALL, 2006, p. 13, our translation).

The mediated connection between one's own identity and that imposed by consumer society then becomes a great value.

Confrontation: the subject and its self-esteem

Throughout human development, the body continues to have a strong bond with the psychism. The pressure and external patterns of beauty end up mobilizing the subject in its perception of itself and, concomitantly, in its self-esteem, since the concept of beauty is very much related to the feeling of acceptance (FERRAZ; SERRALTA, 2007). It is a communicator of our emotions and a translator of our thoughts and desires. The body movement speaks, expresses and reveals the most intimate desires. Through it – and with it – one discovers the world and the sensations. However, many times, it reveals something that does not want to show itself, or is still different, not meeting expectations (MELLO FILHO, 1992, p. 471).

As stated by Gouveia *et al.* (2005), Markus and Kitayama (1991) point out that the way one looks in the mirror and self-conceptualizes oneself can be closely linked to the demands of a sociological norm of form and appearance, which one learns in society and culture. Self-esteem, whatever the level, is an intimate experience, the state of the person who is not at war with itself or with others. The lack of awareness of one's true potential can lead to an imbalance between what I am and what I would like to be (FLORIANI *et al.*, 2010, p. 4). According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), as Gouveia *et al.* (2005), point out, if this intimate experience does not reach a balance, the individual will begin to live in contradiction, pretending to be what he would like, without assuming its true identity.

Self-esteem, therefore, is equivalent to wanting oneself well. When diminished, it can reflect itself as an inferiority complex, feeling of incapacity, apathy, discouragement and other

symptoms that reflect indifference to one's own values and appearance, both physical and mental. For Egito (2010), as quoted by Floriani *et al.* (2010, p. 4). Low self-esteem presents itself as a state of sadness. It builds up and destroys the body image. Since it is not fixed, it is then defined from the social interferences we suffer and the habits we create, shaping our aspect of existing as corporal beings.

According to Portinari (2000), through social fit, the individual is changing behavior and valuing aspects of its body, often thoughtless before. The organization of the body image, therefore, is neither purely neurological nor mental. It is also believed that emotions play an important role in the development of body image (SHONTZ, 1990).

There is an interaction between the physiological, neural and emotional sides, besides the social factor. One of these processes analyzed separately would make the analysis flawed and incomplete. Changes in one of them can cause consequences in the body experience (BARROS, 2005). However, the concrete possibility of bringing desire closer to reality is one of the aspects that drive and move subjects, a way to remedy the feeling of dissatisfaction with oneself.

In the search for good shape, unlike what happens with health, there is not a point where you can say: "Now that I have achieved, I can stop and keep what I have achieved". The fight for good form is a compulsion that soon turns into addiction. Each dose needs to be followed by a bigger one (BAUMAN, 2007, p. 123, our translation).

The more the person is dominated and attached to self-image, to the point of being dependent on its own appearance, the more distant it will be from being free for the happy coexistence in the world of diversities (TOMMASO, 2010 *apud* FLORIANI *et al.*, 2010, p. 6). The "being well with oneself" needs to be evaluated and fed daily, since the fluctuation in mood, the daily events and the transformations dictated by time are responsible for its imbalance. The human being uses strategies to reorganize the self and find the homeostasis again.

In this way, the balance of the intimate experience produces a positive result, generating the balance of the inner self with the world, because good self-esteem demands that the inner self be in accordance with what I manifest in the world (SILVA; SILVA, 2004). Currently, the ideal body has enslaved the human being to an incessant and exhausting search. It is possible to find destructive conducts such as anorexia, for example, as an alternative to reaching it. (PORTINARI, 2000).

The ideal and the real end up being distanced. The individual gets lost in front of its own image, causing emotional, behavioral, cognitive and productive losses, which cause it to devalue the positive aspects that it has (FERRAZ; SERRALTA, 2007).

When the source of discomfort is the body, we can perceive it as defective, unwanted. However, since this aspect is the cause of great suffering and of the non-acceptance of oneself, psychological intervention is necessary for the relief of suffering. Such intervention still provides internal satisfaction, qualifies the relationship with oneself, raises self-esteem, improves both the social image and the imbalance of the body and mind connection. However, to instrumentalize the subject to live in a healthier and more balanced way is a longer action, demanding motivation and personal commitment in its process. The analysis of the internal world opens possibilities of reflection, self-knowledge and critical judgment to question the way the body is being built and body perception, not only in its structure, but in the way it is perceived and interpreted.

Thus, it is noted that, in fact, people are seduced by standards of an idealized body, produced by a society of market logic, refusing to seek the reappropriation of feelings and desires long suffocated with the complicity of the same (RODRIGUES; CANIATO, 2009, p. 682).

Final considerations

Over time, beauty standards have been influenced by psychological, social and cultural impositions. With this, the process of building the ideal body has been increasingly stimulated by subjective behavior and images of the individual, producing an idealized body model that escapes the real attainable, target of great media reinforcement. In relation to the body industry and suggestibility, it was observed that individuals are exposed to various influences and the bombardment of information. This reinforces the images, invading and modifying the way of understanding and feeling the personal choices.

In the search for the ideal body, dictated by the other, the media communication, as a reflection of the feeling towards oneself, has brought emotional consequences that can lead to a compulsion for aesthetic procedures. These, in turn, subjectively determine the current transformations in the search for the best physical appearance the body has been suffering. Thus, it becomes clear the interference of the media in the culture of consumption of everything that refers to the perfection of the body image established by the capitalist system. It is undeniable that the publicity conveyed in the mass media associates happiness and

success to a standardized body model, in which most people do not recognize themselves, that is, superimposing the ideal over the real. The body, therefore, ceases to belong to the bodily subject and becomes the mirror of an idealized media model, which leads it to be subjected to constant practices that transform appearance.

From this, a feeling of belonging and identity to a social grouping of reference arises, that is, people who hold, or strive, to keep the body in line with the ideal standards of contemporary beauty.

Its relevance lies in the urgency of raising awareness about the risks of invasive aesthetic procedures to which the subject submits in search of an unreal and ephemeral standard of beauty. In addition, mental health is attacked by feelings of guilt, anguish, frustration, which leads to depression and countless other disorders.

The main objective, facing phenomenological and psychoanalytic perspectives, was understood and analyzed through the reflection on the myth of the ideal body, having been enumerated the process of body and image construction in contemporaneity, establishing the consequences of social imposition in relation to the ideal aesthetic pattern. This without ruling out the analysis of the psychological factors associated with the search for an ideal image in relation to the real.

We can ask ourselves what is this place where the body is situated in contemporaneity, as well as about the knowledges that cross the subject in the social, since corporeality becomes seen as an integral and inseparable part of discursive practices, constituting a place of conflict and disputes of knowledges, in which the subject enters into crisis with his own body, sometimes cultivating it, sometimes denying it, sometimes appropriating the other, sometimes being appropriated by the other.

Individual identity, once unified and stable, has become fragmented, composed not of one but of several identities, contemporary subjects constitute a universe characterized by the acceleration of change, which no longer ensures identity stability. Thus, what remained for the subject was to carry a passing, liquid, invalid and collective identity, in the frenetic search for consumption, in its mind, the idea that to be one must have, which characterizes today's voluntary consumerist servitude, has been engraved.

The mental structure became an object of such splendence that it was not left aside from the system. The standard images end up being destined to all those who see them, being splendid corporeal images, carefully recreated and shaped, but without filling, with an important scarcity of values and internal life. Invading the part of symbolic-subjective life, affecting the constitution of subjectivity and, consequently, leading to the advent of a new

subject, who in conflict and division, escapes any attempt at apprehension, since it is in transformation, in metamorphosis, and in constitution. This enables inhibition in psychic life, which, when associated to a deficiency, symbolizes significant experiences, having, therefore, a fragile consistency, due to having to be always reconfigured, failing in the action of psychic anchorage.

Modernity and its liquid subjectivity “diluted” everything that was - or seemed to be - solid, not putting anything in place. It assumed, therefore, an impermanence, that is, a constant change of forms, in a process that seems to have no prediction of ending. And, through an incessant dialogue between what one sees and what one is, one can produce individuals dissatisfied with their own appearance. A subject who loses itself in front of its own image, causing emotional, behavioral, cognitive and productive damages, causing it to devalue the positive aspects that it possesses, reaching the psychism and causing harmful consequences to its self-esteem, which, when diminished, can be reflected as an inferiority complex, feeling of incapacity, apathy, discouragement and other symptoms that reflect indifference towards its own values and appearance, both physical and mental.

Generally, low self-esteem presents itself as a state of sadness, and it is possible to produce the body as a source of malaise and perceive it as defective, unwanted. The lack of consciousness of its true potential can lead to an imbalance between what I am and what I would like to be. However, being this aspect the cause of great suffering and the non-acceptance of oneself, it becomes necessary the psychological intervention to alleviate the suffering that this may cause.

The contemporary subject sought an immaterial, eternal body, capable of moving through many spaces and surpassing all borders of time, after the right to rejuvenation, the right to permanence. Even if, to remain, it is necessary to change bodies. And not once, not once for all. To change bodies without ceasing. Perhaps the most arrogant way to survive is to want to remain forever. To have total control and manipulation of the body is something unfeasible, because human nature escapes, in terms of domestication: one day it will grow old.

It is valid to emphasize the importance of psychological care, because it is not only about the body, but also about the mind, since the two are intimately connected and dependent. Thus, it becomes necessary to instrumentalize the subject to live in a healthy and balanced way, demanding motivation and personal commitment in his process, opening space for an internal reflection of self-knowledge, and also for the judgment about this unmeasured social construction of the body image.

Given this, without pretending to have exhausted the proposed theme, this work is an attempt to advance studies on the perception of body image, which is influenced by various socio-cultural factors and involves a complex tangle of psychological, social, cultural and biological issues, which subjectively determine the search for the best physical appearance.

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