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# O Corpo e suas relações: concepções em educação profissional e tecnológica

The body and its relations: conceptions in professional and technological education

El cuerpo y sus relaciones: concepciones en la educación profesional y tecnológica

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#### Resumo

Neste ensaio propomos três tópicos para análise e reflexão de como o corpo tem sido pensado, visto e apropriado na sociedade atual: corpo e trabalho como essência do homem; dualismos e dicotomias do corpo, trabalho e educação; as concepções de corpo nas relações contemporâneas. O primeiro se refere à construção histórica do corpo em função da sua relação com o trabalho, a essência do homem. A composição do segundo implica uma análise dos muitos dualismos e dicotomias existentes no mundo do trabalho e da educação que refletem numa visão fragmentada do corpo físico/motor e psicológico/cognitivo. Finalmente, o terceiro tópico propõe considerações sobre a apropriação do corpo pelo mercado, mídia e tecnologia, e a percepção que os jovens têm sobre os padrões estabelecidos por estes setores. Ao concluir a análise traçamos algumas breves considerações e possibilidades para a Educação Profissional e Tecnológica (EPT) neste contexto. É relevante lançar mão dos princípios da concepção de ser humano, sociedade, cultura, ciência, tecnologia, trabalho e educação propostos pelos projetos políticos pedagógicos da EPT, no sentido de uma educação integral. Porque o corpo é a morada dos processos onde se dá a aprendizagem, e carrega nele toda a bagagem de vida do indivíduo.

Palavras-chave: Corpo. Trabalho. Educação. Dicotomias. Percepção corporal.

## **Abstract**

In this article, the authors propose three topics to analyze and reflect on how the body has been thought, seen and appropriated in today's society: body and work as essence of people; dualisms and dichotomies of the body, work and education; body conceptions in contemporary social relationships. The first one refers to the historical construction of the body, according to its relationship with work, the essence of people. The composition of the second one implies an analysis of some dualisms and dichotomies existing in the world of work and education, that reflect on a fragmented view of the physical / motor and psychological / cognitive body. Finally, the third one proposes general considerations about the body appropriation by the capitalist market, media and technology, and the perception that young people have about the body patterns that have been established by these sectors. At the end of the analysis, we describe some brief considerations and possibilities for the Professional and Technological Education (PTE) in this context. It's relevant using the conceptual principles of the human being, society, culture, science, technology, work and education proposed by PTE's pedagogical political projects, in

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the sense of integral education. Because the body is the home of the processes where learning takes place, and it carries itself all the human experiences.

**Keywords:** Body. Work. Education. Dichotomies. Body perception.

#### Resumen

En este ensayo, proponemos tres temas para el análisis y la reflexión sobre cómo se ha pensado, visto y apropiado el cuerpo en la sociedad actual: el cuerpo y el trabajo como la esencia del hombre; dualismos y dicotomías del cuerpo, trabajo y educación; las concepciones del cuerpo en las relaciones contemporáneas. El primero se refiere a la construcción histórica del cuerpo en términos de su relación con el trabajo, la esencia del hombre. La composición del segundo implica un análisis de los muchos dualismos y dicotomías existentes en el mundo del trabajo y de la educación que se reflejan en una visión fragmentada del cuerpo físico / motor y psicológico / cognitivo. Finalmente, el tercer tema propone consideraciones sobre la apropiación del cuerpo por el mercado, los medios y la tecnología, y la percepción que tienen los jóvenes sobre los estándares establecidos por estos sectores. Al final del análisis, describimos algunas breves consideraciones y posibilidades para la Educación Vocacional y Tecnológica (EPT) en este contexto. Es relevante hacer uso de los principios de la concepción de ser humano, sociedad, cultura, ciencia, tecnología, trabajo y educación propuestos por los proyectos políticos pedagógicos del EPT, en el sentido de la educación integral. Porque el cuerpo es el hogar de los procesos donde se lleva a cabo el aprendizaje, y lleva todo el equipaje de la vida del individuo.

Palavras-Clave: Cuerpo. Trabajo. Educación. Dicotomías. Percepción del cuerpo.

## Introduction

It is through the body that we are in the world and make it ours. The body feels emotions, transmits desires, decisions, explores potentialities. Body that can be represented anywhere, but here, we will think about it and place it in the sphere of education, in the world of work and in everyday social relations.

Several authors and studies bring this theme, which for being timeless and intimately interwoven in biological, historical and social connections provoke endless discussions, and The Professional and Technological Education emerges as a fertile ground for the growth of these debates.

Man is an incomplete animal, influenced by the habits and customs of where he is inserted. He is a social subject, who cannot be only reduced to a physical / biological body (DAOLIO, 1992).

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When we talk about the development of the individual, we refer to his totality. As much as the biological and physiological processes of maturation and development are scientifically proven, on the other hand, it is known that mental functions - and therefore, the practical actions related to them - also originate through the processes of social and cultural interaction. And the body is the instrument by which these interactions take place.

Body movement happens in any human activity of symbolic manipulation - through thinking and reasoning in the same way that most physical or muscular acts depend on an intellectual action (HEROLD JUNIOR, 2006). At this point we trace our first relationship: the body and the work.

Although the physical and the intellectual interact in their purposes, the characterization of the work as being manual or intellectual is still very present. We have the "factory worker" and the "office worker".

It is here that we understand one of the roles of education, more precisely of PTE, in the integral human formation, based on the human being principles, society, culture, science, technology, work and education. It is to give subsides for the individuals to develop the autonomy of acting and thinking, and to participate in the interaction processes, with themselves and with the environment in which they are inserted or will come into being – the world of work – in order to transform it according to their needs.

There is an audience that lacks this mediation, and that is positioned in all the universes that we intend to move through in this text: educational, the world of work and social relations. The adolescent of school age, who lives moments of transformation, decision-making, doubts and uncertainties, of acceptance processes by their peers, often motivated by sociocultural and economic diversity, which directly affect the conceptions about themselves and others. Young people need to study, in most cases work, and still belong to certain groups.

Thus, the importance of bringing the theme of the body to this audience is justified, and this body is the tool, the means of interaction between the being and the world. Because it is at this stage of development that "they definitely learn the

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techniques of the body that they will save throughout their adult hood" (MAUSS, 2017, p. 434).

Among all the processes of evolution and interaction that humanity has experienced and that we ourselves help to modify we have reached the daily life of our times. The information society, of superficial experiences that do not touch us at all, accumulate content and little practice, the subject manipulated by information. The body / mind pair may no longer be achieving interactions that actually promote additions in their structures.

It is remarkable that body conceptions have also changed, and body patterns have been labeled as ideals, with a great media appeal of standards of beauty and consumption. Thus, some questions arise: what society is represented in the bodies of Brazilians? What body model has prestige in our society? (GOLDENBERG, 2006; 2011).

Nowadays the body is discussed in the media, in informal conversations, in a forceful way, and it's likely that the patterns followed don't reflect the situation of the majority of the population, neither physically, nor economically.

For this reason, several studies with this this theme have been carried out in the country, addressing different groups of subjects, and even so most of them point to a great influence of the media and the market on the perceptions of the body.

In an essay on body techniques, Mauss (2017) brings some concepts and notes that corroborate and even support the relationships made so far and that will be discussed throughout this paper.

Starting with the very meaning of the expression, body techniques are "the ways in which men, from society to society, in a traditional way, know how to use their bodies" (MAUSS, 2017, p. 421). Tin this way, we understand that each society has its own habits. In fact, the author uses the term habitus, in the sense that they don't simply vary with individuals and their imitations, they vary especially with societies, educations, conveniences and fashions, prestige" (p. 425).

In short, each being is biologically and culturally unique, carrying codes and symbols that are continuously constructed through the countless experiences

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experienced. However, in any process of experiences or social interaction, whether as an agent or a mere appreciator, the individual uses his body to express himself and abstract the values and meanings that are convenient to him.

Thinking versus acting; the physical as opposed to the psychological; manual work x intellectual work. There are several dualisms and dichotomies present in body relationships, which are there to be overcome. Mauss (2017), when it comes to body movements, supposes an enormous biological and physiological apparatus, but considers it interdependent with the psychological and asks himself: "How thick is the psychological gear wheel?" (p. 441).

And he himself responds, so that we managed to summarize all the main ideas briefly, before examining each one of them:

What I can tell you is that I see psychological facts here as gears and that I do not see them as causes, except in times of creation or reform. The cases of invention, of position of principles, are rare. Adaptation cases are of an individual psychological nature. But they are usually driven by education, and at least by the circumstances of living together, of living together. (MAUSS, 2017, p. 442).

To address all of these issues, we will move on through chapters that permeate the relationships established so far. Firstly, the body as an object of knowledge in the area of education, and also a tool through which work, the essence of man, is carried out. Nor can we speak of a body separate from cognition, and that is where the dichotomies that we need to overcome arise, both when it comes to the body, as well as work and education. Finally, body concepts and the influence of the media, the market and technology. The concept "body" will be emphasized and taken as a main element in our discussions.

## 1. Body and work as the essence of man

The essence of man is work. An essence produced by men themselves and developed over time in a historical process. This work to which Saviani (2007) refers,

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is not wage labor, the added value, but the act of acting on nature transforming it according to human needs.

And it is through the body that we carry out this work, that we are in the world and appropriate it. The body is the main instrument of man, the most natural and probably the best tool available to him to exercise his functions.

However, we cannot categorize the body as "completely" natural. It is through the appropriation of knowledge, behaviors, attitudes and values that this body shapes itself to belong to a certain cultural context, and end up transforming even biological factors.

Daolio (1995, p. 25) uses the term incorporation to ratify the importance of this cultural process that is installed in the individual's body. The same meaning Lefevre and Lefevre (2009) refer to this process as a "necessary incompleteness" (p. 28), a mandatory consumption relationship between man and nature so that humanity exists.

When dealing with work as a process by which man, at the same time, has his potential constructed and limited, and by attributing to him the primary purpose of man to reconstruct himself at all times, we demonstrate that, between the physical and biological body and the rationality - that is, the intentions, ideas and values - there is a dialectical relationship of strong overlap (HEROLD JUNIOR, 2012).

However, the human body, seen as a source of energy and movement, occupied a central place in the reflections of work. Today, with technological changes and new theoretical manifestations, "the body-energy gave way to the body-information, oscillating the relevance of the reflections on the body [...]" (HEROLD JUNIOR, 2009, p. 524).

When the material conditions of existence of men change and the ways in which these conditions are established - means of production, relations of work and consumption - ideas, conceptions and concepts also change. It is not such a difficult reflection to make!



What we experience today is that the body at work is responsible for the production of goods and services that will meet the non-mandatory needs of your own body, those that are suggested and even imposed on you.

In this line of thought, we continue with the idea of Lefevre and Lefevre (2009), who bring as an example, a simple mirror, produced and disseminated by men. This object causes the most diverse feelings, from pleasure to self-hate. An instrument made by the individual himself, to serve him, and that ends up establishing norms and standards for himself.

And when we have a body at work, whose product is to modify the body of the other, just like in the case of cosmetic plastic surgery? Wouldn't it be the essence of man getting lost? Erasing his marks and individual characteristics, to become more an object-body dominated by consumption?

In all of these analyzes, we have seen that acting and thinking about something are inseparable, although sometimes one seems to stand out from the other. PTE, in view of human integrality and direct action in the world of work, needs to promote the movement towards the ontology of being, taking into account the overlap among body, work, learning and emancipatory social relations.

## 2. Dualisms and dichotomies of the body, work and education

Historically, the dissociation between body and mind has been marked in the learning processes, denying the body to the detriment of the mind. "In this perspective, the body was disciplined and controlled, with the intention that the intellectual learning environment of the contents would not be 'disturbed' or harmed by motor or moral actions" (BATISTA; OLIVEIRA; MELO, 2012, p. 239).

On this point, we can clearly see how the integrality of the human being loses its essence over time. As a child, you learn by playing. When entering basic education, the ludic still has some space. In high school, body experiences end up being limited to Physical Education classes, still seen exclusively as the curricular component responsible for moving the body.

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We enter adulthood and our bodies suffer abandonment due to responsibilities, work, and we remember it when we see in the media the importance of practicing physical activities for maintaining health, without even questioning what we are seeing and what we are doing to keep us healthy - body and mind.

Recent research sought to analyze the response of an exercise program applied to psychiatric patients. As expected, the results showed that physical activity reduces pathological symptoms linked to mental health, psychomotor agitation and muscle tension. It also showed improvement in what the authors called body-mind flexibility, or "Changing Body via Changing Mind" and vice versa (TOMASI; GATES; REYNS, 2019, p. 8).

Therefore, improving the performance of the body by changing the mind, and the same way, the opposite. It is essential to seek the maintenance of balance, without dualism in our physical and psychic structure.

In an article designed to promote a dialogue about the reflections on the body and corporeality elaborated by Marcel Mauss and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the researchers show us that both authors were also concerned with trying to overcome the dichotomy between thinking and matter, since the last century. It is necessary to remember, however, that we still find traces of this dualism and difficulties to overcome it (DAOLIO; RIGONI; ROBLE, 2012).

The dualism that exists in the concept of a fragmented body extends in the same way to work and education, and making a counterpoint, we have authors today who continue to provoke discussions on the theme, with the aim of promoting a unitary education and training.

According to Saviani (2007, p. 152) "work and education are specifically human activities. This means that, strictly speaking, only the human being works and educates". To educate is to humanize, and "education is human ontology as a part of human work" (BORGES, 2017, P. 105).

The relationship between work and education is marked by the historical structural dualities of basic education and professional education, and of manual and intellectual work. This duality is described by Manacorda (1992, p. 356) as

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[...] a first constant in the history of education, one of those constants that are always proposed, albeit in different and peculiar forms: the separation between instruction and work, the discrimination between instruction for the few and the learning of work for many , and the definition of institutionalized instruction as an oratory institute, that is, as the formation of the ruler for the art of the word understood as the art of governing (the 'saying', to which the art of arms is associated, which is the 'doing' of the dominant).

Moura (2007) traces a timeline of duality in education and, consequently, in work, which begins in 1909, when the Schools of Apprentice Craftsmen are created, where teaching was structured to meet the needs of agriculture and industry. In the 30s and 40s, the Vocational Education constituted by the normal, industrial technical, commercial technical and agrotechnical courses, did not qualify for Higher Education, while Basic Education in its 2nd cycle (current high school), with the scientific and classic variants, it prepared citizens to continue their studies. The first Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB) promotes equivalence between High School and professional education. Then the 1970s came, and the reform in education made professionalization mandatory - according to the government's political option, this change would facilitate the insertion of students in the labor market. At the end of the same period, professionalization becomes optional. In 1996, the new LDB treats vocational education only as a modality, not being part of the structure of regular Brazilian education and consolidating the educational duality.

When analyzing relations between body, work and intelligence with the mediation of tacit knowledge, Herold Junior (2009, 2012) makes some considerations about the division between manual and intellectual work. Among them, it justifies that with the development of productive transformations, there is a tendency to polarize corporeality and intelligence. However, this dissociation is mistaken, and we can take an industry as an example, with its control panels. The indicator lights are not always sufficient. Noises, smells, handling of valves and levers are also very useful. And how are they perceived? Through the body, a basic structure so that tacit and theoretical knowledge can become effective.

Even at the end of the 19th century, the elimination of opposition between manual and intellectual work was pointed out as one of the prerogatives for a more

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correct society. In this way, each individual could use their productive strength, according to their abilities, to add to the sources of collective wealth, regardless of the style of the work performed (MARX, 2012).

In this sense, if education and work are of human nature, if both have undergone several changes and have been affected by structural duality, political positions and visibility strategies, it is appropriate, in the PTE, to address prospects for integration between these fields, but not without rather, break the dualities that exist in each one of them.

## 3. Body conceptions in contemporary relationships

The body cannot be reduced to physical and / or biological aspects. It is also a cultural construction, since different people use their bodies in different ways (MAUSS, 2017). The body is an ontological reality (MERLEAU-PONTY, 2014).

In this sense, Mauss infers that all corporal expression and practice is traditional, and not natural. As natural as it seems to be a gesture, it was socially constructed, not from the individual's own making.

That is why the use of the body - and we do not treat this "use" here as if referring to an object - differs between individuals. Merleau-Ponty does not contradict this notion of Mauss, but highlights the individual dimension of the biological being where these relations take place.

There is a great network of senses and meanings that cannot be separated from the physical body. Stalybrass (2008) goes through several themes in his work, but always brings memory as a central axis. Now if we have memory, it is because we have a body capable of storing our memories, transforming them into these senses and meanings that we carry with us.

These symbols and codes, as we have seen, are acquired during our experiments. Many of them are internalized because they are significant or affective. Others are imposed, or accepted for convenience. So, we are shaping ourselves.



In the aforementioned work, which alludes to events that occurred in the 19th century, the author narrates that Karl Marx, when he was in a delicate financial situation, pledged his clothes. During that period, he was unable to attend the London library, as the clothes he wore did not give him status and the right to enter. Upon retrieving his coat at the pawn shop, he returned to the library to conduct his research (STALYBRASS, 2008).

It is not by chance that Marx and Engels in their Communist Party Manifesto (2015), first published in 1848, already said that "the bourgeoisie creates a world in its image" (p. 67). That is, there has always been and will be an elite, a portion of the population, motivated by capitalism and rampant consumerism, who will try to introduce their ideals of society.

In what way? We answer this question using the words of the same authors: through extravagant robes he will try to involve his "eternal truths" (p. 96) to increase the sale of his merchandise to the public.

And so, our contemporary society continues to hint at the models we should use, and bombarding us with information to indoctrinate our bodies to achieve aesthetic standards that are pursued as superior, necessary, in short, successful ideas: thin body, beautiful body, strong body, among so many other stereotypes.

The media and advertising use social orthopedics, a way of modeling each individual, either physically by appearances, by the functions of the body at work or as a political and social strategy (CASAQUI; HOFF, 2010).

This growing and permanent interest, however, is about the "object-body", a voracious consumer of the capitalist market, that is, the place of the body is reduced to its commodification, its consumption by consumerism and its form of control and domination.

After all, who does our body and mind belong to? Lefevre and Lefevre (2009) bring some options: they belong to science / technology and their operators increasingly specialized in 'human machinery' and its parts; to the individual himself; or the market, which dominates both?

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This triad maintains a strong relationship, a dependency, and the limit at which one ends up interfering in the existence and authority of the other is very tenuous. The philosophy of consumption and the urgency of meeting needs - these are not so immediate - start to mask all the complex relationships of the human being and reveal the fetishism existing between man and merchandise, and how these products are (im)placed on the individual. Thus, the current model of searching for "perfection" standards is installed at all costs.

The exacerbation of this desire for the ceaseless and sometimes even excessive search for the perfect body, already has its own name: corpolatria, motivated by the media and the strong individualism that characterizes the consumer society (LIMA, 2009). Another concept that we can use to define this exaggerated concern with body care is that of "cult of the body", promoted by the capitalist industry (RIGONI; NUNES; FONSECA, 2017).

In a brief contextualization of the meanings of the body in culture, Daolio (1995) poses some questions, which should be highlighted in this work, since even after more than two decades, they remain current, only changing the historical and cultural context in which we find ourselves. Conceptions of beauty are reworked, body patterns are changed, and the totality of being is left behind.

[...] How to define a slim body? How to define a beautiful body, or an attractive body, or a conscious body? How to know if the body has already reached the stage of freedom so dreamed of? What, then, about a flabby, fat female body, considered inelegant today, but which was not long ago considered sensual and inspired renowned painters? What about the concept of health, formerly associated with a robust body, even fat, and currently related to a thin body? (...) And the body not so young, on which a series of repairs are imposed to look (not to be) new, such as plastics, anti-wrinkle creams, rejuvenating diets, gymnastics, sports? Who defines these attributes about the body? Who determines the criteria for classifying the body in one group or another? (DAOLIO, 1995, p. 24-25).

And with the new technologies, these ideas of perfect body and miraculous recipes for obtaining it propagate with such speed that the subject / body most of the time does not have the discernment to decide what really is valid in face of everything that is put.

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And that is the objective of this market: to consume the uncritical public, alienated and taken over by capitalism. Technology becomes an important opinion maker, and why not say, a body maker.

In this situation, there is what Silva (2013) conceptualizes as "gagging". An attitude of uncritical thinking in which the human being credits technology with the power to transform people's lives. It is not clear that, although technology is responsible for many advances and benefits for our society, it generates dominance and exploitation.

We are quite informed, but only quantitatively. There is no criticality. At least not in the sense of analyzing the meaning of the use of this information, the relevance for individual and collective life. Criticism appears as an obsession to express an opinion, to make yourself noticed by showing that you are attentive to the information disclosed.

By assuming a critical stance, we will reach a consensus with Souza Filho and Souza (2015, p. 4) that "it is necessary to overcome the vision of the body as an object shaped by technoscience [...] and seek to rescue the principles of relationships between man, body, nature and culture."

These relationships are those already mentioned above, of the man who uses his body to transform nature according to his needs - doing work; and the man who creates his web of life, expressing his characteristics, qualities and values, constituting himself in culture.

When dealing with this rescue of principles, the term "body awareness" appears as an overcoming of the media and consumerist conception. However, it is regularly used, by common sense "referring to a mistaken idea that being aware of one's own body is knowing what is the most suitable clothes for him, which parts of him can be displayed and which parts he must hide" (RIGONI; NUNES; FONSECA, 2017, p. 140). In this way, the individual continues to reflect his image in the mirror without identifying himself with it and continues to reproduce the impositions of society.

A portion of the population that ends up being quite persuaded by the ideologization of technology and consumer media are teenagers. This stage of life is a

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time of integral bodily changes, in their existential totality. Body endowed with sensitivity, reason, perception, creativity, affectivity and sociability (BATISTA et al., 2014). Sample that demands attention.

Take the social network Facebook as an example. The young audience is an active consumer of the information disseminated there, and this network wisely "uses a highly educational visual resource: the image" (RIGONI; NUNES; FONSECA, 2017, p. 130).

The analysis of an image, different from a text or a report, is practically instantaneous and the ideas are conceived without considering the purpose of that post. This is an easy and quick way to propagate models, patterns, and to "educate" for an aesthetic and intellectual body categorized as ideals.

In view of the inseparability of the anthropological and sociological issues of the body, and the influence of the media as a privileged way of governing bodies from a biological and political perspective, it is necessary in the teaching plans and menus of PTE, the presence of the theme of the body and their relations and representations in education and in the world of work, in addition to the cultural values and principles that influence body standards.

### Some considerations

The way the body is seen and treated in society is a timeless topic for studies in the most diverse areas of knowledge, because the body is culture, it is a result of historical and social processes. Therefore, at any time when the interest in investigating it is latent, it will certainly not be obsolete, but necessary, since it is convenient to adapt what was already conceived to the present cultural moment.

In this context, Zanella (2013, p. 174) defends the thesis that "the memory of the body is part of the training path of each person, whose experiences are registered as a scripture". It then appears as a possibility for Professional and Technological Education - which values integral education - to approach this theme,

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given that the body is the home of the processes where learning takes place, and carries in it all the individual's life baggage.

The proposals raised by several studies with different social and age groups, include programs and pedagogical interventions in order to highlight the importance of working the body, breaking the dichotomy between thinking and acting, and also breaking with the internal, controlled locks by outside standards. Who does the body belong to? Ourselves, the media, the market, science / technology? After analyzing the body and work as the essence of man, it is also clear the need to adopt the connection between corporeality and the transformations in the world of work in the pedagogical speeches of PTE.

Attempts to answer questions regarding sovereignty over our bodies can be made from different angles. Health, aesthetics, consumption and individualism are some of them. Science defines what is beneficial or not for maintaining health, the media tries to disseminate the data, already directing the consumption of products to obtain satisfactory results. "Perfect models" of the body are showing up all the time, and again the technology and the market readily provide what is needed to "perfect" what has already been given to us as the main tool of existence. The desire to always be one step above the other, leads the human being to adopt a posture subordinate to those who sell him perfection.

It is essential to remember that the subject inserted in the educational environment of PTE, may already be entrenched in this process of commodification of the body, or is about to be taken by him. Therefore, it is relevant to use the principles of the concept of human being, society, culture, science, technology, work and education proposed by PTE's pedagogical political projects, in order to avoid losing, in addition to self-ownership, the notoriety vision and excellence of the role that, we reiterate, science, technology, work and education play in our society.

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