

## **Psychoeducational study on child sexual abuse: an example of a Focus Group of Experts from the film Precious**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this article is to present a guided pedagogic proposal, which serves to illustrate through the movies, concepts related to psychodynamics of psychological child trauma due to sexual abuse. For the development and validation of this proposal, a Focus Group of Experts (GFE) was gathered to analyze the film Precious. Guiding questions posed to the group are described, the most significant ideas that emerged from the discussion are presented, and also, an example of pedagogic intervention of the film is presented here. It's concluded that the viewing of this film, and discussion of the coordinates that arise from its analysis, may be useful as supplementary material to the academic education of the phenomenology of trauma for domestic violence and child sexual abuse.

**Keywords:** Child sexual abuse, domestic violence, film, focus group of experts, intervention psychological pedagogy, social marginalization and social.

## Estudio psicopedagógico sobre el abuso sexual infantil: un ejemplo de Grupo Focal de Expertos desde la película *Preciosa*

### Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es presentar una propuesta psicopedagógica orientativa, que sirva para ejemplificar, a través del cine, conceptos relacionados con los psicodinamismos del trauma psicológico infantil por abuso sexual. Para el desarrollo y validación de esta propuesta, se convocó a un Grupo Focal de Expertos (GFE) para analizar la película *Preciosa*. Se describen las preguntas-guía formuladas al grupo, se exponen las ideas más significativas que surgieron de la discusión, y se presenta un ejemplo de intervención psicopedagógica de la película. Se concluye que el visionado de este filme, y la discusión de las coordenadas que surgen de su análisis, pueden ser útiles como material complementario al académico en la enseñanza de la fenomenología del trauma por violencia doméstica y abuso sexual infantil.

**Palabras clave:** Abuso sexual infantil, violencia doméstica, cine, grupo focal de expertos, intervención psicopedagógica, marginalización y exclusión social.

*"Nothing human is alien to me ..."*  
Publio Terencio

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The literature on the phenomenon of domestic violence and child abuse is wide and varied, however, there are very few visual materials that can show "experiential" and direct the psychodynamics<sup>1</sup> and consequences of this phenomenon. We start from the idea that film can become a pedagogic tool to help the teacher to show complex concepts related to this issue. In this regard, we designed in this research of experience described below, a teaching tool and a psychopedagogical proposal that would show the complex psychology of child abuse, through the projection and reflection of a commercial film, and for this, we chose a recent production and media impact.

The aim of this paper is to document the experience with a Focus Group of Experts (GFE)<sup>2</sup> in the analysis of the film *Precious*<sup>3</sup> (Daniels, Siegel-Magness and Magness, USA, 2009). The purpose was to obtain coordinates or units of meaning that served as a teaching script, to explain in a simple and most of all in an experiential way, concepts related to the phenomenology of psychological trauma. In this regard, first a brief contextualization of the phenomenon of family violence, emphasizing sexual abuse in childhood. Is presented, it highlights the role of cinema as a teaching and educational approach in the human sciences. Third, the methodology followed is described. Fourth, we summarize the most important coordinates (ideas and concepts relevant to give meaning to the movie organizer) arising from the discussion with the GFE. Finally, we present the conclusions and recommendations.

## **2. CONTEXT OF THE PHENOMENON OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

Historically, family is considered as the primary system of any society, and it is the family the first social institution responsible for transmitting feelings of love and understanding, opposed to violence and abuse. We could say without fear of exaggerating that the human familiar system is the ideal place to cultivate love and generate altruistic values of cooperation and unity.

As the family is an institution of values, family violence is a reality that deserves special attention. Violence in the privacy it is a scourge that threatens integrity of this system, and it may contribute to the disintegration of the core group of social living (Escámez and Garcia, 2005).

The stories of family violence and child sexual abuse have existed at doctors' offices and mental health workers for centuries. Freud, in the late eighteenth century, formulated the first theory of neurosis from hearing the experiences of their patients, especially women, who claimed to have been the subject of sexual practices on the part of loved ones (parents, stepparents, nannies, siblings). So that, since the first theories about mental functioning outlined by the psychoanalysis of the late eighteenth century, it was considered the traumatic effects of early sexual experiences, including child sexual abuse within the family.

We could say that of all the phenomena observed in the clinic, child sexual abuse is one of the most difficult to witness. The pain, anguish and

most of all the shame that often produce having been abused by a loved one, makes the professionals tend to avoid deep and sincere work with these victims. The complexity of family violence leads to confront with less elaborate features and more distressing than humans can bear, and this means that in many instances, the professional avoid coping with the situations that the family tells, for the sad, painful, absurd or confusing events experienced.

Although psychological and social consequences generated by childhood sexual abuse are harmful and have been well documented (Finkelhor, 1984 and Sanz Molina, 1999), they are still observed in the population certain attitudes of disbelief in these stories, and a tendency to minimize its effects and occurrence.

The scientific literature (e.g. Volnovich and Fariña, 2010) has documented the adverse effects of domestic violence on the psyche; this violence is related to the generation of social aberrations, such as crime, street children (where the marginalization and social exclusion prevails as theme in their life stories) and maleness among others, and psychopathology, e.g., the battered woman syndrome, the disorder of post-traumatic stress, pedophilia and borderline personality.

In this regard, it is interesting that, despite the widespread sexual abuse in childhood, and that its “visibility” has begun to happen, this is a topic that still generates “resentment” in both the professionals who have to teach their phenomenology, such as those engaged in learning about it. Somehow, the study of sequels and psychodynamics of child sexual abuse has been excluded. Just three or four decades ago, victims have dared to present their stories; the professionals give the seriousness deserved, and scholars to theorize about them.

The reasons for this attitude to silence the phenomenon of child sexual abuse are many. Among the highlights, we can mention the same “secret” act and complicity, which usually occurs between the victim and offender, and attachments that occur between them, the intense and conflicting feelings of guilt and shame that the very act generates (especially in the victim); the nature of sexual abuse, which usually occurs in the privacy of home, and under the “protection” or “complicity” of someone known and even loved; and the notion, still prevalent in our societies, that the family is a privileged place of love and peace, where there is room for conceptualizing violence generated by the sexual

abuse. These ideas summarize some of the causes that could explain why even today remains reticent and evasive attitude toward this problem.

However, as we stated in the caption of this work: Nothing human is alien to me. This phrase was written by Publius Terentius Afro (Publius Terentius Afer), known as Terence, for over two thousand years, in the second century BC. This writer got the idea that mankind is an indivisible concept: what affects one of its members, as distant from the head or other members, involves the entire body, and what happens to a human, it happens to everyone. So this reflection expresses a deep sense of solidarity with human suffering. For the authors of this paper, this thought reflects empathy and commitment to victims of childhood sexual abuse, and expresses the need to break the silence regarding complicity with this problem and the urgency of appropriate pedagogic intervention.

### **3. FILM AS A TEACHING RESOURCE ON THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF TRAUMA**

If we continue the line of thinking stated in the preceding paragraphs, we must recognize that the teaching of the psychodynamics of child sexual abuse is not an easy task to implement. The violence that generates child abuse is very difficult to explain solely from theoretical concepts. The pain, shame, anger and helplessness generated by the abuse will not be captured by simple concepts of common sense or taken in the same way, the theory “coordinates” that illuminates the phenomenon are often difficult to “grasp on” especially for those who do not have in their repertoire of life histories of abuse, or have no experience with real cases.

For this reason, many authors (e.g., Hudock & Gallagher Warden, 2001 and Shepard and Brew, 2005) have stressed the importance of including life experiences with cases in the training of professionals, who address this problem, so they appreciate since the beginning of their training, the sense of what it means to be a victim of abuse. However, we know that teachers do not always have direct access to real cases to be considered educational. This is where the use of alternative media such as film and its subsequent analysis, suits as a tool in order to meet this need expressed by experts in the training of health professionals and education in values. It could be said then, that film is a condensed view of fiction (and perhaps manipulated) on the person, reflecting the human being in existential richness.

#### **4. BRIEF HISTORY OF FILM AS LEARNING TECHNOLOGY IN THE HUMAN SCIENCES**

Film and human sciences (in particular those dedicated to the study of the mind) have been inextricably linked. In 1916, Glenn Gabbard reports (2001), that the psychologist at Harvard University, Hugo Münsterberg, applied science of psychology to study film. This author suggested that the set of photos of the film, replied to a greater or lesser extent, to the mechanisms of the mind, much more convincingly than the typical narrative forms of storytelling. However, it was not until the late seventies when film was formally used as instructional technology. Wegner has been regarded in 1977 as a pioneer in the use of this medium to illustrate complex concepts related to the human sciences (Champoux, 1998).

From the eighties and nineties, the use of commercial cinema in the teaching of subjects related to philosophy (Cabrera, 1999), psychiatry (Shortland, 1987), nursing (Carper, 1999), psychology (Misch, 2000), and education in values (Mitry, 1978), began to flourish so giddy. All this was intertwined with advances in neuroscience, particularly research on brain functioning (Champoux, 1998). These investigations have provided relevant data on how to process information. On the one hand, the left brain specializes in digital and deductive tasks that relate to oral and written media. This area of the brain is stimulated by the presentation of lectures and reading books. On the other hand, the right hemisphere of the brain specializes in tasks related to creativity and intuition, which are important in the development of empathy to intervene therapeutically in cases of psychological trauma. The film, with its visual power, its influence to convey emotions, and its ability to mimic real life, becomes a great way to encourage learning “experiential” tasks more related to the right hemisphere than the left. Once in the new millennium, the term “cinema education” was coined (Alexander, 2002), and the use of film as a didactic and pedagogic intervention is not questioned, but rather it is promoted from different fields of knowledge (e.g., Pereira Domínguez, 2005).

#### **5. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The following sets out the experiment carried out with the Focus Group of Experts (GFE). We describe the composition of the GFE, the followed process and the “coordinates”<sup>4</sup> or units of significance that give enlightening meaning to the selected film.

### **5.1 Focus Group of Experts (GFE)**

In line with the ideas developed in the preceding paragraphs, we decided to call a GFE on mental health and education, in order to get the coordinates to enable us to illustrate in a simple and “experiential” way the psychodynamics present in victims of violence and child sexual abuse. To this end, we decided to use the film *Precious* (Daniels, Siegel-Magness and Magness, USA, 2009), as a thread that exemplify common theoretical concepts that are used to grasp the complexity and psychodynamics of the trauma of domestic violence<sup>5</sup>.

The criteria for selecting the members of GFE consisted in that these professionals had experience in the field of childhood mental health and education. The configuration of the focus group of experts is described in the following Table 1.

**Table 1**

<b>Profession</b>	<b>Specialty</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>
Educational psychologist	Social maladjustment	10
Psychologist	Clinical Psychology. Relational Psychodynamic Psychotherapy	26
Social educator	Prison Officer	20
Social educator	Educational programs for reintegration	8
Educational psychologist and teacher	Child Education	15
Philosopher	Social worker and teacher	18
Clinical psychologist and pedagogue	Family Planning	25
Psychologist	Management. Guidance. Teaching Psychology	21
Doctor	Psychiatry. Psychodynamic Psychotherapy Psychoanalysis	35
Doctor	Psychiatry. Psychodynamic psychotherapy. Teaching in Psychiatry	26
Doctor	Family Medicine. Gestalt Therapy	24
Doctor	Family Medicine	16
Doctor	Psychiatry. Lacanian Psychoanalysis	25
Psychologist	Clinical and School Psychology. Lacanian Psychoanalysis	5

**Table 1. Continuation**

Profession	Specialty	Years of Experience
Teacher	Counseling and group dynamics	27
Sociologist	Guidance. Teaching Psychology	15
Psychologist	Jungian Psychotherapy	15
Student	16 year-old teenager	
University Student	Social Education	

GFE Configuration

People involved in this experience were gathered with the purpose of viewing the film in group, and once seen, it discussing their impressions and locate the coordinates that give meaning to the film.

The meeting was held in a screening room with video beam and white screen designed for this purpose. The slogan of invitation is summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2**

<p><i>“We are organizing a GFE, where we project and analyze the film Precious, to find meaning units (coordinates) to clarify the concepts related to the trauma of child abuse. This experience will be documented (recorded on video and sound), the discussion will be transcribed, and the most important ideas will be highlighted, and then published, so that both the scientific community and our students will share them. We invite you because we believe that your input will be important to our work. This activity is part of an interdisciplinary research project supported by the University of Zulia (Venezuela) and Vigo (Spain)”.</i></p>
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Invitation Slogan

Once convened the group, having already made their appearance, the film data sheet was commented (see Table 3), a brief description was read (see Table 4), and we proceeded to the projection of the film.



**Table 3**

Original title: Precious. Based on the novel "Push" by Sapphire. Director: Lee Daniels. Country: USA. Year: 2009. Length: 109 min. Genre: Drama. Cast: Gabourey Sidibe (Clareece "Precious" Jones), Mariah Carey (Mrs. Weiss, a social worker), Lenny Kravitz (John, nurse), Susan L. Taylor, Mo'Nique (Mary), Paula Patton (Miss Rain), Sherri Shepherd, Stephanie Andujar (Rita), Chyna Layne (Rhonda), Angelic Zambrana (Consuelo). Writer: Paul Damien, based on the novel "Push" by Sapphire. Producer: Lee Daniels, Sarah Siegel-Magness and Gary Magness. Music: Mario Grigorov. Photography: Andrew Dunn. Mounting: Joe Klotz. Production designer, Roshelle Berliner. Costume Design: Marina Draghici. Distributor: Filmax. Release: February 5, 2010. Awards 2009: 2 Oscars: Best Adapted Screenplay, Supporting Actress (Mo'Nique). 6 nominations 2009: Golden Globe: Best Supporting Actress (Mo'Nique). 3 nominations 2009: Sundance Film Festival: Grand Jury Prize, Audience Award. 2009: Independent Spirit Awards: Film, director, screenplay, actress, supporting actress 2009: Toronto Film Festival: Audience Award Genre Drama. Based on real events. Independent Film USA. Adolescence. Teaching (Taken from: <http://peliculas.labutaca.net/precious>)

Technical details of the film Precious

**Table 4**

Clarence Jones story (Precious), is a sixteen-year-old black, almost illiterate girl, who is expecting her second child. The first one was at age twelve, a child with Down syndrome known by the name of Mongo, whose father is Precious own father. He lives in Harlem with his mother (Mo'Nique), on Lenox Avenue, the realm of the invisible, of the voiceless. Her mother is an obese and cruel woman, whose sole occupation is to watch TV everyday, eat whatever Precious cooks, gets on welfare benefits at the expense of her daughter and granddaughter, while she abuses her, blaming her for the sexual assault by her father, accusing her of stealing her husband and treating her in the most degrading possible way. Precious has to leave school because of her pregnancy. The school is her only tie to the real world, the world of adolescents, the only place she feels any interest in getting in, and in which she finds a way, even though invisible, of leaving the environment in which she lives. Precious ends up on a school for special cases which will be the beginning of the road to recovery, hope. But there, in the last step of the well, when there is no more hell to come down, she will meet Miss Rain (Paula Patton), a young teacher with her friends, other girls whose lives were mad, but together, with the help of social worker (Mariah Carey) and a nurse (Lenny Kravitz), will be with them, which will see beyond the simple appearance, with whom Precious begins their ascent from the underworld (Taken from: <http://www.inventodeldemo.es/tag/precious>).

Precious Review

Once viewed and it was the film, there was discussion (given by one of the authors of this paper), taped it in its entirety (with permission of those present). A relaxing atmosphere was created so that experts would feel free to express ideas that emerged from the experience with the film. Some open questions for reflection were suggested (See Table 5).

**Table 5**

What do people get from this film?  
 What questions do we ask about the plot and characters of the movie?  
 What teaching do we get from watching the movie?  
 What coordinates or units of meaning can we describe from the film?  
 With which theoretical concepts do we relate the movie?

Questions to GFE

## 6. REFLECTIONS OF THE FORUM

Here are the coordinates or units of meaning that emerged from the discussion of the GFE from the analysis of the film *Precious*. Table 6 summarizes the most prominent categories of the film. Later, we post a detailed summary of the comments made by experts and triangulated it with some theoretical concepts.

### 6.1 Preliminary reactions of GFE (countertransference<sup>6</sup>)

During the screening of the film, several participants expressed exclamations of wonder by showing gestures of disbelief and disgust, especially against the brutal behavior of the mother of *Precious* and to discover that the star was pregnant by her own father on two occasions.

One of the first associations that the GFE made revolved around the idea that “the story that the director Lee Daniels shows us is raw, hard and difficult.” These comments can be associated with some criticisms made to the film. For example, it has been listed see: as a “porno-drama carefully designed“ (<http://www.blogdecine.com/oscars-2010/oscars-2010-precious-porno-drama-carefully-designed>). However, despite it was commented to the GFE about this criticism, concerned professionals felt that the plot is a reflection of a segment of society, not only of American Harlem of 1987 (in which the film is set), but from other countries, both European and Latin American. The group felt that this critique that lists the film as “porno-drama” may be related to the intense feelings

**Table 6**

Category analysis (coordinates of the movie)	Development	Theoretical concepts related to domestic violence
<p>Movie Title:                      Precious:                      Based on the novel 'Push' by Sapphire.</p>	<p>Precious is the name given to the film's main character. The title of the film gives us an idea of the importance of the name of the protagonist to tell her story. This name allows the player to identify with a resilient value in her life. It could be hypothesized that his name symbolizes the idealization that her parents had at some point in life. In other words, the name given to the player gave an important value for this teenager so that it could give new meaning in her trauma and her life. Throughout its history, the main character has not been appreciated as a human being different from their parents. Perhaps the only recognition was the name given to her. We may assume that the parents of Precious did not assign a place in the world; it is only through her name that Precious has the tracks to get one. Perhaps, through the name chosen by the mother, the mother of Precious had a primary maternal preoccupation, that saved the girl from madness. It is very likely that the name assigned to the girl has stimulated intense imagination that later developed as a compensatory mechanism to mitigate her victimization. However, the name is a significant burden of irony: Although involving a protagonist, Precious does not identify herself as such.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identity in traumatized victims.</li> <li>• Resilience and power of imagination and fantasy in the healing and salvation of the victims</li> <li>• Importance of having a place in the world</li> <li>• Primary maternal preoccupation</li> <li>• Perverse enjoyment</li> </ul>

**Table 6. Continuation**

Category analysis (coordinates of the movie)	Development	Theoretical concepts related to domestic violence
<p>Main Character: Precious</p>	<p><i>Precious</i> is the main protagonist of the story. A teenager victim of a perverse enjoyment of both parents who do not give her a place in the world, and assigned only the fate of suffering, victimization and subjugation. The film shows the long and winding road that runs along the heroin, until the end of the film which picks up the pieces of her life and builds a different narrative of being a victim of the mother and the social system where she lives. She has no visibility (despite her weight), or existence, in a city as vast as New York. Precious's character comes to represent the physical and psychological holocaust on an innocent person inflicted by whom they should have protected and nourished her. This trauma marks the identity of Precious, and is only at the end of the film, when she is able to resume the control of her life. Precious is illiterate, which is metaphorically associated with an inability to recognize herself. Precious speaks at a time "I talk loud but still I do not exist." ("I can scream, but it still does not exist.") In spite of this, Precious has an intense imaginative life, which saves her from falling into an existential void greater than it already is. Though she can only gauge the impact of her illiteracy, she is aware of the stigma that is associated with not reading or writing. So when Miss Rain, her new teacher in the special school, tries to teach her, Precious responds aggressively because of her disability. Precious dreams of being a beautiful, thin dancer, but also has dark moments: street teenagers persecute and torment her. Perhaps the message that Lee Daniels, director of the film gives us through his character is that all victims, including the heroine of Precious, have within them courage to heal wounds. Precious grew up without role models to idealize or imitate. Her parents abused her all her life and her grandmother, a witness to this abuse, is unable to defend her. Her only salvation is to take refuge in the intense inner imaginative life which she develops. Precious has a distorted image of herself (morbidly obese, illiterate), and uses this distortion as a shelter to face the resentment and violence that she receives everyday, as much as from her family as well as the community where she lives and the school where she studies. Precious dreams of being different, white and thin, as the only way to "fool" herself, and be accepted by the rest, she fantasizes about being recognized for her rich interior. However, as long as Precious does not accept herself for who she is, no one will recognize her.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value of trauma and its inclusion as first order element in understanding human suffering.</li> <li>• The inner life as a means of healing and salvation of the victims of child sexual abuse.</li> </ul>

**Table 6. Continuation**

Category analysis (coordinates of the movie)	Development	Theoretical concepts related to domestic violence
Precious's mother: Mary	<p>Mary is represented as a monstrous midwife, captured in destiny, and incapable of doing something to change it. Mary was imprisoned, and it could be said that despite her cruelty is also a victim of both the society to which she blackmails (she uses Precious and her son, Mongo to collect support from social services), and Precious father. Mary was caught in the perversion of her "partner", and she could not set limits to the wishes of this man. The mother seems jealous of the desire that the husband feels for her daughter and abuses her so viciously. Mary does not tolerate loneliness, and this gives rise to the abuse she performs on her daughter, encouraging her obesity. In this sense, Mary speaks, "He was my man was my fucking man, he was my man and he desired my daughter and that's why I hated her so much" (1h 34 '31'). She also says, "She told him what I did ... who would want me? You have a title (referring to the social worker, Miss Wiess), and you know so much, tell me who would love me and make me feel good at night? (1h 35 '04') and "Come and take care of mom Precious" (22'21'). Throughout the history we can infer that Mary once had dreams and maybe the ability to love (at least put a "precious" name to her daughter), some reminiscent of kindness should have had to save precious from madness and perversion. For example, this is represented in the film in the scene when Precious comes out of the hospital and gets home with her baby; we find a big fight with her mother. Precious inserts sweet memories from her childhood with her mother (1h 3 '01'). Similarly, we could say that the name chosen by the mother for her daughter represents the importance that this girl had to keep the couple together (albeit for a perverse enjoyment).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of the primary caregivers in child development.</li> <li>• Importance of mental health of the mother being "good enough."</li> <li>• The society in family victimization.</li> </ul>

**Table 6. Continuation**

Category analysis (coordinates of the movie)	Development	Theoretical concepts related to domestic violence
Grandmother (mother of Mary)	Precious's grandmother and mother of Mary plays a small but important role in the story: she takes care of Mongo, with Down syndrome, Precious child, and somehow gives a benchmark of normalcy to her granddaughter. There are several references in the movie that tells us that the grandmother had a deep fear of her daughter Mary. For example, she tells her granddaughter, "you're not like your mother" (referring to not the same in evil), and this must have some effect on Beautiful, which was distinguished from the cruelty of the mother. Despite this, the grandmother is an accomplice in the abuse of Precious; since she does not make decisions, and takes her grandson to Precious to see him only when he is going to get a visit from the social services staff. Similarly, her character serves to introduce the idea of the importance of inter-generational trauma and the consequences of not taking motherhood and the limits in parenting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergenerational transmission of trauma.</li> <li>• Aiding and family secrets, typical in cases of child sexual abuse and domestic violence.</li> <li>• Importance of the limits in raising children.</li> </ul>
Precious's father	Precious's father is a "missing" figure because at no time he shows his face (just like a shadow and away). However, his evil is felt throughout the film. His "absence" shows that the damage to the aggressor is not only physical but also corresponds to her memory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In domestic violence and child sexual abuse, the perpetrator's presence is not necessarily physical. The omnipresence of the perpetrator involves suffering mega exercised.</li> </ul>

**Table 6. Continuation**

Category analysis (coordinates of the movie)	Development	Theoretical concepts related to domestic violence
Miss Blue Rain (Master of the "Special School")	<p>Miss Blue Rain represents the figure of the therapist and good mother, with whom Precious can identify. It is through the relationship established with Miss Rain that Precious may give new meaning to her life, and take a different narrative to the past. In this regard, Miss Rain gives a new identity to Precious, considering her a human being, with her own characteristics and kindness. One of Miss Rain first appearances is to tell the group of girls who share with Precious, "I want you to say your name, where you were born, your favorite color, what you do well and why you are here" (27 :24''). It also introduces Precious in the world of reading and writing, allowing her to create a new narrative for her life. Miss Rain and Precious maintain an exchange of diaries, which resembles the therapeutic activity that is done with victims of sexual abuse. In this regard, Precious says, "I'm happy writing, I am happy at this school. Ms. Rain wants us to write every day. She helps us with the doubts we have" (51 :40''). And, "Miss Rain was the one who put a piece of chalk in my hand. She made me the queen of the alphabet" (1h 13 :24''). We could interpret the name given to this character reflects life (represented by rainwater) and serenity (blue) which Precious lacked. In this regard, it is written by Precious, "Some people have enough light to light up others, so this is how Ms. Rain is for me" (1h 14 :57''). Ms. Rain teaches Precious to read, and as a metaphor for life, gives a new interpretation to the story of the protagonist.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importance of a new and different link to the perpetrator in the conception of child sexual abuse treatment (corrective emotional experience).</li> </ul>

**Table 6. Continuation**

Category analysis (coordinates of the movie)	Development	Theoretical concepts related to domestic violence
<p>The social worker Miss Weiss</p>	<p>The social worker becomes the means by which Precious forges her own destiny and redefines her identity, from dependent victim of the cruelty of her mother, to an autonomous person capable of forging her own destiny. It is this character which conveys Precious' s mother to confess her crime and can raise the horror that has lived Precious, while approving Precious to build her position as a mother capable of caring for her two children and taking charge of their destiny and not as a chronic victim of abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of social services in the testimony of child sexual abuse.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Each One Teach One</i> Alternative School</p>	<p>Precious is placed in a special school where personalized education is awarded. The protagonist is placed in this center because she is illiterate, does not do well in the normal school and is also pregnant, in this new institution, <i>Each One Teach One</i> Alternative School, Precious meets Miss Rain and makes a network of friends, who are in a similar situation to Precious (Latino and black, all "minority"), but who support and teach a new narrative for her life. It is with this teaching method, custom, humane and based on the relationship, which Precious pulls out from her illiteracy, and is able to rewrite her own life. The <i>Each One Teach One</i> school becomes an extended family to Precious. Miss Rain emerges as a mother figure that respects and loves Precious. Other classmates also act as supporting figures, even when Precious gives birth to her second child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of social networks in victimized groups.</li> <li>• Importance of a humanized and personalized education.</li> </ul>
<p>The social network and friends of the new school</p>	<p>Precious new friends symbolize the notion of group support and recognition of her loneliness as a victim.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coming out of victimization involves building a new vision of the world with the support of empathetic social networks.</li> </ul>



**Table 6. Continuation**

Category analysis (coordinates of the movie)	Development	Theoretical concepts related to domestic violence
Social Services	Precious breaks the cycle of victimization through social services, not through physicians. In the film there are no figures in the area of health that help Precious heal her wounds. It is through the relationship with Miss Rain, Ms. Weiss, and with the special education she receives that Precious becomes aware of her position in the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on social and educational rather than medical treatment and rehabilitation of victims of abuse.</li> </ul>
Couple relationships	The only relationship that can be seen in the film is what establishes Miss Rain with her lover, who happens to be another woman. Interestingly, the director of this film, Lee Daniels, is openly gay, and acknowledged how difficult it was his childhood and adolescence, in particular the relationship with his father, for having a sexual orientation different from "normal." Likewise, the author of the book on which the film is based is a lesbian. In the film, we see Precious questioning relationships different from heterosexual relationships, but immediately we are referred that heterosexual people were the ones who made her suffer the most, so that gives one space to another type of relationship based on love, respect and tolerance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The victimization is a chain of relationships, often based on gender stereotypes.</li> </ul>
Male figures	The male figure is represented only by the nurse, John, and is the only male character. His presence, although it is supporting in the plot, is important because he is kind and is concerned about the health and recovery of Precious. In this respect he once said to Precious once she has given birth, "... here you will eat as God commands and will look after your health." (55'00'').	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral to crisis of family values and double standards that prevail in American society.</li> <li>• Gender stereotypes related to family violence.</li> </ul>

coordinates map of the film

generated by its viewing, and that in the psychotherapeutic language, it is called counter transference.

The entire GFE agreed that the plot of this film is difficult to witness. The terms “hard”, “tragic”, “shocking”, and “suffering” among others, flooded the beginning of the discussion. All participants agreed that while this is a film, and it is meant to impress the audience, also the real stories of domestic violence are staggering.

These comments coincide with the investigations that have been carried out on intersubjectivity that occurs between the one who tells stories of violence and the listener. In this regard, Campo-Redondo (2008) has found that domestic violence stories generate an emotional shock in professionals, and tend to surprise the listener, while they may mobilize negative feelings of disgust towards the perpetrators.

In this regard, it is very important in working with victims of domestic violence to be aware of the feelings that these people can generate in us, not to let ourselves be flooded by those affected.

In the case of the film in question, it is clear that the director tries to make us partakers of the suffering endured on Precious since her birth (Imbert, 2002).

### **6.2 Triangulation with some theoretical concepts. Precious as a victim: true self versus false self**

Precious is shown in this film as being victimized by her parents and society, not only in psychological and educational fields but also in the bodily area. Since her birth, Clarence “Precious” Jones was awarded a place in the world, only the physical (hence the morbid obesity), and for the perverse enjoyment of both parents. Precious, as she says, is introduced at the beginning of the film, it is torn between being the object of enjoyment of others or remain independent to avoid being a victim of her mother.

As a victim of severe and repeated abuse by her closest caregivers, Precious uses dissociation as defense mechanism against suffering. Precious keeps mentally away from painful situations and memories, imagining herself as white, beautiful, slim, sweet, and dancing with a prince who rescues her. She also creates a fairy godmother that she loves (a metaphor for her desire to have a good mother who cares for her and loves her), and serves to calm her against adversity. This dissociative

fantasy allows Precious to mitigate the psychological pain from abuse and neglect that has been exposed throughout her life. In other words, it could be said that fantasy saves Precious, from of madness (psychosis), and the perversion (psychopathic). Also, this fantasy makes Precious to have desires, and ultimately achieves “salvation” and restarts a new direction (at the end of the film.) It appears that the resilient force of Precious stems in part from her rich life of imagination.

Although fantasy helps Precious to dissociate painful experiences, this has a cost in her emotional life: Precious loses consciousness of herself, in exchange for tolerating her tragedy. This is evidenced significantly in the different reaction facing her two pregnancies. In the first, she confesses to Miss Rain that she “felt nothing” when her first child Mongo was born. In contrast, in her second delivery, Precious experienced, and comes to verbalize that “this time it hurt” (referring to Abdul’s birth, her second child). So that we could say that the change Precious undergoes throughout the film, (a result of her new network and the influence of Miss Rain and Miss Weiss), is to expand awareness of herself, including those painful feelings of life as birth.

Following the theory of Winnicott (1965) on the maturation process in children, we could say that all the suffering inflicted on Precious prevented her to develop a true self, and instead, it created what the author calls “a false self.”<sup>7</sup> In this regard, the psychoanalyst says that when a false self has been formed, it could be partly because it is the child who has had to adapt to the environment (the mother), rather than this one adapt to the needs of the child. The false self would then appear as a defense.

So, this whole “adapted” life that Precious developed both her passivity in the face punishments and inability to read, corresponds to a “false self”, since it must relinquish some of her own conscience, to meet the enjoyment of her parents. In the film, this should be evidenced in the orange scarf, Precious always carries like a bracelet (perhaps as a symbol of the handcuffs that bound the girl’s false self adapted). This “bracelet”, could well represent the handcuffs that bind her false self, as a transitional object<sup>8</sup> that gives security against the most despicable moments of her life (the orange scarf first appeared being given to Precious by a fairy godmother, as part of her dissociative fantasy ) and it is not, until the end of the film, when Precious reveals against this false self and gives the orange scarf to her young neighbor, who is also in the social services; we

suppose by having been physically abused (close-up of the girl's face with punches). In this regard, Winnicott tells us that

when the mother is not able to adapt well, the child is seduced into submission and it is a false and submissive being who reacts to environmental demands, which seem to be accepted by the child. Through the mediation of this false being, the child constructs a set of false reactions, and through introjections tends to acquire a fiction of reality. The false being has an important positive function: to hide the true self, which manages undergoing environmental requirements (p. 1982: 177).

This idea leads to the characterization that Precious makes herself, in the sense that there was no room in her life for spontaneity (hence obesity), or for creativity (perhaps this explains her inability to read as a metaphor of her inability to "read" herself).

## **7. IN CONCLUSION**

A film can generate infinite interpretations, and further discussion can take various aspects. In the present case, we were interested in an exemplification of a hypothetical (but experts say not far from the "real" cases) of sexual abuse violence. Through accurate documentation of what was a Focus Group of Experts (GFE), we have presented an analysis that can be used with students who are beginning in the field of mental health counseling, prevention and education values.

We believe that this scenario we have presented has enough validity to be used in as a tool future courses, so that students of social education and psychology and counseling, may have an approach to the phenomenology of a case of child sexual abuse.

### **Notes**

1. For psychodynamics we understand the psychological aspects underlying a particular behavior or phenomenon, especially those that relate to the unconscious aspects of this.
2. We take the concept of the Focus Group of Experts (GFE) of Vargas Flores, José and Ibáñez Reyes, Ediberta. (2008) and agreed that is a conversation with a group of people, who know the subject of dis-

cussion and who are made an interview with a defined agenda. This means that the topics covered are pre-defined, but are flexible. This qualitative research strategy is designed to obtain information from a defined area of interest. In general, one can say that the atmosphere within the focus groups is permissive and non-directive, and considers individuals who are experts in certain subject or have much experience on a certain area, in this case was related to their expertise child abuse.

3. Original English title: Precious: Based on the novel 'Push' by Sapphire.
4. We took the concept coordinate a broader called "concept-image", coined by the philosopher of cinema Julio Cabrera (2006). The concept-image, is defined by this author as chains of which the director of a film uses to convey an idea or knowledge, but not wanting to draw it completely. Thus, the film-image concepts are like roads that say something about the world with claims of truth and universality, in the sense that the film expresses something that could happen to anyone, rather than something that necessarily happens to all (p. 21). So that for Cabrera, a concept-image can be an entire movie (such as the experience of victims of abuse that Precious shows us, the main character in this one), or may display other items, smaller images (such as criticism of family patterns and gender roles through the characters of Miss Rain's girlfriend, or the role of Precious's nurse while she remains in the hospital).
5. We assume, knowingly and said, that neither this nor any other commercial film, conceived as teaching material. The film is not science and movies are not books or scientific publications. However, we chose this film because of its rawness, its resemblance to real cases of abuse and family neglect, the message of hope and resilient in dealing with child victimization, and because the characters are not completely trapped in despair. Similarly, we propose to recover the classical idea of understanding cinema as the story: as stories to be fiction, we can help create situations of conflict or trauma in our reality. In this case, using the model of mental space-time, we propose to see the film as a creative alternative to open, or if you prefer unsaturated for a situation hard to understand how child abuse.

6. Although there are very different positions on how to conceptualize the term “counter” when we speak of it we refer to all feelings, fantasies, thoughts and emotional reactions experienced by the professional help as a result of interaction with a family or group event.
7. The false self defense structure that assumes the mother’s role early care and protection, so that the child adapts to the environment at the same time protects your true self, the source of his personal impulses, the alleged threats, injuries or even destruction. For this author, if the mother is not good enough and not able to sense and respond appropriately to the needs of the child, it will replace the spontaneous gesture that enforced conformity by a gesture with his own mother, thus this repeated conformity is to be the basis of most primary mode of false self.
8. Winnicott (1982) defines a transitional object as a material object in which an infant deposited some attachment, such as a stuffed animal or a cloth, which has important psychological functions, especially when trying to sleep, when alone or in other moments, like boredom. Serves as an object that supplies some functions of the mother when she is absent. It is a source of pleasure and safety for the infant that usually pulls it, to have around and talk. Allows the child to establish an intermediate area between himself and another person or between himself and reality. The transitional object is both objective and subjective, objective because it is on a real object, subjective because they are given and given functions in the field of imagination.

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