

5. Body Capital

5.1 How Does Body Capital Emerge?

In “Emile,” Rousseau’s classic book on bourgeois ideas about education, he offered a perspective in 1762 that has been important for the understanding of the body for a long time. The student Emile was supposed to be accompanied as he grew up by nature, the objects in his life, people, and especially his teacher. In growing up this way, he was supposed to cultivate his physically perceived experiences and other experiences through nature and these objects in order to develop a realistic picture of the world and its possibilities. The body and the mind of the student are primarily constructed through the effects of external circumstances on the self, which has a free will and can determine how it behaves in these circumstances but also needs to recognize that it should not unnecessarily behave in a way that contradicts the course of nature and things.¹ This remains a common perspective in recent sociology of the body: in enlightened modernity the body is primarily understood as shaped by external natural and social conditions.²

However, in his “Confessions,” one of the first autobiographies in the Western world, Rousseau also painted a different image of the body. He describes, for example, here how as a spurned lover he had to experience the physical strength and natural beauty of a rival, which strongly detracted from his self-image. He characterized in detail the emotional moods, uncertainties, and contradictions in his self, which struggled with its self-esteem and bodily image not from the outside but especially from within, with an inner image as the construction of its own subjectivity.

Today we know that we have to consider both sides.³ It is nevertheless astounding how little the body is present in research on social questions, forms of capital, equality of opportunity, inequality, and education.⁴ In medicine, there is dedicated research on the body, but it remains relatively isolated from other fields such as sociology, psychology, philosophy, and pedagogy,

¹ Rousseau also constructed a “natural” gender difference with “Sophie” here, which despite all enlightenment in his work still represented the image of masculine domination.

² For an introduction, see in particular Cregan (2006), Malacrida & Low (2008).

³ I will use the approaches of Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu again and again in the discussion that follows. I will not, however, go into detail about relevant distinctions from phenomenology, which allow us to distinguish between the body and mind. See in particular Merleau-Ponty (2002).

⁴ On the sociology of the body, see for example the classics by Turner (1996), Featherstone et al. (1991), Shilling (1993), and the journal “Body and Society,” which has been published since 1995.

which have for a long time forgotten about the body. The fact that these disciplines have for the most part ignored the topic of the body certainly is due in part to their need for independence, which overlap with medical questions might threaten. A brief review can provide some insight into the one-sidedness of these approaches:

- *Pedagogy*: the body is often thought of as an enemy rather than as the expression of inner demands that can be externalized. In the rationalized world of enlightenment pedagogy, the body is disturbing because it cannot always easily be disciplined, and the militaristic synchronization of the learning process has to regulate the body; this can be seen, for example, in the variety of advice in the 19th century provided during lessons against masturbation, a big topic in that time. Often people fall back on the formulaic idea that a healthy body is occupied by a healthy mind, where the mind is always privileged and health is reduced in general to disciplined physical exercises.¹ Special needs education has for a long time been concerned with the deficits of the disabled body. Education in school has until this day followed a thorough hostility toward the body, which is expressed, for example, in the small rooms at schools, bad lighting and acoustics, equipment that works against the body, and the lack of opportunities for movement.²
- *Psychology*: the interior view is more central to psychology. But the body is often constructed here as something that carries symptoms, reduced to individual body parts, or reduced to the medical model, which in turn neglects internal interactions with oneself and the body. There have been attempts, for example in psychoanalysis, to expand the view to include the body,³ but a dualistic view of cognition, emotion, social behavior, and the body is still common today. Brain research and neurobiology may cross boundaries here in the future, but they reduce the view of the body often by naturalizing it and neglecting interactive and social aspects.
- *Philosophy*: the neglect of the body in rational philosophy is proverbial. Highly abstract thinking and the physical body seem to exclude each other in principle. But phenomenology in particular, for example Merleau-

¹ Critical background studies can be found especially in Devereux (1967, 1979) and Foucault (e.g., 1980, 1988, 2010)

² John Dewey is an important exception to which the *somatic turn*, e.g., Shusterman (2000, 2008) refers. Shusterman is also influenced in this regard by Bourdieu (see Schusterman 1999).

³ Wilhelm Reich (1960, 1973) became especially famous in this regard for his ideas about bio-energy. He emphasized in particular the function of the orgasm, which he summed up in his “orgasm formula” (tension – charge – discharge – relaxation). The approach remained as controversial as his orgone theory.

Ponty, discovered the body,¹ and feminism opened the way for understanding embodiment in a new and profound way.² The work of Michel Foucault was essential here because he explored a deeper understanding of the body, on the one hand, as a disciplined body, and on the other hand he also discussed the technology of the self, which discursively problematized our construction of the body.³ In these discourses it became clear that the construction of the body always involved linguistic constructions of reality and did not simply reflect “natural” processes.

- *Sociology*: sociology also tends to situate the relevant social relations and developments in the mind; it tends to focus on society and consciousness rather than society and the body. Often the trained and disciplined body is discussed with reference to Elias or Foucault, but embodiment or physicality has not yet become a central theoretical category in sociological discourse. Even Bourdieu, who recognized that the body can become a kind of body capital, did not develop body capital as a distinct form of capital. Rather, the development of civilization and reflection on this appears to reflect a reduction in the importance of the body; and new technology also accelerates the neglect of the body because in the “the order of absolute acceleration,” as Virilio (2006) describes it, the user passively lets the world come to them rather than being physically active. The old dualism of a division between the world of nature and the social world seems to vanish and becomes a virtualized world strapped to our bodies.

This brief look already shows that the body has had a difficult time finding its way into academic discourse. This result contrasts, however, with human actions that increasingly draw the body out of its repressed and forgotten role and into the world and thus demand treatment in the research:

- It has been known for long time in capitalism that the body and thus bodily health and fitness are essential for work and earning a living. But the profanity of this situation did not, however, give the body the higher orders of rationality and critical reflection but stopped at a simple statement: a healthy mind requires a healthy body.⁴ The more, however, body cultures are created by healthcare and fitness movements, the more interesting this trend becomes not just from the athletic or medical point of

¹ See in particular Merleau-Ponty (2002).

² On this see, Butler in particular (2004, 2006). In Gender Studies, embodiment is discussed in a broader way than previously.

³ See in particular Foucault (1980, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1998, 2010, 2011).

⁴ The Roman poet Juvenal’s original saying aims to show that a healthy mind is needed for a healthy body. However, in the reception of this saying, primarily by those who were focused on the physical training of youth for military service, it was reversed insofar as the healthy body was put before the healthy mind.

view; it becomes visible as a phenomenon for other disciplines. What drives people more now than in the past to spend increasingly more time, effort, and resources to cultivate their bodies?¹ What stands behind this is the phenomenon that modernity describes the body as natural, unique, special, and emphasizes its necessary integrity and authenticity, which first allow it to operate as working body. People have to want to shape their body and cultivate and care for it if they want it to be effective as a body used for labor and leisure.

- However, the degree to which the body is trained and shaped in modernity is strongly determined and regulated by class, sex, and ethnicity. These structures only begin to be modified with liquid modernity. The primarily physical shaping of the body is pushed back, and the standards of physical education are pushed in the direction of fitness, healthcare, eroticization, and idealized modelling.
- Given such liquefaction, since the 1990s, mass media has increasingly turned its attention to the body and started an unceasing, animated reporting that shows signs of being a cult of the body. Countless magazines, books, TV reports, etc. portray the care of the body, create fashion and body images, illustrate beauty, force manipulation and alteration of the body, etc. Fashion creates a uniformity of beautiful design that determines individuality for the consumer and only generates enough profits through serial production on the mass market. And in the background here, there is a body industry that influences ideas of the body with the aim of profit.
- Advertising, the world of the rich and beautiful, fashion, the cult of youth, and blatant gender stereotyping combined with thoroughgoing capitalization increasingly determine the images of the body and the self-image of embodiment where the social demand for the perfect body places constant excessive demands on one's own desires.
- Practices regarding the body from tattooing to plastic surgery reflect a change in consciousness not only on the part of individuals but of large groups of people who internalize the demands of society or transform internal demands into social ones. The body is not only supposed to be health and last as long as possible, it is also maintained in a healthy state and even "trained," shaped, and sometimes injured; and now a comprehensive body industry offers services and routines, from wellness to surgery, to match the diversity of practices, or new practices are advertised.

¹ Thus, for example, the military training of the body was highly cultivated in the past. The neglect of the body is connected with modern rationalism and with the transition from direct battle to battle through technology, even if the body of the hero is still cultivated and honored in the military today.

- The body as a location of identification and discipline, which involves finger printing, DNA analysis, biometric measurements, and pictures of all kinds, represents the other side of individualization. Attitudes, hopes, ideas, and behaviors can be traced by the physical traces they leave behind; and as a window into the body, the search for traces has developed disciplinary practices such as police and forensic investigations. People are fascinated by this as can be seen by the depiction and fictionalization of bodily traces in the media. Foucault has described comprehensively this aspect of the discipline, surveillance, and control of people through their bodies. The possible abuse of the body is always in direct tension with the hopes and opportunities for individualization. The body exists somewhere between self-control and control from the outside where the practices of self-control often first give rise to and improve external controls.
- The body as a repair kit and as a reproduction and transplantation machine is moving increasingly into the center of medicine that is focused on apparatuses and devices. This form of medicine demonstrates technical ability and helps create a consciousness of the alterability of the body, which presents the body as an object to be worked on and constructed in ways that have not been seen before.

Upon closer inspection, many of these new manifestations are not exactly new; what has changed is the heightened sensitivity and consumerism. Even in the past, the body did not draw attention only when it was sick but also in matters of love and stress or other sensory experiences or bodily contact. But the peculiar interpretation of such bodily perceptions has made it a secondary object since modernity; it appears again primarily in matters of desire, even if pure physical pleasure is often not considered “real pleasure.” The body was and is in this regard not simply an opponent as it appears to the self during sickness or suffering but is also an object of lust and an expression of physical pleasure. Today the secondary perspective on the body, cultural paternalism, and the emphasis on higher reason and morality are no longer adequate in academic and scientific discourse for a comprehensive recognition of the body. This approach has transformed with critical works on body construction and the transformation of the body during the course of history, especially Foucault’s studies on “The History of Sexuality.” It has also become clear how differently the body was constructed in different periods and that the body cannot be reduced only to linguistic constructions of reality (see Barad, 2003). The gendered body in particular has become visible through feminist discourse, which has extensively discussed how gender roles are attributed to the body. The more women have joined the workforce in industrialized countries and secured their own income, the more emancipatory women’s movements have fought against the unequal treatment of women; this has also

given rise to discourses that promote the participation of women in education, income, jobs, and careers. Although women's emancipation has much older roots, its effectiveness has become particularly apparent in this transformation. As a whole, in a time of artificial insemination, increasing cosmetic surgery, genetic manipulation, sex-changes in the context of transsexuality, and many other practices, it is becoming increasingly clear that the body is socially constructed. It is also clear here that the issue of inequality regarding attributions, evaluations, and applications necessarily has to go hand in hand with the analysis of these constructions.

In this respect, the cult of the body is not only the ecstasy of its capitalization, which is accompanied by profit interests, and it is not just the social pressure to mark physical differences in order to introduce new distinguishing criteria in social and cultural classes; rather, it is also the return of forgotten and repressed contexts. For early societies at war, the body of the hero is always the epitome of beauty and functions as a social model.

Such models continue today, where there are often unconscious motives and desires involved. We recall such models in our language without much reflection: "We have a light touch, give someone the thumbs up, wash our hands of a situation, or take a situation into our own hands, etc." Our senses and various body parts are constantly marked linguistically in order to remind us to recover the physical; at other times, we have an uncomfortable feeling in our stomach, our skin crawls, or we are overcome with feeling.

Using his model of the psychic apparatus, Sigmund Freud conceptualized the conflict that the self has to resolve; this conflict emerges between physical drives that arise from the id and directly affect the body and the ego, and our hopes and expectations that are recalled in the super-ego. This fits with how the body is handled now:

On the one hand, the construction of psychic health demands that the self or ego listen to the desires and demands of its body and exercise a strategy for self-preservation and satisfaction of its desires so that body is not alienated. This means that physical health and psychic well-being are a good that is to be regulated by the self, and this strategy of regulation makes a new technology of the self-necessary. This is also often simplified when the real, natural body moves to the foreground, which generates the hope that one can finally actually be one's natural self and see oneself independent of all of the confusing and contradictory social constructions. The naturalization of the body (and associated theoretical approaches) becomes an expectation that, however, is always disappointed because all attempts at naturalization only reveal the constructed body as it is conceived in a certain time and culture. We see this when looking back at past cultures or comparing cultures, and future observers will also see the same in us.

On the other hand, we live within social constraints that discipline the body and encourage the self to prefer certain strategies and technologies. There

are preferred solutions to conflicts in certain situations; in the regulation of desires and drives, historical-cultural preferences appear in the course of changing life circumstances. And we have to reproduce in a two-fold way: as a species, we reproduce ourselves sexually. And as individuals we do so through our work. In short, we cannot act out everything that gives us satisfaction or pleasure, but the body is also a construct from our circumstances in life, and these circumstances constantly force us to find new answers that fit.

Striking a balance here is a contradictory and uncertain process. The individualization in particular that begins with modernity has become central because it appears to relieve the self of collective constraints, but at the same time these constraints are introduced again through the back door through putative free choice as conventional action based on fashion and recognized lifestyles. The self has to balance itself again against this background. It is always searching for its body; it wants to feel it and perceive it, care for it, beautify and improve it, but while doing so, it always has to look at what other people find beautiful or better. Here we have both drive and competition, which motivate the self to establish body capital as a resource and a strategy in dealing with oneself and others.

In his work on “liquid modernity,” Zygmunt Bauman draws attention to the fact that the body is reconstructed in the transition from its role as a producer to its role as a consumer. While the body was previously aligned with what was needed for a job or for production or the state, for example as a soldier, which led to a thorough disciplining and a balance of physical needs and expectations against the background of the respective class position and roles, the body has now been given a new role as a consumer. Now it is not primarily the others, the exploiters, or the states and their ideologies that use the body for their interests; rather, the body has become a consuming physical subject for the individual, which generates costs and has also become an object of consumption for others.

That the body is a consumer is evident. Care for and work on the body require a great deal of time and resources today. The effort may differ greatly depending on the individual, but the trend in consumption is toward increasing the costs for the body. This generates a physical habitus, which not only displays the body outwardly but also requires something of this body. When we invest so much in our body, we expect recognition, benefits, and profit. Someone who invests in health wants to live longer without disease or illnesses. Someone who stays in shape expects the body to reward him or her with more achievements, pleasure, and endurance. The dilemma of the physical habitus is that it cannot simply be pushed outward but has to be anchored in individual subjective experience (it must be embodied like the cultural habitus). The self can take a distance from the body (“the body as my enemy”) when it sees illness or bad health as unjust or inexplicable, but the physical

habitus turns things around and allows the self to experience the body as something “natural” (e.g., “I am the ideal weight”), “human” (e.g., “movement is healthy”), and pleasurable (e.g., “massages are good for me”). In the past, the body also always experienced, felt, or suffered things; in this regard, the physical habitus is intimately connected with the self and its reflections on itself and the body, but these constructions, reflections, experiences, expectations, and interpretations of the self, change depending on culture. And excitement about the body depends here on excitement about consumption.

But how realistic is the accounting here? Investments in health are apparently primarily investments in security and a scientifically researched order that can be controlled. And more is certainly talked about with regard to possibilities than limits here. In modernity, the image is still of an active body with a normal weight and endurance that protects itself from disease, illness, and the wrong milieus. But viewed from the consumption side, this search for order and security is thrown into question. The body is supposed to be a consumer, but its health no longer has to be in the foreground here; instead, everything can be consumed, even those things that poison the body or make it unhealthy, ill, or overweight. It now becomes the job of a “technology of the self” (Foucault), an individual job, to adopt highly ambivalent practices of the body, which are suitable for certain self-determined aims and that appear useful or valuable or useless or without value with regard to health, fitness, beauty, erotic attraction, care, exhibition, pleasure, etc. The exchangeable form of the body’s use values appears in body capital. Here, the body also becomes consumable for others by being transformed into, for example, erotic capital.

The condition for the creation of such body capital is primarily the idea that an individual can as agent at the same time relate to their body in an independent, controlling, and intervening way. If everything appears mutable and possible in the balancing of social demands and individual solutions, the body also appears as an object to be shaped and transformed. Already in the past, it was clear that the body could function as an exchange object for producing gains. Such gains can be had directly, for example, through the body in prostitution. But gains in capitalism are bound with the condition that the body is actually privately owned and can act freely. Prostitution, however, often involves coercion and exploitation through pimps and agents who suppress the freedom involved in such contractual relations through violence, oppression, and abuse. In such circumstances, there are often criminal economic laws that operate regarding markets. The private property is typical for capitalism. It becomes as sacred as the market, which leads to a two-fold liberation for the body:

On the one hand, the individual is recognized as the owner of their body so they can do what they want with it within certain limits. These limits appear, for example, in euthanasia when the body is supposed to be liberated from

its suffering by the individual owner but cannot be liberated because causing the death of another is not legally permitted. Laws on private ownership do not permit everything. Other limits appear, for example, with regard to social exploitation when the prostituted body is not only exploited but the income generated from prostitution is appropriated by a pimp.

On the other hand, the individual also privately bears the costs associated with the maintenance, care, transformation, and shaping of the body. In the context of healthcare, the distribution of costs can be regulated by the government, which, however, does not essentially change the fact that in general the individual is responsible for the costs. In capitalistic countries, physical emergencies are dealt with socially in different ways, but the care for the body is left wholly to the individual. Regarding illnesses or disabilities, physical debts are incurred, which are required investments, but for which there is only a costly insurance market.

The “body” can be conceived of as something that fills a measurable space. There are many such bodies such as foreign bodies, governmental bodies, material bodies, etc., and there are also mathematically defined bodies as well as human bodies. For such bodies, there is an outer visible boundary and an inner that is thought of as filled. This is why it makes sense to talk about body capital and not biological capital because what is filled out and what is reached through operations on and shaping of the body both within and without is what constitutes its capitalization through investments. Biological capital as a concept could mislead us here because in this regard we might imagine investment in an area of nature that is not so much characterized by private possession, a distinction between inside and outside, as is the case with the legal understanding of a physical body. Physical control of the body occurs through physical features such as biometric data, appearance, etc. Depending on the democratic structure of states, there are rules and laws of included and excluded bodies in all parts of society. The bodies are mostly free to move, but restricted by the state or money paid in different areas of life. Against this background, only the legitimate possession of the body enables its democratic rights and capitalization to direct and govern its possible freedom.

There are efforts in particular in the pharmaceutical and biological industry to capitalize on biological nature as well by patenting genes or plants. But these practices appear to be fundamentally illegitimate even under capitalism because they attempt to privatize natural resources for humanity for their own profit interests. Halting such practices will be a central fight. In this fight, we have to talk about biological capital.

The body and its constructed boundaries, however, cannot be understood as the natural prototype of an image that we could derive from nature or that would reflect nature. Bodies have been understood differently throughout time, and the present is no exception in this regard. Schroer summed this up:

“The situation today appears to me to be shaped primarily by the fact that the body is to a certain degree presented as the last remaining object opposed to the process of dissolution accompanying social differentiation processes, while on the other hand cultural practices and media representation testify to the fascination people have with seeing the body not as being biologically established once and for all but as something whose boundaries are in question” (translated from German, 2005, 25). This situation is not just reflective of freedom and the joy and pleasure in the multiplicity of constructions of the body, it is also reflective of the pressure of assimilation in which every individual has to determine what they are willing to do for the capitalization of their body, i.e., what opportunities the body provides for improving one’s competitiveness against others on the market. This trend in particular appears to be spreading because pleasure in one’s own body does not appear to be enough to explain why so many resources are increasingly spent on the body.

Foucault was able to show in “The History of Sexuality” (1990, 1992, 1998) that already in antiquity there was a concern with how to care for, beautify, and shape the body. Foucault’s thesis was that the development up to modernity was accompanied by growing attention to hygiene which eventually led people to apply this attention not only externally but internally to themselves and monitor themselves in order to shape psychic well-being along with physical well-being. Such things require investments. And the first such investment is time. The perception, care, and beautification of the body, keeping it healthy, increasing fitness, and the amplification of expectations for life require a lot of time and attention. And both cost money; resources and a great deal of effort are required in order to accomplish these aims. Time, effort, and resources appear in each of the following aspects:

- Humans have always had to ensure physical reproduction through nutrition, sleep, and social provisions. These physical costs are necessary. But the portions expended are variable. People who fight for mere survival have few opportunities to develop physical use values in order to generate body capital. The affluent, however, can plan their investments in healthy or unhealthy nutrition, in antibiotic-treated poultry from a discount grocery store or in better goods from an organic grocery store.
- At the same time, in addition to the effects of economic and social circumstances on body capital, a self-referentiality has arisen in dealing with the body, which in affluent societies privatizes the body, although in its privacy it is always in competition with others on the market. Nobody can escape this ambivalence now.
- Rising spending appears during periods when we care for the body, wash it, treat it, massage, etc. Such periods in the meantime are becoming industrialized and associated with a variety of products whose use is made legitimate primarily by the fact that others use the products. The

basic care of the body belongs to the basic body use value that must be employable as an exchange value at all times in education, employment, leisure, and the search for a partner. The cultural habitus combines with an attitude toward one's own body and appears as a body habitus; and the affluent in particular recognize the value of investment in this area. The body industry, under the banner of the globalized market, leads to a levelling of existing cultural national differences.

- Time spent on beautification serves the display of the body, and its value appreciates through make-up etc. that reaches from head to toe. Harmless forms such as variants of cosmetics extend all the way to physical transformations through tattoos, branding (burning patterns on the skin), stretching, cutting, or piercings on various parts of the body, whereby the ingenuity of such practices is often far from original because they often reach back to the earlier cultures and their practices of collective symbolization. The practices are strongly determined by and associated with the respective social groups. Where the majority seek the most immaculate and beautiful body possible, which is defined by commercially inspired fashions and corresponding “top models,” others (especially youth scenes) fight against such apparent beauty with all the means of apparent ugliness. Both sides, however, do not escape the capitalization of their bodies because both require time and money. And both sides hope for the attention and benefits that their investments are supposed to generate in one way or another.
- Plastic surgery is no longer only a means to appear as beautiful as possible but has primarily become a means of remaining beautiful as long as possible and stopping the aging process. It is in the long run a lost battle, but investments appear to be worth it particularly in the competition for the erotic component of body capital
- Fitness training is often equated with preventative health, which is often primarily concerned with people who are overweight (or sometimes underweight). Diets are touted in countless variations; and no intervention is spared including gastric reduction. Fitness training leads to the erection of centers organized like factories, which people voluntarily go to at a cost in order to recuperate what labor and leisure often deny them: movement, physical exertion, endurance, etc. The game of defining “fitness” is unending because someone is always more fit than oneself and nobody can really assess what it means. Indeed, even your body could be made fitter after each day of aging, but you could never win such a battle. That is why estimates and expectations take precedence over facts or certain truths.
- Bodybuilding is a specific way of shaping and perfecting the body. The constructed nature of the body becomes clear here when people say that such bodies look “unnatural.”

- Organ transplants are supposed to save the body; when there are defects in certain areas, replacement parts are available. The shortage of replacement parts evident today also drives up the costs. This opens new markets for organ trafficking, surrogate mothers, and the exploitation of human beings who cannot take part in capitalization. It also creates an industry for genetic manipulation in order to serve the quickly growing future market of an aging population in industrialized countries. The body as a commodity is clear and obvious here.
- All bodies seem to be addicts in this commodification because the practices of the body appear exaggerated: there is either too much food or too little exercise, too much work (workaholic) or too much leisure (leisureholic), too many practices that damage the body or too much concern for the body—the possible oppositions are limitless in their detail. In their addiction, the individuals see themselves as able to become themselves, but through their consumption they also become something else. Ideals of beauty, youth, and old-age, the right figure, perfect body, and presumed power of attraction, etc. are so heavily depicted in the mass media that their consumption strengthens one's own desires and promotes addiction in all areas. In extreme cases, this can be extended so far that the self-preservation and reproduction that are inherent in the physical body and its internal perceptions are forgotten. Such suffering in the body and with the body is expressed, for example, in anorexia. Countless therapies and counselling are used in order to bring balance to the relationship between the body and the self, to the conflict between oneself and others, to the disturbance of a person's self-image and image of others. The individual in their drive to consumption, in the psychic pressure they experience in the search for inner balance, which is so difficult to achieve because of the overemphasis on the expectations, images, body-images, and fashions etc. of others, always has to deal with physical symptoms, particularly disturbances to their image of their body, which the increase of eating disorders shows.

Bourdieu (1987 a) still believed that body capital was something important in the affluent classes, but in the lower classes it seemed to play a subordinate role. He showed this, for example, on the basis of class tastes regarding food and drink. This has changed, however, in particular through media and the omnipresence and standardization of beauty and attractiveness. Investments in body capital are made by everyone, but the investments and results are quite different. At the same time, a new group of outcasts has emerged, which Bauman (2004) has called “wasted lives.” Those who can no longer actively consume on the basis of their own income also lose their “positive” body dedicated to consumption; and people perceive the homeless as they do the sick,

as people who carry some danger with them, and as vagabonds who demonstrate how far one can fall and how one must dedicate oneself to avoiding such a descent, which is visible as the “ugly” body.

As much as there may be a distinction here between the upper and the lower, all too often the affluent fail at their own physical care. Too much stress, too little time, too much fast food, and burnout are all symptoms in the cycle of demands.

The greater the expenditures are in terms of time, effort, and resources, the more likely it is that the illusion will emerge that there is an actually measurable capital here that will enable or at least facilitate control in one’s own life over the visibility, materiality, and effectiveness of the body. Is this only an illusion, or are there sufficient facts and results that the investments pay off?

The effectiveness of body capital is always in competition with other forms of capital, and it derives its information from this competition. The body and its condition are evidence of a person’s position and circumstances, but this construct always assumes that I define a comparison group in order to provide a concrete definition of this position. The statistics on the body that insurance companies produce attempt to calculate this very clearly in order to assess their risks. Bodies are countable, and they serve the calculation of quotas, risks, opinions, etc. Even if the individual body would like to see its individuality preserved, the counted number of bodies leads to a de-individualization that appears through this separability and countability. There are sufficient facts and figures here, which would allow one to conclude that there is a production of surplus value in body capital as well.

5.2 The Surplus Value of Body Capital

To describe and analyze the surplus value of body capital, the investments made must first be investigated. The three aspects that have already been discussed with respect to social and cultural capital are also relevant here:

- 1) *Time*: it takes time to acquire, maintain, and use body capital. This time is taken away from other activities, such as time spent for work or leisure, and there is pressure to exploit it (= does the body capital really bring me as many gains as I am expecting?).
- 2) *Effort*: when time is spent on an activity, the question of whether the effort is worth it also arises. How much is my body worth? How can this effort be expended, and what kind of effort is unacceptable? How much should I invest, and how can I minimize my efforts?
- 3) *Resources*: the acquisition of body capital consumes resources. The more I strive for a healthier, fitter, more attractive and long-living body, the greater are my expenditures in terms of resources. The level of my

expended resources (my health, my fitness in relation to my age, my beauty and attractiveness, my life expectancy) generates expectations, which always have to be proven first in life and which are never certain.

What kind of value do I gain from spent time, my efforts and expended resources? What kind of surplus value can I realize?

5.2.1 Production of Surplus Value through Work for Health, Fitness, Erotic and Biocapital

In his studies on the civilizing process, Norbert Elias (2000) worked out that a lot of time has to be invested in upbringing and education, in the formation of a cultural and social habitus, in order to internalize self-restraint that also includes physical functions and physical behavior. In his “Studies on the Germans” (1998), he presented the types of self-restraint and external constraints. For him, there are first constraints stemming from our “animal nature.” He lists hunger and sex drive as examples for these kind of constraint or drive. The constraints of aging and of dying, the compulsion of craving for affection, recognition, hatred, and hostility, which occur spontaneously in people are also part of this kind. Constraints arising from the drives regarding the search for food or protection from the elements are also connected. This kind of constraint is opposed to constraints that people generate in their interactions with each other, which we can call social or external constraints. Such external constraints appear in all different forms of relationships. All people live in relationships and are not merely free in these relationships but are subject to constraints. External constraints express themselves in the rules of the community as well as the written or unwritten rules of coexistence and behavior. However, in order for these constraints to be effective, they cannot come only from the outside, e.g., from threats of punishment, but have to be converted into self-restraint or self-control. We call such self-restraint conscience, internal norms, values, and common ideas. Constraints related to our “animal nature” are present for all people in all forms of society. But the external constraints differ in the course of history and between cultures.

Is this image of nature and civilization, however, sound? Should we not look at things more specifically from our current perspective? After all, what are these “natural” conditions supposed to be if they are always already conceived of as dependent on historical and cultural circumstance? We might think of hunger and sex drive as natural conditions, but the way we deal with such drives differs significantly across cultures. In this regard, the investments in our nature are never the same but differ across and even within cultures.

Subjectively, people attribute a high value to body capital because it is so present and visible at a “natural” level, which, however, only allows for the

construction of an *apparently* secure space of actions and expectations in our complex, uncertain, and volatile liquid modernity. That is precisely why it is so difficult for people that the body follows the general tendencies of transience, uncertainty, and superfluity and is thus uncertain in its interpretation. People increase their efforts to at least rescue the body from this world. And they are willing to agonize their bodies to do this.

Naturalization is constantly undertaken in particular with regard to gender relations because it appears easiest to legitimize existing cultural behaviors and attitudes on the basis of innate male and female physical features. But liquid modernity is also bringing about a transformation in this regard, which is leading to a result that irritates many, namely that there is not a male or female nature that is subsequently culturally shaped and discursively explained; the claim of naturalness itself is actually a construct from a cultural perspective. Judith Butler distinguishes between biological sex and socially constructed gender. Butler argues that even biological sex does not reflect nature but is a social construct. We use observations and explanations to construct it; it is not simply discovered in nature as it is. From this perspective, it makes little sense to look for the origins of a prototypical male or female body when we find only variants of gender constructions, which are created from social gender roles and associated cultural ideas. Butler (2006) showed in her book “Gender Trouble” that all use and exchange values in body capital indicate, following Foucault, that sexuality and power always work together. This means understanding that all gender constructions and sexual relationships are always established culturally with power and also perpetuate certain power positions that are always concretely identifiable. In this regard, body capital is never neutral; selective interests and preferences are always constructed in it, which are closely connected with other forms of capital. At the same time, it has to be kept in mind that all interpretations in this area of individuality and human development are constructed performatively. We cannot point to a “nature in itself” that originally determines such constructions but have to look at culture itself for the conditions and interests that give rise to such constructions. This also gives people the opportunity again to determine such relationships and transform them.

Such a perspective—not only with respect to sex or gender but the entire nature of human beings—also opens our eyes to how the body is capitalized. There are also social constructs here, which are connected with other forms of capital, that make up body capital as a construct in people’s interactions with each other. Ideas about body capital are thus constructed, established in the world, and lived as practices in order to appear than as unquestionable reality, as symbolic explanations, and presuppositions. We could ask, why does it make sense to keep your body fit? And the answer would be given as a fact of nature: it is natural and necessary for the preservation of life. But we forget when stating such banal and seemingly obvious “facts” that they are

cultural constructs from our historical period and attitudes. And we also have to recognize that the answers can quickly be distinguished: what kind of sports do you do? Is it a physical exercise that aims as much as possible at conditioning, fat reduction, or normal movement, or is it a kind of adventure-oriented exercise that gets kicks from jumping from great heights, diving to great depths, reaching the greatest speeds, etc., which can degenerate into high stress activities that are counterproductive to health?

Surplus value can be distinguished in more detail into four forms of body capital:

(1) Health as use and exchange value

Overall, healthcare and the implementation of measures in dealing with health in modernity are wholly the responsibility of the individual. Because this individual is also supposed to take part in free wage labor, individuals appear free in two regards: the individual is supposed to seek out an occupation in life without being able to lay legal claim to it, and the individual also has to keep themselves healthy because they have disposal over all private or free rights to their body. The costs in health are investments that only secure their use values when they can actually be exchanged for time spent at work. They are necessary costs that do not yet constitute body capital in a strict sense. Body capital first arises when certain investments can be exchanged for certain services. And precisely this point is also expected with increasing individualization. Everyone is supposed to keep themselves physically healthy in order thereby to become more available for the exploitative interests of capitalism. This is because regardless of whatever occupation a person has, they can only achieve gains as a healthy, predictable body.

In the history of wage labor, trade unions had to fight for a long time on the part of the interests of the workers so that wages would not just provide enough for food and decent accommodation but also for illnesses, emergencies, and care during old age. These reproduction costs for life shift, as Marx already pointed out, with the historical period. They are relative to the prosperity of a country. The costs are thus higher in affluent countries than in less developed countries. The same is true for healthcare, which the body can enjoy in very different ways. At the same time, capitalist countries differ widely in their social and health-care systems. Without governmental regulation and without the power of trade unions, capitalism would likely fall back into barbarism due to profit interests instead of behaving in a way that reflects solidarity; this is something that can be concluded at least from much of the data (on this see, for example, Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010).

Many companies have, because of poor results on the part of their workers, created their own health balance sheets and actively have effects on health. And those who do not participate in wage labor also have to pay attention to body capital because they always run the risk, particularly in the

self-exploitation of small independent workers, of over-exploiting their own body. In contrast, for the affluent, there is often sometimes the risk of being excessive in terms of physical pleasure. Health statistics show us that health costs increase with increased economic capital and other forms of capital, but the expectations for health and old-age are also significantly higher than for people with less money.

As a whole, interdisciplinary research on health has emphasized since the 1960s that the individual is responsible for the health of their body in all of their activities and is obligated to assume this responsibility. Health is not a matter of fate but is the result of our autonomous actions. This is accompanied in all developed countries by a boom in healthcare services and an explosion in costs in the healthcare industry.

Health is distributed differently according to social circumstances and position. Even if mass media promotes good health, consumer society and its structures often produce exactly the opposite when there is a lack of self-restraint or education that would lead people to act according to their contexts. The lower the education level and resources are for the individual, the more unfavorable their habits often become. They have misunderstandings how to interpret a healthy body. The consumer habits of such people are tied to cheap goods that tend to promote unhealthy behavior, especially with regard to eating, drinking, and preventative measures.

I can achieve a surplus through health capital only by making sustained and long-term investments in my body. My body has to be healthier than average in order to obtain a payoff through better working conditions, long periods without unemployment, a long work life, refunded insurance premiums (especially for health insurance), a long life, etc., i.e., in order to achieve gains that exceed my investments through an increase in wages and income. The capitalist labor market has always expected that the individuals take on these costs for themselves and actively promote preventative health measures not only through money but through conscious healthy behavior. The individual achieves surplus value when the ratio between invested costs and long-term gains is positive in comparison with others.

(2) Fitness as use and exchange value:

Nobody is so fit that they could not be more fit. The body itself seems to be insatiable, and this image is constantly maintained in the leisure and body industries in order to increase expenditures on the body. Every body is also a consumer under capitalism, and the body is comprehensively promoted as a consumer. But a tension arises here between wellness and risk. The body, which is supposed to be made healthy, requires great attention and care, which appear to be increasingly variable in terms of possibilities for development and production in light of the variety of consumer choices. The illusory effects of equipment and healthcare services are also very important here

insofar as they help to suggest that the body is doing well and that the measures are successful. What is crucial for the industrial production of such services is that the consumer believes that they are actually receiving what they wanted. At the same time, such desires are generated in a targeted way through advertising. This leads to a circular relationship between expectations and existing offerings. In contrast with wellness and care, there is the fit but risk-oriented body that chases physical limits through various activities in order to feel its fitness, physicality, opportunities, and abilities. Whether it is a matter of wellness or risk, the body aims to feel itself and improve itself. Both images of the body thus seek to construct the body in a fit way and to experience the body as a body. In this regard, fitness can become meaningless when it is really just a matter of feeling and seeking physical sensation. We arrive here at the physiology of the body and its intimate, personal, and individual construction. In light of consumerism, the market, and competition, however, the use-value side always drives us toward comparison with better, ideal forms and perfect bodies and thus toward the exchange-value side. This concerns our costs first of all. In order to achieve use values, we have to buy things. Fitness requires a fitness center, a membership card, and membership fees. The exchange scales are always open toward the top. We pay the highest sums in order to demonstrate excellence in theatrical productions of dangerous sports or risky stunts, in order to present a model for physical exertion strategies through the expenditure of great physical and mental energy and the strain and exhaustion of our body through falls from great heights, dives to the deepest depths, and extreme hot and cold.

Despite such extremes, fitness generally provides a favorable background for health-conscious behavior because the expenditures and costs in both areas often work successfully together. The physical habitus has to present itself in the development of fitness particularly through self-restraint, which is almost always seen as more successful both professionally and socially: one has to be ready to work and torture oneself to reach a goal; and one has to show endurance, orientation toward success, and a competitive spirit. In this way, investments in fitness also become expressions of investment in personal behavior that can increase social or cultural capital and be respected by society.

A surplus value can arise from the use value of fitness if the initial necessary expenditures can be later recouped or exceeded through income. The exchange value presented on the market is represented by a physical habitus for which it is both a challenge and motivation not only to act in a health-conscious way but also to actively move and shape the body through exertion strategies and demonstrate its attractiveness. Fitness thus helps through comparison with other people who are less fit to demonstrate a level of performance, which can also have an illusory aspect because even the fit body

cannot be protected from all physical crises and risks. But fitness always expresses health and strength, as well as will and power, which suggest superiority. Surplus value can be achieved when one is successful through self-presentation to draw attention to oneself and leave the competition behind with regard to hiring, promotions, or a fight. On the other hand, high expenditures are also often merely costs and arise as they do for other areas such as entertainment. A surplus value no longer appears when mere consumption raises the use-value side but this value cannot be exchanged. It may be useful and important for your own health, but it does not bring in money.

(3) *Erotic use and exchange value*

The freer and open the partnership and marriage market is, the more investment in erotic capital is worthwhile. It is well known from the history of mankind that eroticism and sex are a crucial form of exchange for good relationships, personal advantage, and social protection. But it is only with modernity and liquid modernity that in addition to the perfecting of prostitution there are also opportunities for generating capitalistic gains in other relationship forms. The erotic capital that Catherine Hakim (2011) calls “honey money,”¹ which I consider a subtype of body capital, may appear on the physical side as a use value for a person from birth on, but it never unfolds in social reality without additions such as styling, working on one’s presence, attractiveness and the possibilities for successful communication and presentation. Erotic body capital needs these extra ingredients and use values so that it can transform itself into exchange value and capital. It then creates advantages in hiring, in the search for better job or better social relationships, in upgrading partners, friendships, fixed relationships, or a marriage. Almost everyone denies wanting to have erotic capital or use it because what seems important is only true love or friendship without reservations, but when we look closer it becomes clear that the previous definitions that might fit here appear either useful or already capitalized. If previously the social or cultural status of a person was still central, today it is primarily money that is erotic alongside social status.

Erotic use or exchange values arise from various characteristics, which Hakim (2011, 12 ff.) identified and which I expand upon here:

- The beauty of the body or specific parts of the body, particularly the face, are central features that establish differences between people in a way that is dependent on culture and its norms and expectations of beauty. Someone who has “natural” beauty has to worry less about producing

¹ Hakim develops her view of erotic capital as the presentation of personal characteristics, as an expression of attractiveness, which expresses advantages or disadvantages in relationships in terms of attributions, expectations, and opportunities for advancement and recognition. She could in principle have written about erotic characteristics because she does not analyze this form of capital further according to its surplus value. She really only presents possible use values without justifying the surplus value of the possible exchange values.

such beauty in their youth but also incurs higher costs for maintaining this beauty as they age. Beauty requires expenditures to produce flawless skin, a youthful appearance, the right weight, and the elimination of anomalies, etc. according to prevailing cultural norms. Additional costs arise when beauty is supposed to be perfected according to current fashions, which are found especially in cosmetic surgery in addition to basic costs associated with caring for a beautiful body.

- There are cultural specifications that vary from culture to culture in terms of extent and expectations. In globalized capitalism, however, there are the following: sexual attractiveness is associated with beauty and appearance where features such as the shape of the body, length of the legs, figure, and sexual willingness in the form of direct seduction or secretiveness play an important role. These features have to be coordinated in interactions with one's counterpart and their immediate demands or silent desires. Beauty alone is not enough here: movement, tone, gestures, and expressions are also added to arouse attention. Young people appear to have more "natural" sexual attractiveness, which represents a projection onto their appearance and sexual potency on the part of the observer. As age increases, sexual attractiveness has to be increasingly learned and emphasized using the right tools. Differences in taste are always an advantage with regard to preferences; thus, a person who wants to be attractive should not only focus on one type of desire, as this would significantly reduce the chances of success. The costs for this aspect reside primarily in the generation of health and fitness capital but also in social and cultural capital. Additional costs often arise through exercises where attractiveness is learned through experiments with various partners so that one is ready at the right time for the right choice in the capitalization of eroticism.
- Social skills, a dignified appearance, charm, friendliness, confident behavior, secure and reciprocal behavior in interactions, mixed with flirtation skills and self-irony, preferably along with charisma that appears to arise from an inner attitude of calm and confidence, are expressions for high erotic use values. To transform them into exchange values requires the right moment where some risk and desire is confronted with reality. This requires a mentality, which has the highest possible self-worth and can dare to correct its self-images. However, such skills do not just belong to the subject but are always also ascribed from the outside. By means of such projections, these skills have a greater effect for those who also have social, cultural, or economic power in addition to their "natural" attractiveness. This aspect cannot be achieved through physical costs but requires extensive costs in terms of other forms of capital.
- The vitality and fitness that are conveyed suggest potency, health, genetic advantages, and longevity, which are erotic on another level. One

might also mention here skills such as humor, grace, and aggressive appearance in general but especially in dance, sports, or leisure activities. The training of the body through sports, dance, and fitness create corresponding costs.

- The external attributes symbolize a presence and presentation of the body. Clothing, make-up, jewellery, accessories, the created environment and aura are important features here that express presence and attractiveness outwardly. Social classes differ greatly in this domain so that it comes down to which use values are being used here in order to obtain an exchange that appears appropriate. If a young woman from the lower class wants to upgrade to a higher class, she has to adapt to the social code and style of the higher class and orient herself so that she can create a space of possibility for advancement. Cultural fashion awareness extends to knowledge of cultural and social forms of capital, which always also involves learning capital. The symbolization of attractiveness, thus what most people first perceive about me through my body, involves strong social-cultural expectations about what is physically desirable and desirable about our behavior as perceived by others. The costs for fashion, jewellery, styling, and accessories are especially significant here.
- In consumer society, eroticism is used extensively for product advertising in order to provide the goods with a degree of illusion. And there is an erotic industry that markets the human body in various forms in order to make profits, which is often associated with sexual exploitation, abuse, and oppression. Internet sex sites underpin an understanding of eroticism and sexuality that is essentially based on obscenity in Baudrillard's (1996) sense. It is all about the display of intimate practices that strip naked all secrets and feeling-based relationships in order to place the act or activity in the foreground. All of these images, which were previously private, circulate today as public constructs through our everyday lives; they illustrate fantasies and reinforce in a circular way the imaginary power of erotic capital by depicting everything as being for sale.
- Fulfilled sexuality itself is what can actually be achieved in sexual satisfaction by dealing skilfully with oneself and others; and the desired mixture of play and passion, expectation and satisfaction, spontaneity and endurance, tenderness and aggressiveness, make a good lover depending on subjective expectations and their forms of adaptation. These skills, however, are all created and distributed very differently. The desired libidinal balance (physical desire and the activity of sexual desire) is not "naturally" associated with sexual skill. Skills have to be acquired and practiced within a culture. It is precisely this lived sexuality that under certain circumstances captures more than all of the preceding points. But

this sexuality can generally only be reached when the other points have already been effective.

Regarding the effects of erotic capital, people do not often like to make economic calculations here and prefer to explain their relationships in terms of love rather than capitalized connections. In the end, not many people want to be involved in striving for profits through sexual relationships when it comes to writing their life story. Nevertheless, when observing a large number of cases, friendship, pairing, and marriage behavior significantly show that erotic capital is at work regardless of what people may claim. The elites, rich, and super-rich cannot monopolize beauty because they cannot determine who is born with it, but they can surround and adorn themselves with it; and for the supposedly beautiful in particular, erotic capital comes into play here.

(4) Biocapital

In “Global Nature, Global Culture,” Franklin, Lurie, and Stacey (2000) show how nature changes through the marketing strategies of capitalism in the sense of short-sighted interventions and is shaped and even destroyed through profit maximization. Biopiracy, as Vandana Shiva (1997) calls it, attempts to patent biotechnological products in order to privately appropriate natural resources. This attack is incomprehensible against the background of previous understandings of nature in modernity and focuses on a neoliberal market that attempts to colonize all areas of nature and life. At the same time, it expresses profit interests that have a long cultural history. Nature has constantly been the focus of attacks through human actions so that parts of it that were originally used collectively could be appropriated. However, capitalism in its newer forms accelerates this process significantly with active assistance from the government in neoliberal economies.

The body is the focus of attacks by the bioindustry, particularly biogenetic, biotechnological, and pharmaceutical companies, as well as the addiction and drug profiteers, so that they can generate large profits on the capitalist market (see Rajan, 2006). Biocapital aims primarily at securing economic capital, but because it uses and instrumentalizes the body it also capitalizes it. Such capitalization occurs when people purchase biotechnological or pleasure-related services or promises in order to invest in their bodies. As Rajan shows, the bio market does not, however, focus primarily on physical features that could be treated medically or on questions, for example, about how to help people with rare illnesses, or on questions about improving health; rather, it focuses on attainable profit for respective companies that already attempt to calculate the body before trying to “treat” it in some way. Expected gains on the basis of quantity first lead to the intensification of research, but rare illnesses in contrast often are not considered because the market is too small. This expresses a form of biopolitics in the way Foucault

(2010) already analyzed and criticized (see also Peters, 2006). In the cooperation of the capitalistic profit interests of biocapital with support and protection from the government, the body becomes increasingly capitalized. And this is the case whether it happens through the external claims of biotechnology that are made on it or through the measures, means, and kinds of treatment that appear to stem from genuine desires and yet always reflect the feasible profit interests of certain companies. The ability to present this interweaving as a desirable object and present itself as capitalizable makes it easy for this strategy to connect with the previously mentioned points.

Biopolitical strategies focus on both individual strategies and governmental regulations, for example, in the areas of genetic engineering, reproduction, and transplantation medicine. Capitalistic profit interests are closely connected with lobbying interests in politics. There are thus less and less central decisions made in politics here; instead, there are increasingly more individually internalized calculations and decisions, which, on the one hand, want to see the greatest possible emancipation from the natural and physical limits of the body and, on the other hand, also accept regulations that increasingly privatize these opportunities and cement inequalities because they think the market-based approach is the most successful one.

Questions regarding genetics and genetic dispositions increasingly come to the forefront today through these strategies. The research has changed this discourse into one about the statistical probability of genes having certain effects on phenotypes and functions, which makes biology no longer something subject to mere fate but a matter of risk that drives people to practice preventative care. They are supposed to test their genetic predispositions in order to see the probable course of their body capital and react appropriately. Self-regulation is also supplemented then by the regulation measures of society. In the face of the experimental risks, the idea of biological citizenship has emerged in order primarily to mark the legal position of the individual in light of increasing biological influences on the environment. The idea can also be expanded for biogenetic and medical measures. The question is the degree to which humans can protect themselves against influences and biomedical manipulations, particularly regarding influences on the body.

The examples of breast cancer or uterine cancer already prototypically show the effects of biopolitical interventions. Women are finding themselves compelled to test their genetic predispositions in order to undertake measures, including removal of the breast or ovaries, to minimize risk. On the other hand, the democratic state can also see itself induced to make dangers to the social body a theme and establish provisions through the regulation of birth-rates for poor demographic prognoses (for example, through cash incentives, benefits, or pressuring on the basis of worst-case scenarios, etc.). And there is quickly a move toward regulation, which minimizes or removes free individual decisions. Often commercial interests or the savings needs of

governments intertwine with definitions of danger in order to legitimate biopolitics. On the other hand, such politics can also help protect or extend life. The degree to which individuals can act freely and critically here becomes a crucial issue.

In her concept of the “*vita activa*,” Hannah Arendt (1998) emphasized that through birth a new life comes to the world, which enables a new start. There is an opportunity to change the world from one generation to the next. In contrast, in biotechnologies there is always the danger of avoiding such rebirth through the permanent adoption of a certain genetic state and the avoidance of evolution and its difficulties through stores of replacement parts, transplantsations, and even cloning. If it were to become possible that parents could shape the future of their children through genetic manipulation or even self-reproduction as a copy of their own genetic development, the “*vita activa*” would reach a stasis; the consequence of this would be that body capital as an expression of such assets would increase and lead to radical inequalities on the biological side among people. Humanity would quickly no longer battle for the community but for unequal individual survival. The consequences for the species would be very problematic because and insofar as there would be no ethics of human life that could protect the dignity of human life as a whole beyond individual interests.

Karin Knorr-Cetina (in German, 2005, 68 f.) argues that the new life technologies can no longer be expressed adequately with the language we have inherited from the Enlightenment. “Psychotropic drugs that miraculously alter personality, or biotechnological measures that permanently change germ cells, or genetic interventions that promise at least indirectly to eliminate individual death are phenomena for which our language is not adequate” (translated from German, *ibid.*, 68). What runs contrary to our language as it has grown out of humanistic traditions is the overemphasis on promises that take the place of values. A value-based society is full of demands on the individual, but promises appear full of opportunities. However, the point here is that precisely in the Enlightenment such values were associated with great promises (e.g., for the human equality) that often failed to be kept. But the promises still remain fundamentally attractive. This is deeply inscribed in body capital and its surplus value as well. Surplus value lives from promises that come about or should come about when many expect things could be a certain way. It is also a part of the promise, according to Knorr-Cetina, that it refers to the future and it is hoped that the person hoping can also see the promise fulfilled. In order for the promise to be fulfilled, however, the person making the promise also has to have the ability to fulfil the promise. But in a culture of promises, the expectations on the associated demands and the ethics of action decrease because the consumer’s wishes often direct the ideas about feasibility, and the promises are rarely kept by those who make them. At the same time, people know about unfulfilled promises that the wishes often count more than

the facts. And this makes it difficult to measure body capital precisely, although everyone believes that there are promises about its effectiveness. In addition, Knorr-Cetina observes that the relationship between use and exchange value has changed in recent times. Interactions are increasingly determined by the objectification of things that can be consumed, which is a tendency that Marx already discussed in the fetish character of goods. The social undergoes a transformation against this background: “Sociality occurs when the self as a structure of wanting loops its desire through the object and back. In this movement, the self is endorsed and extended by the object . . . , which also provides for the continuation of the structure of wanting through its lacks. Sociality here consists in the phenomenon that the subject takes over the object’s wants—as a structure of wanting, the subject becomes defined by the object” (Knorr Cetina & Buerger, 2000, 157). When in addition to all other goods, the body also appears on the market, it is also reduced as with everything else on the screen to relevant price forms that stand in the foreground. “The literal ‘wants’ of the market expressed on screen are the conversation-initiating price questions by other banks and institutions, which traders attempt to ‘read’ with respect to the dealing intentions (buying or selling) of the calling party, for their implied market- (price-) transforming significance, etc., and to which they respond, trying to fulfil their own wants” (ibid., 156). But it is not just the markets that determine our wants; the subject also articulates itself through them: “Conversely, the articulation of the object, the market, is looped through the subject: as a structure of lacks, of the questions it poses and the things that ‘it’ needs, the market receives the kind of extension that the subject determines” (ibid., 157).

As with the other forms of capital, in the analysis of the activity of using body capital there are at least four aspects that are necessary for understanding the essential elements of action in dealing with this capital:

- 1) Bodies are expressions of persons and personalities, a habitus and taste, health, fitness, eroticism, and biomanipulation, which are managed and developed in social practice and stand in the tension between choices and external attributions (marketing). The body is intersubjectively visible and present and is the agent of one’s own and external observations, comparisons, views, and attributions which are always connected with comparative evaluations. In order to create the subjective body, there are sufficient body use values that can be obtained as well as markets on which body use values can be accessed. There is a conventional pressure on all subjects to shape and subjectively demonstrate their own practices of the body.
- 2) Bodies are presented in objectified forms. Causes, style, and social lifestyles that come into view “embodied” are interpreted by appearance. It is thus necessary to stage the body in certain ways, in culturally desirable

forms, and in market-relevant scenes, and it is neither useful nor possible to hide the body in such a way that it remains invisible to others.¹ Customized cultural work on the body is a basic condition for physical action, i.e., with the existing substantial individualization of people in global capitalism, there is a comprehensive need for managed and consumer-oriented practices of the body that require knowledge of normative expectations and the body-related markets. A large amount of time for care, concern for oneself, health, fitness, rejuvenation bio practices, beautification, and maintenance are necessary in order to produce use values according to personal requirements for the body that are objectively recognized and disseminated in the media. Meeting generally accepted conventions regulates one's own success with respect to work on the body in order to generate exchange values that are actually valuable on the market. An additional means here is also body presentation in virtual spaces, which promises everyone the hope of presence. But hope has its limits. All expenditures secure body use values that only operate perfectly within limited time frames and are always challenged by the body's aging. Another issue regarding time expended on the body is, as with social capital, the ability to successfully make use of such expenditures in the corresponding desired social circles. And finally, there is always the danger of culturally desired practices of the body changing where, for example, a previously sanctioned tattoo can be transformed overnight into an expression of ugliness.

- 3) In body capital, there are also initially only subjective experiences and assumed expectations that allow one to draw conclusions about possible uses of this form of capital in achieving higher incomes, marriage, upward mobility or other forms of profit on the basis of expenditures of time, effort, and resources. Nevertheless, particular successful careers depend on a favorable body habitus and especially on sufficient capital with regard to health, fitness, eroticism, and bio power. Additional benefits can be secured here or established as starting points for obtaining higher exchange values in the forms of capital. What is crucial here is the situational success of transforming use values into monetary advantages that reward the subjective costs and efforts of pursuing a culturally desirable body and allow for the use of additional means of body care.
- 4) The respective social status of actual income from body capital beyond boundaries of social classes, income levels, status expectations, etc. is largely dependent on the openness of a society. An essential indicator

¹ This is a Western and capitalist view of the body. It can be contrasted with other cultures with completely different views. Thus, for example, wearing a burqa is a religiously required attempt to hide the body in order to protect its assumed secrets and seductiveness and preserve it patriarchally as a hidden image of the body.

for this is the degree to which body capital can help someone jump social classes. A further indicator shows the degree to which it is possible in the society that large groups of people are still included in the schema of the young, healthy, beautiful, and fit body or the degree to which practices of discrimination lead to the exclusion of many people. Capitalist consumer pressure can have the positive effect here that the standardization of beauty covers and differentiates large groups in order to sell as many products to as many people as possible. For example, advertising has now discovered older people as a positive peer group and thus attempts to counter the madness about being thin with different models. Nevertheless, there is still great cultural pressure because advertising and the media also want to present the most perfect image of the body possible in order to deliver more use values. If, however, a large group of people is excluded because they do not have adequate means for consumption (especially in the luxury areas of fashion and healthcare, etc.), then social disagreements regarding the body are suggested to be “natural.”

5.2.2 Production of Surplus Value through Supply and Demand

In surplus value arising through training and shaping of the body, there are always comparisons of the body involved and the supply and demand for the body are always intertwined with these practices. In the transition to a consumer society, alongside the expansion of basic well-being and leisure, the body also becomes a point of attack and starting point for consumption and status comparisons. The explosion of concern with the body expresses itself in the phenomenon of the glorification and display of young, fit, thin, healthy, attractive bodies that appear maintained, beautified, trained, styled, and ready to consume. The cult of the body is aligned with a body industry that markets all of this to make profits. And even if all people appear equal and are equal from the perspective of consumption, i.e., they are supposed to consume as much as possible, it is part of the paradox of the cult of the body that differences between people are taken as an occasion to present more and more perfect bodies in order to raise the pressure on the consumer. This is why the mechanisms of supply and demand seem to be so much stronger and obvious in this domain.

The market activity in which bodies act is not only the open stage of public display here but life and work in general. It is part of the self-presentation and staging mechanism for all people to bring the body into play in relationships, work, leisure, and even in desired fantasies, although this game always ends in comparisons with each other. To the extent that it is thereby reaffirmed that everyone can improve their self-promotion, supply and demand pressures

arise, which mutually reinforce each other and are promoted through the commercialization of the body in advertising, film, TV, and current body idols. The eroticization or sexualization of the body in particular which extends all the way up to the increasing acceptance of pornography shows the dynamics of this process. The increase in mental disorders such as anorexia and bulimia are signs of crises in a culture whose obsession with the modelled body allows no one to really appear perfect because in the relentless comparison of bodies there is always someone who appears more perfect and successful. Also, perfection is always already tied to the deception of advertising and idealization, which retouches and hides anything that does not fit the desired image. Thus, in the domain of supply and demand, the body constantly struggles against its own ghost.

Depending on cultural preferences, certain bodies have an advantage over others from birth. The demand for models of beauty, youth, health, fitness, etc. is so large and at the same time so standardized that some people enjoy “natural” advantages from birth. But these advantages are often not enough if there is not also an additional habitus that does not squander the body on the market and thus waste the special attractiveness of a certain period of life. It comes down here to using the four strategies just described for the training of the body in order to increase demand and drive up the price. Body capital can be traded as a good. Bodies are not just available for purchase in prostitution in order to illustrate eroticism, in the way that art is displayed in an apartment, because a body that is in demand sees benefits on the market, in relationships, in the search for partnerships and work, and in the formation of social networks. However, the effects of the body as a product even in erotic capital are limited, which increasingly drives people to use their body at the optimal time on the relationship and marriage market, in networks and at work. Just because people do not like to talk about it, does not mean that it does not happen.

Why is high economic capital almost always connected with a certain body capital? Why do the rich and beautiful constantly approach each other? What is the exchange rate according to which aging men with deep economic resources attract the youthful beauty of women? The logic of the social domain, which Bourdieu attempts to investigate in order to understand preferences in choice, reveals a capitalization of the body here where the highest bidder in terms of economic capital wins. But those who are successful or those who look on with envy pretend that things are totally different.

There are also at least four aspects in the analysis of the action of using the difference between supply and demand that are especially important when we consider social actions in this domain:

- 1) Bodies as well as physical relationships are experienced and regarded as essential in all social groups. There are different kinds of physical work

or bodily work in families, work, and leisure. Demand happens in a changing world and is subject to fashions. When appropriate supply can be provided for demand pressures, new practices of the body arise that go beyond previous boundaries with regard to the body. But in comparison of the bodies the demand for the best choices seems to be never fulfilled. At the same time, over the long term, demand pressure produces a variety of offerings, and the consumable variety of offerings increases demand pressure.

- 2) There are choices with regard to supply. Investments can be made in the tense relationship between interests and amusement on the one side and calculation and benefit on the other. But only solid market observation can help one properly calculate and plan for one's own body opportunities in light of supply and demand.
- 3) There are physical means of exchange, which allow exchanges to take place as simply as possible. Such means of exchange are available in the form of physical relationships, through eroticism and sex, and collective physical experiences in fitness, sports, and collective labor. But these means of exchange are not physically and socially equally accessible to everyone.
- 4) Physical investments are almost never in vain as long as they do not entirely neglect demand, i.e., the invested costs are actually recouped either in the form of subjective satisfaction (individual demand side) or in gains in the search for relationships, in income and job security, or independence (social demand side).

5.2.3 Creation of Surplus Value through Illusion, Deception, and Fraud

The first illusion with regard to the body already lies in the fact that it is inhabited by a certain class character, which Bourdieu points out primarily with respect to the cultural habitus. The body is shaped from birth in connection with social, cultural, economic, and educational conditions; there are also special individual formations in the context of certain preferred conventions, and certain social classes and cultural aspirations. This was discussed in detail with regard to social and cultural forms of capital. Bourdieu even maintains that it is precisely the body that reveals a particularly persistent "objectification of class taste" because such tastes often present themselves in a certain way through physicality and the forms of appearance and presentation of a habitus (see Bourdieu 1987 a). Thus, for example, for athletic bodies one can distinguish between sports for the lower classes such as wrestling and boxing and sports for the upper classes such as tennis and golf. Clothing as the external shell of the body also reveals a great deal about the desired body

through what it covers and displays. At the same time, however, such differences are also more easily overturned through increasing individualization, and the areas of consumption and demand change more quickly than they did previously. This is particularly true for taste, which for the lower classes is often limited to fast food and convenient products from discounters—with corresponding effects on the body—; there are distinct differences in particular between upper and lower classes with respect to visits to restaurants, but there are also a lot of common points. In this domain it becomes clear that the habitus is not just a cognitive construct of a certain culture but that it also includes emotional and physical aspects that reveal both socially dominant and class-specific practices of the body as well as individual variations and deviations. Why is this?

The more self-staging practices are supposed to secure capital in all its forms, the more individualization becomes necessary for adequately developing one's opportunities according to existing resources. The more this has become a mass process, the more variations also have to be possible in order to be able to add to the diversity of the supply and demand. A social and conventionally normed image of the body does stand in contrast with this—one could also talk about favored bodies here—, but the variety lies in the fact that there are also variations and gradations of this image so different positions appear to be attainable in a fairly open field of rankings. Everyone now just tries to avoid ending up in the lower ranks. This in turn brings about a frenzy of illusion and an increase in attempts at deception, in order to secure benefits, as well as fraud so that one can secure these benefits more easily than others or avoid ending up in the lowest ranks if one starts off in bad conditions.

Illusions are in principle socially desirable for all bodies because as consumers people are supposed to buy those things on the market that are associated with a high price and often exaggerated promises. Commodity aesthetics gets into the wildest frenzy in particular with regard to the body, and it also imbues many other objects in the world of consumption with additional physicality (a classic here is the connection between a beautiful woman and a car). Although the illusions are directed at everyone, they also promise, as was the case with the other forms of capital, each individual better effect, a more favorable prognosis, smarter behavior, etc. in comparison with others in order to make their profits. With regard to the body, people can be affected very easily because all comparisons quickly appear obvious to them because they constantly look at their body in the mirror and construct it in comparison with others. Measured according to the comparative norms of beauty, youth, fitness, health, and status of biomanipulation, they construct a self-image that is shaped according to advertising and media scenarios either consciously or

unconsciously, and thus the illusion of consumer goods is always already processed as a part of oneself. Even those who think in alternative ways discover their fashions and organic brands. In the struggle over individual body capital, there are various kinds of illusions that people become subject to in order to effectively distinguish themselves from others. This is similar to advertising strategies: if someone puts time into their body image and the shaping of their body, the illusory benefits of spending such time have to at least be symbolized as ideas and hopes. With respect to the body, this has become a significant burden because there are many illnesses that do not fit the illusory model or norms here in individual cases.

Deception in body capital is almost always primarily self-deception. Whether a woman's breasts are too large or too small, nature can be fixed and outsmarted. The constructed body now shows itself on its objective side. An entire industry of deception has emerged in order to continue to paint this deceptive picture, which rests on a fundamental need to alter the seemingly unalterable. The fantasies extend so far that natural laws of evolution according to mutation and selection are rendered powerless so the same thing can constantly be reproduced, which at the same time would lead human development into a dead-end. This is the essence of deception: it no longer sees the degree to which it deceives itself and the consequences it produces in the long run. The plastic surgery that was still successful today is a disaster for our body image when we age again tomorrow. On the other hand, the greatest power for body capital arises at the moment when the right body image can be captured. And finally, deception in relationships is also not experienced as deception when both parties agree on the goal of producing a beautiful body in the richest possible environment. This extends even to the most minor practices of the body: the retouched photo, flattering clothing, self-suggested fitness, convincing oneself that one is in the best health, etc.

Fraud with respect to body capital is often rooted in promises of profits that cannot deliver what they promise. Thus, operations lead not only to beauty but to disfigurement. And people do not just exercise but make themselves sick doing so. Rejuvenation therapy can also lead to depression, which makes us look old. The fraud that we commit against our own body is also not so rare. Thus, we lie about our birth date, hide hereditary diseases or other burdens, and refuse medical consultation because we are afraid of discovering we are ill.

There are also four aspects here in the analysis of the action of using illusions, deception, or fraud, which are essential for enabling these practices of the body to be effective:

- 1) There is a mixture of real and fictional practices of the body in the domains of beauty, youth, fitness, health, eroticism, and biomanipulation,

which are carried out at certain costs, i.e., a presentable body is produced which can be offered socially and culturally. The more one's own reasonable "nature" is contained in this body, the better one's chances are on the body market. But illusion, deception, and fraud, which enhance this body, are capable of securing additional gains in surplus value.

- 2) Physical achievements are presented, described, and demonstrated as something plausible for "common sense" in order to be credible and actually generate sales. With regard to the body, such presentation especially finds success through display, high ratings and acclaim by others, success in the physical arena (from sports to sex), as well as the recounting of stories that appear credible.
- 3) Gains are achieved through externalization of the body, which happens primarily through symbolic exchange. It is suggested to the exchanging party that they have achieved handsome gains. Here the symbolic gain is not as a rule supposed to appear directly economic as in prostitution; it is hidden, concealed, or remains undetected. The external observer is thereby someone who makes an attribution that is justified by the "true" circumstances. Then wealth and beauty are joined together in exceptional cases because of love and not the intention to create surplus value. Who is supposed to draw a line here? Even the "objective" observer is always involved in the illusionary game.
- 4) Surplus value is realized either in an actually existing value or through pure fraud, i.e., it either increases already existing body capital or increases demand, compensates for disadvantages in both areas, or generates gains without any trade-off.

5.2.4 Production of Surplus Value through Parasitic Participation

The largest gains are made from physical characteristics that we have from birth. Genetic origin is not irrelevant in view of the inheritance of certain physical features. In the past, physical differences or a foreign appearance were already discriminating factors at the level of the body, and it was difficult to change this. Of course, this is still true today, but through the tendency toward individualization on the one hand and the mixing of many different societies through migration on the other hand, the attribution of such differences to people is not as strong as it once was. However, this also has to be supported by inclusive policies and anti-discriminatory practices of the body to sufficiently answer the demands of human dignity and human rights.

Apart from that, the mechanisms that were already highlighted for other forms of capital also apply in this domain. The social and cultural habitus in particular always also include a body habitus, and these are created together.

Parasitic participation is especially evident where the beautiful join themselves to the wealthy. Here both sides operate parasitically: one gains access to monetary benefits, and the other gains access to erotic exploitation. Transplantations also present a distinct area of parasitic participation in the bodies of other people, particularly when people are mutilated for money.

5.2.5 Summary

The surplus value functions of body capital are summed up in chart 22:

	Form of body capital	Surplus arises as a difference	Gain in its form of action
1.	value of social relations through investments of bodily labor (time, effort, resources)	between the costs for bodily labor <i>versus</i> the achieved exchange value mediated by physical relationships	the exchange value achieved through physical relationships exceeds the costs in the long term
2.	supply and demand	between common/existing and unusual/rare physical features in invested costs <i>versus</i> later gains in status and income actually achieved	physical, bodily competition relativizes the expended costs and the realizable surplus value through fluctuations in the volume and realization of gains on the market
3.	illusion deception fraud	between the usual, comparable values of physical features via costs <i>versus</i> the fictional value via illusion, deception, or fraud.	the body is worked upon actively to secure gains and extra profit via illusion, deception, or fraud.
4.	parasitic participation	between participation in the assets of <i>others versus</i> one's own minimal efforts	inheritance, transplantation, and marriage relationships in particular secure the gains

Chart 22: Surplus Value through Body Capital

5.3 The Societal Use of Body Capital

The importance of the body in all human societies has been described by comparative cultural studies, which often reveal a strong anthropomorphism. In their world views and cosmic beliefs, humans across time always add themselves as a “natural” image, whether it is in the creation of the world according to the measure of the human body or its parts or an interpretation of the external world and nature according to the models of human behavior (see for example O’Neill, 1989). But to draw from this the hope that because of their concern for their own bodies, humans will also concern themselves with their projection on nature and the external world, as O’Neill supposes, is of course too narrow at least for the present. Concern and care for one’s own body is evident, but interest in the rest of the world appears for most people primarily to be directed more toward their own satisfaction and (except in critical reflections in academic circles) less toward long-term preservation of the Earth. Nevertheless, and O’Neill is quite right about this, we often feel and think about our world in an embodied way, or from an embodied perspective, or see society reflected in the body. This is especially clear in biopolitics, in the body politic, which is a body that calls for social and governmental regulation today given the increase in body capital.

Such regulation initially appears paradoxical. Capitalism is based on freedom, which is freedom of the body if anything. It is an undisputed private possession and a condition for human relations structured according to our own desires and preferences, for concluding a contract, for trading hours at work for wages, for moving independently as a free body, or for looking on the labor market for certain bodies in the form of labor for certain jobs. The state should under such capitalism ensure that the body can develop, move, and work, etc. freely. This is also the main goal for all liberal economic approaches.

But this free image of a freely acting body quickly reaches limits, which we recognize when we consider the conditions of this movement clearly. Here, the anthropomorphization or even naturalization of the body is a major threat to critical consideration. It robs us of a deeper insight into practices of the body as they appear, for example, in the formation of cultural and body capital. We only see the acting body then and how it behaves, but we no longer understand the background and know too little what happens, why, and with what interests, power claims, and differences. That is why it was so important for Foucault to show practices of the body in their discursive contexts and constructions. This first opens the possibility of speaking about body capital that is not tied objectively to the body or its skin but is inscribed in it (theoretically constructed, conveyed in norms, values, and behaviors through education and demonstrated on the basis of observations). There is tension here with regard to the body:

On the one hand, it is a disciplined body because and insofar as the claims and behavior norms that society expects and requires express themselves in external constraints and self-restraint. Bodies cannot act freely and do whatever they want; they have to move within lanes that apply socially to all bodies and their interactions and are regulated and sanctioned. It is this history of discipline through surveillance and punishment, through the division between normal and abnormal, and through discipline that works powerfully upon the body that especially interested Foucault and about which he developed his excellent studies.

On the other hand, however, it is about the technologies of the self and not only about power that affects the body but also about a power that people produce from themselves and apply to themselves and others, which is typical of practices of the body or more generally of the relationship between the individual and society.

Both sides produce in their interplay a discursive understanding of the body, society, and the individual itself because the meaning of truth and lies, normality and abnormality, inclusion and exclusion is first expressed and negotiated here. Such meanings are always set by and permeated with power, and this permeation is always connected with knowledge that helps such power act. The definitions that are given, for example, discursively in the sciences on bodies and their practices or other phenomena express a power of definition, which subsequently also manifests itself in specific power practices on the part of representatives of certain definitions. Looking at the body, this means that existing and prevailing power interests are inscribed in the body, appear as knowledge about the body, and they allow the (sometimes scientific) background of the respective constructions and interests to be forgotten easily. Thus, the body industry, for example, affects the body with its consumer interests by hiding its interests behind apparently natural and self-evident knowledge (= bodies are the way we present them to be) in order to act on its power and realize gains on the market. However, because all knowledge practices always act with such power and often also against the background of the markets if they want to be effective, the expectations for knowledge also always simultaneously involve the exercise of power.

Such power also always has two sides. First there is the repressive, normative, and disciplining power, which was discussed in particular in Foucault's earlier works, but which does not simply disappear when he discusses another side of power in his later works. This other side is more of a productive, constructive power of the self, which expresses human demands on themselves and others that are necessarily a part of survival. This connects with the work of Nietzsche who was very influential for Foucault.

Without going into detail about Foucault's studies or Judith Butler's studies that build upon Foucault, I want to highlight that bodies are always connected with knowledge (language) and power in discourses, i.e., in discussions about

the body, which generate a certain perspective and interpretation. So as observers of the practices of the body, we are called upon to deal critically not only with individual practices of the body but also with claims to power that inhabit these practices. This also applies in retrospect to the other forms of capital, which have also generated questions about the role of power in their domains.

This insight into the power relations with respect to the body is significant in a particular way. Thus, for example, advances in medicine with regard to bodily phenomena have given rise to a discourse according to which the body is increasingly shaped. The discourses define what is generally health, the body-fat percentage you should have, your ideal weight, what appears to prolong life and what does not, what is normal, etc. At the same time, this kind of medicine does not have a neutral and objective relationship to humans, i.e., it is not merely beholden to the truth of apparently objective medicine but is always associated with its own interests and the interests of others, which are often profit-oriented; all of this makes the construction of the body questionable. Thus, for example, without medical technology, in the past death came much sooner than it currently does. Recent medicine has constructed the idea of brain death in order to provide clear indications for when death occurs and the medical devices should be turned off. This discourse, which constantly changes given the improvements, for example, in knowledge and practices, defines how the body is perceived and evaluated. It also no longer helps to reverse the question and consider what the body *actually is* because every study only constructs a new variant in the story of knowledge and power.

In his studies on “The History of Sexuality,” Foucault showed, particularly with respect to the development of sexuality, that this putatively most natural thing in the world does not exist in pre-discursive forms. The transformation of sexuality in the course of history vividly shows that sexuality is always embedded in a narrative and a setting, which is created differently according to different cultural practices. The history of modernity, which is often characterized according to the pattern of a repression of sexuality because pleasure and work exclude one another, has another side, namely the fact that sexuality has never been discussed more than in this supposed climate that is against pleasure. The pressure toward sexual confession, which we know has increased in pedagogy since the 18th century, has today become an ecstasy of experiencing intimate practices with which the mass media increases its demands or meets its broadcast quotas. This increase has also been accompanied by a regulative discourse so that sexual behavior can be controlled and directed.

Foucault shows how this has been carried out thus far in four types of discourse: the hysterical woman represents a construct of the inner differentiation of psychological operations (particularly later in psychoanalysis) and

for a long time establishes ascribed gender roles; the masturbating child makes fears such as control of sexualized confessions especially clear and leads to childhood sexuality becoming an object of pedagogy; family planning on the part of couples shows the mode of modern sexuality in particular as a task of socialization; the perverted adult describes the perversions in desire and how it should be eliminated and punished. In all four cases, it becomes clear that sexuality is not just about the nature of things but about constructions within the knowledge-power complex.

Even if Foucault could only describe excerpts from this history, a bio power appears here that arises in the tension between the disciplining of the individual and the regulation of the social body. On the one hand, such bio power creates a micropower of countless minor surveillances of the body, through medical and psychological tests and diagnosis, in order to assign each body its place and space, which it must occupy in the tension between the individual and society. On the other hand, the social body is measured and analyzed in every way, particularly in statistics and generalizations, which can then be transformed into political and bureaucratic interventions, i.e., in a biopolitics, in order to regulate society.¹

Individualization in liquid modernity combined with the simultaneous expansion of consumption increased the tendency to free the body from its narrow confines and attributions. For example, in the past a different sexual orientation was a prison in two senses: (1) the body had to hide itself so that it did not attract attention; (2) the discovered homosexually oriented body was threatened with prison time. Today such bodies are captured by normalizing expectations such as homosexual marriage, which no longer only reveals the tendency toward individualization but also the social recognition and transformation of the body in regulated practices.

Sociological research on the body is also always research on inequality. The individual, unique, and special body of each person becomes an occasion in the social domain to regulate its movements, paths, and turns in order to reduce losses due to friction and to convey a set of culturally held practices through routines and institutions. Even if such regulations aim at all people, thus for example statutory norms and punishment are defined along with practices of the body, an observation of these practices shows that people behave in unequal ways and achieve unequal results. A significant change can be seen here. Although in the past, it was often understood that on the basis of nature people have certain advantages through their body via birth and temperament, this natural attribution has increasingly transformed today into a recognition that such advantages are produced in combination with biopolitics if not wholly introduced by biopolitics. For example, if in the past

¹ Foucault has had a fundamental influence on the sociology of the body. For sociology see, for example, Shilling (1993), and for feminist discourse see Butler (2004, 2006) in particular.

women were already disadvantaged by their bodies because they were held to be inferior, a biopolitics based on gender equality can create conditions for the creation of a new “nature” for women, which enjoy equal rights. But the more intensely biopolitics intervene in the people’s attributions and judgments, the more critical its account must be of how it positions itself in the field of inequalities that remain. In democratic states, there are also numerous practices of the body that tend to reinforce inequalities rather than eliminate them. The four forms of body capital described above are their instruments.

People with a high volume of cultural and particularly economic capital, attempt in their practices of the body to derive direct benefits from their material resources by upgrading them in various ways. First, they are more easily in the position than others to upgrade the body through the media, a practice that is associated with biotechnology and genetic technology; although this is a practice that is in its infancy today, it is already developing in an extraordinarily dynamic way. Paul Virilio (2004, 2007) sees in the technological advancement of medicine in particular an overcoming of the body, which not only fights to preserve the dignity of its nature but also attempts to transform it into a replacement-part warehouse with pacemakers and other technological aids in prosthetic surgery; this makes bodies increasingly unequal through transplantations or creates a capitalist market that will lead to new class struggles. Here the necessary “replacement parts” can be directly traded as use values on the exchange-value market by those who are abused by greedy criminals or who out of despair about their lack of basic subsistence exploit themselves. The practice of organ donation in case of death in contrast has not been developed enough, apparently because many people fear possible abuse.

The treatment of the body in the media not only means that people struggle with and against each other for a really perfect body; it also means that the body and its real interactions have at least currently become less relevant. Bodies that sit in front of films or computers no longer need to be present in the interactions between real people but simply remain in stasis in order to liberate themselves for virtual, fictional, and physical experiences and idealize things more strongly than before through supposedly perfect appearing models. Because this perfection of reality has actually been divested of actual physical interaction, the image of interaction itself changes. In addition to the mere presence of agents, the interactions among present people always also involve a *performance*, hearing their intentions and stories regarding themselves and others, comparing them, remaining open in their own perceptions, and also encountering contradictions, uncertainties, etc. The more the body is captured in images of fictional interaction and thus shapes itself in a self-image, the higher the chances are that actions, presentation, display, and performance become dominated by external images represented by con-

sumption ideals. As a result, an intentional, linguistically differentiated observation and interpretation of behavior through complex stories involving reasons and sympathy disappears.

There is, however, also an interpretation that is precisely the opposite of this: new media can allow agents in virtual interactions to construct new aspects of and perspectives on their bodies, which offer them completely new possibilities for developing and finding themselves when they move away from superficial attributions and learn to realize their own aims.

Both areas are under pressure by capitalization. We are familiar with this regarding all practices of the body. One nice example here is the beach, which has been invented as a place for displaying, shaping, and tanning the body. There are cultures, particularly in Asia, where the beach is still completely alien and people take vacations at the beach without actually using the beach itself. For example, the Chinese go to the Maldives to dive, fish, or have other adventures, but the beach itself does not open up for their bodies. The beach is a construction by modern Western culture (see Corbin, 1995). It is a place where the body can apparently embrace its own nature by encountering the seas, sand, wind, sun, and eventually crowds. This is also at the same time a history of undressing the body and erotic charge; it also costs people increasingly more money in order to reach the true paradise beaches. Kaufmann (in German, 1996) shows in his studies of the beach how supposed physical freedom turns into mutual monitoring, calculation, and comparison where even the smallest gestures and glances are regulated. The practices of the body at the beach are not only permeated with financial contributions that are necessary for even going to the beach but also express possession of one's own forms of capital. The visitors spread out their towels and belongings and defend their territory against possible invaders precisely because they move so close together here in the presentation of their individuality. The cultural habitus usually requires that one hide one's glances behind sunglasses and disguise one's glances at others by acting as if one is indifferent. This is when women remove their tops in order to linger in apparent intimacy, which however also always includes showing their own physicality. It is a showroom for the comparison of more or less fit bodies, beautiful and young bodies, and the fact that there are also other bodies also generally provides justification for people's own expectations.

Body capital not only appears entwined with and mediated by other forms of capital, it is also an expression, external image, and staging of a habitus that has to be observed from multiple perspectives. There are two directions in empirical studies that can be distinguished here. First, the factors mentioned can be differentiated and then the actual traceable effects of body capital can be observed and analyzed. Studies on material status, the social and cultural habitus in comparison with expenses and expenditures for body cap-

ital, consumer habits, physical relationships, and health conditions (differentiated according to the main distinct aspects in this form of capital) would be useful (= a basket of physical expenditures). At the same time, the correlations with the labor market, achieved degrees of freedom, and educational status appear to me to be most important here for drawing conclusions about the precise possibilities for the influence of state regulations. This work is characterized by a high degree of ambivalence. State regulations can help to establish provisions for avoiding discrimination in particular and opening a wide range of possibilities for action in people's relations to their bodies. But at the same time, a ranked comparison and competitive attitude can establish itself through capitalization, which can constantly become a new site for distinctions and practices of discrimination.

This ambivalence becomes immediately clear when we look at the media. Here the media's emphasis on the body is a complex issue that is in particular related to consumption and thus capitalization, which can hardly be avoided. In this respect, it is important to introduce regulations where the market would otherwise colonize the body and lead to inequalities in terms of practices of the body, which would quickly be in opposition with morality and human dignity. This aspect relates to state provisions that are directed in a critical process of political decision making primarily at education in this field in order to emphasize critical abilities and moral decisions and if necessary work against biotechnological possibilities. Previous studies such as those by Wilkinson & Pickett (2010) show that provisions for education are a main priority in this area. But anti-discrimination practices, regulations for the labor market and social services, and the establishment of sustainable healthcare systems also appear to be a main priority in addition to others so that this form of capital is not just left to individual strategies and thus to the production of increasingly greater inequalities.

What are the important social aspects of a politics of the body that occupies the tension between individualization and regulation against the background of the many aspects that were primarily alluded to here rather than worked out in detail? And what should the social provisions be in order to ensure adequate opportunities for all people for a dignified relationship to their body?

In view of body use values, state provisions appear needed in particular for the areas of health, fitness, sexuality, eroticism, and biocapital in order to ensure equal opportunities for all people with regard to their bodies:

- In the capitalist world, health is becoming increasingly expensive, and as a point of attack for the health industry it also guarantees numerous means of profit maximization. No country that strives for dignified relations for all can get around active health policy in which sufficient access to medical care is made possible and financed for all in light of economic

and social circumstances. This requires a state-regulated health and social security system, which provides such access for all and does not discriminate against or exclude anyone. It is astounding that wealthy capitalist countries such as the United States do not provide this for all. It is tragic how many people die from malnutrition and lack of healthcare on a daily basis (see Pogge, 2002). There are numerous proposals for developing countries (see Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010) as well as those from a global point of view (see Pogge, 2001, Barry & Pogge, 2005) regarding how healthcare can be regulated in connection with other human rights.¹

- Health policy is always social policy and is closely linked with questions of equity and equality of opportunity. It is primarily determined by economic and political conditions, which often reproduce bad conditions for health. This means that questions regarding health have to be conceived of as fundamental questions regarding the biopolitics of a society outside of the individual phenomena of struggles over the body as the expression of individual strategies for body capital. Economic and political powers, as the expression of certain interests and power positions, e.g., profit-maximization strategies in the pharmaceutical industry or other capitalistic interests in the areas of health and the body, lead to the impoverishment of certain populations, social classes, and underdeveloped countries. In the WHO report from 2008, such reasons are given, and numerous alternative strategies are proposed.² Many political movements in the context of human rights movements or individual issues such as HIV/Aids help to develop a broad view of the causes of illness and violations of human rights and develop countermeasures. It has become really important to collect sufficient data on global health and combine this with economic analyses—and analyses of the forms of capital I discuss here—in order to develop legitimate strategies for the improvement of social justice as a whole. Not only ethical claims could grow from this, political demands could also arise and be pursued by larger groups of people in order to develop measures and tools that can be used both in individual countries and at a global level. Inequality, however, makes situations worse, as studies have shown (Wilkinson & Pickett 2010).
- Educational policy that does not ignore the body is essential for developing sufficient physical opportunities for everyone. This applies first to the need for an inclusive school system that also serves people with disabilities and people from disadvantaged classes in order to increase their educational opportunities. A full-day school system with sufficient and

¹ On this, see the proposals from the “Health Impact Fund,” which focuses on medicine for the poor: <http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/igh/>.

² On this, see <http://www.who.int/whr/2008/en/index.html>.

healthy nutrition and sustained preventative healthcare as well as adequate opportunities for exercise according to interests has to be a goal for policies regarding the body, which are supposed to provide opportunities for everyone. One of the major standards here is anti-sexism and the prevention of sexual exploitation. It must be sufficiently funded for the socially and economically weak so that new educational privileges are not produced (affluent classes enjoy healthy school nutrition while the poor are excluded). Because the connection between higher education and longer life expectancy and better health is clear, the state in particular must create provisions in this area to reduce the education gap.

- At the same time, discrimination of all kinds has to be fought actively; this includes physical or sexual discrimination or bullying in any form in social groups. Clear guiding principles and regulations are needed here at schools, in work with youth and children, and in sports and all social groups in society so that mutual help and common objectives in the sense of mutual acceptance and assistance grow rather than continue to decrease.
- Overall, state provisions have to show sustained expenditures for physical, educational, and practical training through the support of a variety of projects and associations. This includes in particular expenditures in the areas of gender discrimination, anti-sexism, and anti-racism. It is also important to promote rational body awareness, health awareness, and healthy nutrition with positive examples, where the state has the ability to regulate (thus in particular in all state institutions), and to promote active schools and an active society in order to develop the potential for critical rationality that is opposed to the interests of consumer society that are favored by certain companies and corporations.
- This also involves clear regulations of approved practices. This includes bans on smoking and other measures directed against addiction. In medical procedures, there must also be regulations that are supported by high ethical standards. In biopolitics, however, this always leads to an opposition between state regulation and individual desires. This leads to critical questions, which can only be answered in contradictory ways, regarding the beginning of human life such as in research on embryos, the problem of late-term abortions, interventions in human genomes, genetic tests and gene therapy, stem-cell research, clones, etc. Another group of problems concerns questions about the end of human life. This includes issues such as brain death, organ transplantation, organ trafficking, terminal care, and euthanasia. And there is also a debate about what aspects of life and which biological processes can be patented in order to monopolize aspects of nature for the generation of profits. The international bioethics council of UNESCO is a step in the

positive direction here for making ethical standards binding.¹ But it is also exceedingly difficult to defend ethical interests against the interests of the body industry, which wants to overwhelm the body with exchange values in order to realize profits. It is also difficult to sufficiently align private consumer interests in a consumer society with rationality and the reasonable decisions of majorities. It is a struggle that knowingly has to draw in as many people as possible through education so that there is even the possibility of ethically acceptable success.

5.4 Individual Use of Body Capital

For surplus value and its production, the owner of this form of capital has to develop and shape the body as much and as intensively as possible. If we take a closer look at the four forms of surplus-value production in body capital, a large degree of uncertainty can be seen with regard to the actual foreseeable effects. Chart 23 shows in a summary the individual strategies through which the surplus value of body capital can arise (*see next page*).

- 1) It is primarily always the difference here between one's own expenditures in terms of time, effort, and resources that generate benefits in terms of access, upward mobility, an improved position and associated gains. The presence and staging of the body is an essential condition for the realization in this regard of gains in its various forms such as wages, income, gifts, upward mobility, etc.
- 2) In physical relationships, everyone is in competition not only with each other but also within the various groups and circles with their inclusion and exclusion mechanisms. The shape of the body itself expresses this mechanism outwardly in its appearance. There are also strong counter-vailing strategies with many facets of fashion and style formation that define inclusion and exclusion. The market heavily regulates the effectiveness of the body through the demand side, but at the same time there are elements where supply helps determine demand. Individual calculations have to be very well developed and market-oriented if demand effects are actually going to be able to be used. Often these seem to be rather accidental and thus appear as individual luck (often constructed with respect to erotic capital to suggest that one has found the right person rather than it simply being a matter of the beautiful and the wealthy finding each other).
- 3) "More apparent than real." This motto also applies to body capital, but the efforts and expenses are often very large here for getting additional

¹ On this, see <http://www.unesco.de/bioethik.html>.

help. Illusion, which is mainly for others, often leads to self-delusion. All deceptions are in danger of becoming fraudulent because and insofar as there is the tendency to present what is shown in a special light using any means necessary.

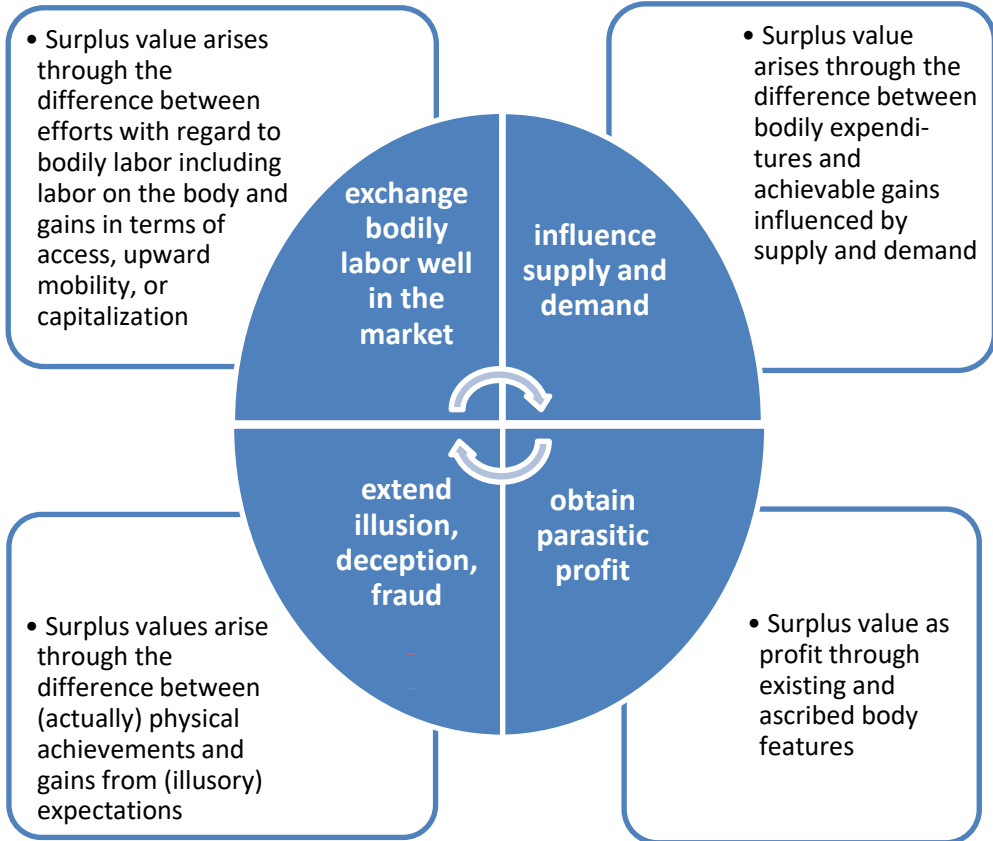


Chart 23: Forms of Surplus Value for Individual Body Capital

- 4) It is always better to have a body that is beautiful “in itself” and fits with current fashion and ideas about beauty. Effort is also applied here in maintaining what already exists by chance. Others have to fundamentally transform. But nobody can be sure that they will not meet with a comparatively more perfect body that achieves even greater parasitic gains.

Against this background, it becomes clear why the costs for the body have grown and continue to grow.

As in the other chapters, we can also consider the consequences here of body capital for important areas of life.

- *Income*: body capital may lead indirectly to securing income. In combination with a social and cultural habitus, it can help to secure one's own position insofar as it expresses health, fitness, attractiveness, and biotechnological approaches to one's own resources and their formation, which represent achievement, perseverance, self-organization, self-restraint, and other such attributes. Individual initiative in particular may help generate body capital. But this also constantly increases costs. The private and profit-oriented interests of the health and pharmaceutical industries as well as the media have closed the gap in many areas left by missing governmental regulations and help to shape the body through mass taste, which does not leave even the elites untouched. Nevertheless, differences remain that are revealed in the body habitus and that can become important when securing a job or achieving a certain income. Although the body habitus is subject to increasing profanation, it defines inclusion in terms of economic, cultural, and primarily social status.
- *Unemployment or employment*: lack of body capital expresses itself especially in the fact that people, because of lack of body use values or attributes that are not sufficient in comparison with others, have less confidence in their own self-presentation, staging, and display of skills and physicality. This significantly reduces their attractiveness and is an obstacle for gaining or maintaining a job. People often derive a more or less pronounced self-value from their bodies, which can be critical in having success in competition with others. Sometimes it even comes down to physical favors or exploitation when securing a job.
- *Opportunities for social mobility*: body capital is always also a perspective on global developments and a reflection of the global body. Anyone who has body capital also has body use values that allow them to move more freely than others. People with such use values, which they are often able to exchange, learn more clearly than others to test their own potential in competition and to adapt strategies that open the best possible chances for mobility. Against this background, options for action and communication arise more easily. Body capital more easily opens doors that would otherwise be closed, but even beauty is no guarantee for upward mobility because it can quickly be prostituted. Thus, the possibilities and risks of mobility qua body capital also have to be considered critically if social mobility as the maintenance of possessions or a standard of living is to be secured or upward mobility is to be attained. As with cultural capital, the interaction with learning capital is crucial for long-term success.

- *Opportunities for consumption and lifestyle:* Culture is increasingly measured today according to consumption and appears in the body as a clear expression of the lifestyle one has attained. Bodies are omnipresent in almost all media. They are flooded with consumer goods in order to offer themselves to others for consumption in relationships and entertainment. Even if a profanation has taken place here as in all habits of consumption, it is the distinctions in the profane, mundane things that make the difference as before.

Summing up some of the considerations in this chapter, there are three scenarios that best capture individual dealings with body capital:

- 1) *The ownership scenario:* anyone who wants to acquire large amounts of body capital is always dependent on their own capacities and a certain origin. It is especially difficult here for people with putatively worse “natural” physical endowments—dependent of cultural judgments of taste—to overcome the advantages others have. Some have to care for and maintain their “natural” resources, while others feel themselves more or less forced to meet body ideals, which can be costly. But the affluent still have sufficient resources to actively shape themselves bodily. This gives them special power. At the same time, they are under more pressure with regard to aging, which they often desperately try to fight with a lot of resources and effort. Even the affluent are not free from certain regulations through bio power, which affect them when the state establishes restrictive legislation. It is precisely the affluent that most often resist such regulations.
- 2) *The upward-mobility scenario:* the improvement of one’s own body capital can begin with health, fitness, eroticism, or the body itself using biotechnologies. This wealth of variations allows for room to create and realize various scenarios for upward mobility. Upward mobility is made easier through favorable use values such as beauty, attractiveness, health, fitness, and erotic aura, but a deliberate climb will be successful only when one can make use of the very narrow window during which these use values can be realized as exchange values. Such windows for action arise only on certain occasions and have to be taken advantage of then. Anyone who fails to do this could also quickly experience downward mobility again.
- 3) *The uncertainty scenario:* in light of quickly changing mass taste, body capital is always insecure. Physical alterations such as implants, tattoos, etc. are particularly in danger of being regarded as ugly rather than beautiful depending on the fashion. Particularly in lower social classes, even beauty and attractiveness remain endangered values insofar as they cannot be maintained outside of limited successful situations. Anyone in such an uncertain situation can generally only expect from these body

use values exchange values that remain within their own social class. But it is fortunate that in such scenarios of uncertainty and insecurity, there are also some people who prefer alternative values of self-awareness over physicality. They have the opportunity to relate to their body in a freer way than others do.