

Whose Body?

The body of Capitalism

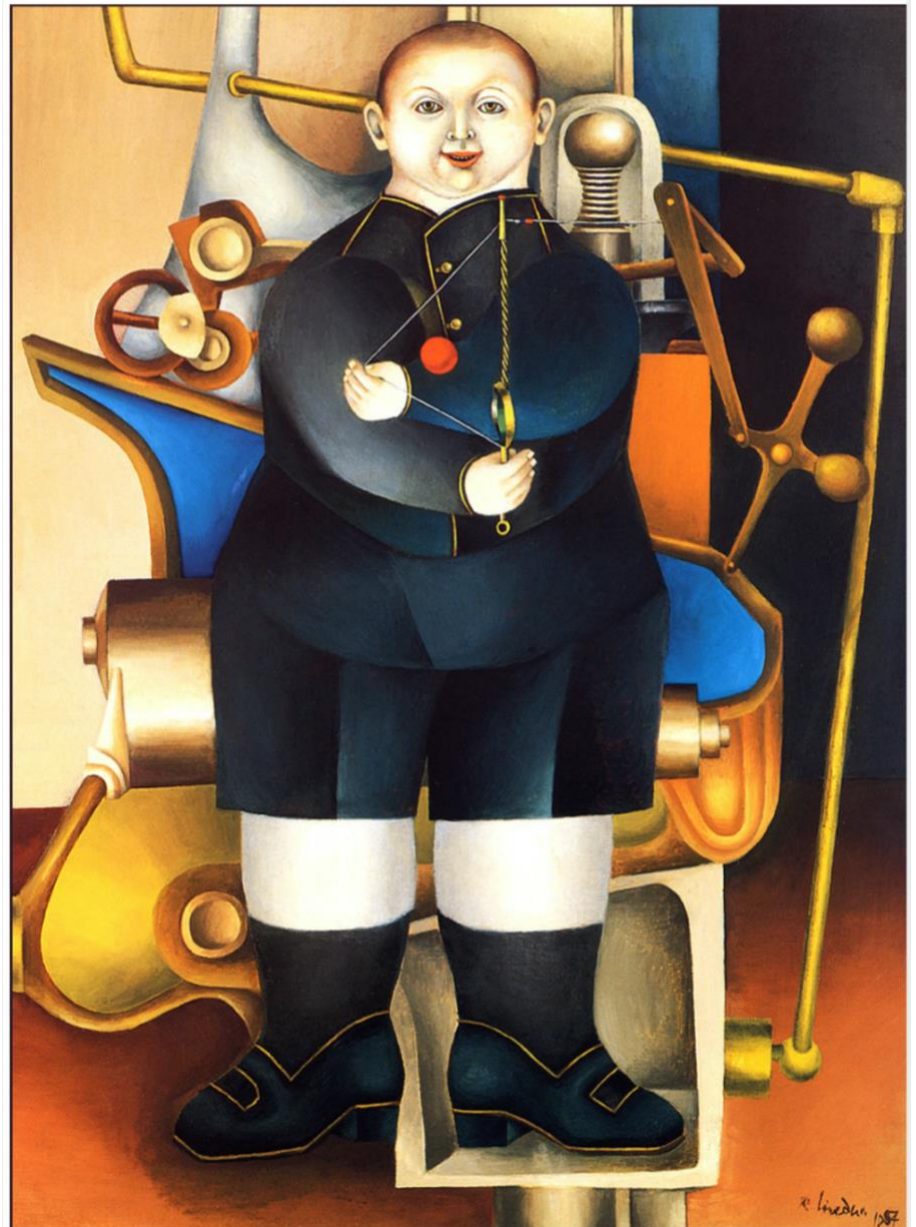
The painting by Richard Lindner

"Boy with Machine"
from Deleuze &
Guattari's

'Anti Oedipus'
shows a huge bloated
boy, working one of his
little desiring-machines,
having hooked it up to a
vast technical social
machine.

Producing, a product.

A producing product
identity.



A very curious notion this 'thing' called the body 'is'. Something performed, something which needs to be made. A product, a form of production. A production which you work on. Body has become a place 'other' to live from. Othered by capitalism and advertising. A whole system, everything bodily going on with the body, is everything good for the economy. Profitable.

As economies crash, profits are to be made, by selling body hate. A solution to new economic recession. We no longer use our bodies in production, we produce our bodies. We 'did' have a relationship to body. 'The Body' did have a function, but manual work has disappeared in the West.

This neoliberal body is a site of consumption. The 'individual body' becomes a series of surfaces, exquisite areas for transformation, for changing, for perfecting, for becoming. The ways in which the body has become a product is terrifying. We can change gender, change body shapes, ears, noses and hair. But the reification of thinness, remains not part of the post-modern makeover. Thinness has a fixed place. **Uncontested**. Indicative are the many ways in which we go to change ourselves. Dieting, cleansing, plastic surgery, stomach stapling, the troubled body. At a cultural level, young women are growing up thinking ahhhhhhh labia plasty. Transformation for them has not been problematised... It has been normalised, originating from the photoshopping and airbrushing of their baby photos. We exist in a digitalised culture seeing between 5000 & 10,000 digital images a week. Many of these images are about the human form, these become iconography. External, edited representations of what it means to be human. The approximation of being, belonging, of existing. The is body there, represented, all the time, but in a way, novel to the last 30 years.

Mid 70's / early 80's...

Eastern Europe: Images of communist dictators.

Working class homes: The Queen.

Italy: The pope.

2020: Social media.

A decade ago, we didn't have the continual feeding of imagery which we now unconsciously absorb. We are trained to look by the masculine gaze of capitalism. Look and not see, see only certain things. We don't even think or look twice.

Millennial conflict with the body means change the body, make the body **do something different**, look different. Then we'll be okay. Working on a body project, my #transformation, working off an internal body.

Homo-economicus, perfectionism, self-marketing, dissatisfaction, self-hatred. Transformative technologies operate to allow ourselves not to be present. The fantasy of perfectionism is the fantasy of transformation. If I can achieve that, I'll be okay. I'll be alright with myself.

Desire, Longing, vulnerability. Bodies being stripped of adipose. Fat. Lack.

Complete fulfilment. This imaginary fantasy, perpetuated in the marketplace, playing out in all spheres of our being. The marketplace becoming substitute for the subject in search "This diet is going to solve all my problems".

We are willing to accept these adverts and reality TV: If I can change **me**, then you'll love **we**.

An unnamed desperation with Celebrity status.

Love Island. Media trolling. Dehumanisation. Suicide. Compassion.

The cultural homogenisation of beauty standards is real. One standard. And the attempt to reach it, are commodified. A paradox, because at the same moment as we democratise the notion of beauty, everyone is allowed and invoked into beauty. Many moons ago there were few 'beauties' around. Few 'beauties' in each 'class', in a 'year group' and in 'Hollywood'. Present day, everyone has to make the most of themselves.

Accept their beauty. Widening the notion of beauty **BUT** a narrowing of beauty ideals. White and thin. This not only narrows ideals locally, nationally but globally. Skin bleaching.

We export these ideals, these extraordinary images and efface the body all over the world.

The culture industry.