

CHAPTER 6

The body as an accumulation strategy

[I]t is crystal clear to me that the body is an accumulation strategy in the deepest sense. (Donna Haraway, *Society and Space*, 1995, 510)

Capital circulates, as it were, through the body of the laborer as variable capital and thereby turns the laborer into a mere appendage of the circulation of capital itself. (David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital*, 1982, 157)

In fact the two processes - the accumulation of men and the accumulation of capital - cannot be separated.

(Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 1975 [1995], 221)

Why focus on these citations? In part the answer rests on the extraordinary efflorescence of interest in ‘the body’ as a grounding for all sorts of theoretical enquiries over the last two decades or so. But why this efflorescence? The short answer is that a contemporary loss of confidence in previously established categories has provoked a return to the body as the irreducible basis for understanding (cf Chapter 1 and Lowe, 1995, 14). But viewing the body as the irreducible locus for the determination of all values, meanings, and significations is not new. It was fundamental to many strains of pre-Socratic philosophy and the idea that ‘man’ or ‘the body’ is ‘the measure of all things’ has had a long and interesting history. For the ancient Greeks, for example, ‘measure’ went far beyond the idea of comparison with some external standard. It was regarded as ‘a form of insight into the essence of everything’ perceived through the senses and the mind. Such insight into inner meanings and proportionalities was considered fundamental in achieving a clear perception of the overall realities of the world and, hence, fundamental to living a harmonious and well-ordered life. Our modern views, as Bohm (1983) points out, have lost this subtlety and become relatively gross and mechanical, although some of our terminology (e.g. the notion of ‘measure’ in music and art) indicates a broader meaning.

The resurrection of interest in the body in contemporary debates does provide, then, a welcome opportunity to reassess the bases (epistemological and ontological) of all forms of enquiry. Feminists and queer

theorists have pioneered the way as they have sought to unravel issues of gender and sexuality in theory and political practices. And the question of how measure lost its connexion to bodily well-being has come back into focus as an epistemological problem of some significance (Poovey, 1998). The thesis I want to pursue here is that the *manner* of this return to 'the body as the measure of all things' is crucial to determining how values and meanings are to be constructed and understood. I want in particular to return to a broader relational meaning of the body as 'the measure of all things' and propose a more dialectical way of understanding the body that can better connect discourses on the body with that other discursive shift that has placed 'globalization' at the center of debate.

1 Bodily processes

I begin with two fundamental propositions. The first, drawn from writers as diverse as Marx (1964 edition), Elias (1978), Gramsci (1971 edition), Bourdieu (1984), Stafford (1991), Lefebvre (1991), Haraway (1991), Butler (1993), Grosz (1994), and Martin (1994), is that the body is an unfinished project, historically and geographically malleable in certain ways. It is not, of course, infinitely or even easily malleable and certain of its inherent ('natural' or biologically inherited) qualities cannot be erased. But the body continues to evolve and change in ways that reflect both an internal transformative dynamics (often the focus of psychoanalytic work) and the effect of external processes (most often invoked in social constructionist approaches).

The second proposition, broadly consistent with (if not implicitly contained in) the first, is that the body is not a closed and sealed entity, but a relational 'thing' that is created, bounded, sustained, and ultimately dissolved in a spatiotemporal flux of multiple processes. This entails a relational-dialectical view in which the body (construed as a thing-like entity) internalizes the effects of the processes that create, support, sustain, and dissolve it. The body which we inhabit and which is for us the irreducible measure of all things is not itself irreducible. This makes the body problematic, particularly as 'the measure of all things.'

The body is internally contradictory by virtue of the multiple socio-ecological processes that converge upon it. For example, the metabolic processes that sustain a body entail exchanges with its environment. If the processes change, then the body either transforms and adapts or ceases to exist. Similarly the mix of performative activities available to the body in a given place and time are not independent of the technological, physical, social, and economic environment in which that body has its being. And the representational practices that operate in society likewise shape the

body (and in the forms of dress and postures propose all manner of additional symbolic meanings). This means that any challenges to a dominant system of representation of the body (e.g. those mounted by feminists and queer theorists in recent years) become direct challenges to bodily practices. The net effect is to say that different processes (physical and social) 'produce' (both materially and representationally) radically different kinds of bodies. Class, racial, gender, and all manner of other distinctions are marked upon the human body by virtue of the different socio-ecological processes that do their work upon that body.

To put the matter this way is not to view the body as a passive product of external processes. What is remarkable about living entities is the way they capture diffuse energy or information flows and assemble them into complex but well-ordered forms. Creating order out of chaos is, as Prigogine and Stengers (1984) point out, a vital property of biological systems. As a 'desiring machine' capable of creating order not only within itself but also in its environs, the human body is active and transformative in relation to the processes that produce, sustain, and dissolve it. Thus, bodily persons endowed with semiotic capacities and moral will make their bodies foundational elements in what we have long called 'the body politic.'

To conceptualize the body (the individual and the self) as porous in relation to the environment frames 'self-other' relations (including the relation to 'nature') in a particular way. If, for example, we understand the body to internalize all there is (a strong doctrine of internal relations of the sort I have outlined elsewhere - see Harvey, 1996, Chapter 2) then the reverse proposition also holds. If the self internalizes all things then the self can be 'the measure of all things.' This idea goes back to Protagoras and the Greeks. It allows the individual to be viewed as some kind of decentered center of the cosmos, or, as Munn (1985, 14, 17), in her insightful analysis of social practices on the Melanesian island of Gawa, prefers to put it, 'bodily spacetime serves as a condensed sign of the wider spacetime of which it is a part.' It is only if the body is viewed as being open and porous to the world that it can meaningfully be considered in this way. It is not how the body is seen in the dominant Western tradition. Strathern (1988, 135) underlines the problem:

The socialized, internally controlled Western person must emerge as a *microcosm of the domesticating process* by which natural resources are put to cultural use ... The only internal relation here is the way a person's parts 'belong' to him or herself. Other relationships bear in from outside. A person's attributes are thus modified by external pressure, as are the attributes of things, but they remain intrinsic to his or her identity.

But in the Melanesian case:

[The] person is a living commemoration of the actions which produced i t . . . persons are the objectified form of relationships, and it is not survival of the self that is at issue but the survival or termination of relations. Eating does not necessarily imply nurture; it is not an intrinsically beneficiary act, as it is taken to be in the Western commodity view that regards the self as thereby perpetuating its own existence. Rather, eating exposes the Melanesian person to all the hazards of the relationships of which he/she is composed ... Growth in social terms is not a reflex of nourishment; rather, in being a proper receptacle for nourishment, the nourished person bears witness to the effectiveness of a relationship with the mother, father, sister's husband or whoever is doing the feeding ... Consumption is not a simple matter of self-replacement, then, but the recognition and monitoring of relationships ... The self as individual subject exists ... in his or her capacity to transform relations. (Strathern, 1988, 302)

This relational conception of the body, of self, individual, and, consequently, of political identity is captured in the Western tradition only in dialectical modes of argumentation. Traces of it can also be found in the contemporary work of deep ecologists (cf. Naess and Rothenberg, 1989) and the view is now widespread in literary and feminist theory. It constitutes a rejection of the world view traditionally ascribed to Descartes, Newton, and Locke, which grounds the ideal of the 'civilized' and 'individualized' body (construed as an entity in absolute space and time and as a site of inalienable and bounded property rights) in much of Western thought.

It then follows that the manner of production of spacetime is inextricably connected with the production of the body. 'With the advent of Cartesian logic,' Lefebvre (1991, 1) complains, 'space had entered the realm of the absolute ... space came to dominate, by containing them, all senses and all bodies.' Lefebvre and Foucault (particularly in *Discipline and Punish*) here make common cause: the liberation of the senses and the human body from the absolutism of that produced world of Newtonian/Cartesian space and time becomes central to their emancipatory strategies. And that means challenging the mechanistic and absolute view by means of which the body is contained and disciplined. But by what bodily practices was this Cartesian/Newtonian conception of spacetime produced? And how can such conceptions be subverted?

We here encounter a peculiar conundrum. On the one hand, to return to the human body as the fount of all experience (including that of space and time) is presently regarded as a means (now increasingly privileged) to challenge the whole network of abstractions (scientific, social, political-economic) through which social relations, power relations, institutions.

and material practices get defined, represented, and regulated. But on the other hand, no human body is outside of social processes of determination. To return to it is, therefore, to instantiate the social processes being purportedly rebelled against. If, for example, workers are transformed, as Marx suggests in *Capital*, into appendages of capital in both the work place and the consumption sphere (or, as Foucault prefers it, bodies are made over into *docile bodies* by the rise of a powerful disciplinary apparatus, from the eighteenth century onwards) then how can their bodies be a measure, sign, or receiver of anything outside of the circulation of capital or of the various mechanisms that discipline them.? Or, to take a more contemporary version of the same argument, if we are all now *cyborgs* (as Haraway in her celebrated manifesto on the topic suggests), then how can we measure anything outside of that deadly embrace of the machine as extension of our own body and body as extension of the *machine*?

So while return to the body as the site of a more authentic (epistemological and ontological) grounding of the theoretical abstractions that have for too long ruled purely as abstractions may be justified, that return cannot in and of itself guarantee anything except the production of a narcissistic self-referentiality. Haraway (1991, 190) sees the difficulty. 'Objectivity,' she declares, 'turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment and definitely not about the false vision promising transcendence of all Umits and responsibility.' So whose body is it that is to be the measure of all things? Exactly how and what is it in a position to measure.? These are deep questions to which we will perforce return again and again. We cannot begin to answer them, however, without some prior understanding of how bodies are socially produced.

2 The theory of the bodily subject in Marx

Let us suppose that Marx's categories are not dismissed as 'thoroughly destabilised.' I do not defend that supposition, though I note that from the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* onwards Marx (1964 edition, 143) grounded his ontological and epistemological arguments on real sensual bodily interaction with the world:

Sense-perception must be the basis of all science. Only when it proceeds from sense-perception in the two-fold form of sensuous consciousness and of sensuous need - that is, only when science proceeds from nature - is it true science.

Marx also elaborated a philosophy of internal relations and of dialectics consistent with the relational conception of the body outlined above (particularly by Strathern). The contemporary rush to return to the body

as the irreducible basis of all argument is, therefore, a rush to return to the point where Marx, among many others, began.

While he does not tell us everything we might want to know, Marx does propose a theory of the production of the bodily subject under capitalism. Since we all live within the world of capital circulation and accumulation this has to be a part of any argument about the nature of the contemporary body. To evade it (on the specious grounds that Marx's categories are destabilized or, worse still, outmoded and unfashionable) is to evade a vital aspect of how the body must be problematized. And while Marx's theorizing in *Capital* is often read (incorrectly, as I shall hope to show) as a pessimistic account of how bodies, construed as passive entities occupying particular performative economic roles, are shaped by the external forces of capital circulation and accumulation, it is precisely this analysis that informs his other accounts of how transformative processes of human resistance, desire for reform, rebellion, and revolution can and do occur.

A preparatory step is to broaden somewhat the conventional Marxian definition of 'class' (or, more exactly, of 'class relation') under capitalism to mean *positionality in relation to capital circulation and accumulation*. Marx often fixed this relation in terms of property rights over the means of production (including, in the laborer's case, property rights to his or her own body), but I want to argue that this definition is too narrow to capture the content even of Marx's own analyses (Marx, recall, avoided any formal sociological definitions of class throughout his works). Armed with such a definition of 'positionality with respect to capital circulation and accumulation' we can better articulate the internal contradictions of multiple positionalities within which human beings operate. The laborer as person is a worker, consumer, saver, lover, and bearer of culture, and can even be an occasional employer and landed proprietor, whereas the laborer as an economic role - the category Marx analyses in *Capital* - is singular.

Consider, now, one distinctive systemic concept that Marx proposed. *Variable capital* refers to the sale/purchase and use of labor power as a commodity. But as Marx's analysis proceeds it becomes evident that there is a distinct circulation process to variable capital itself. The laborer (a person) sells labor power (a commodity) to the capitalist to use in the labor process in return for a money wage which permits the laborer to purchase capitalist-produced commodities in order to live in order to return to work ... Marx's distinction between the laborer *{qua}* person, body, will) and labor power (that which is extracted from the body of the laborer as a commodity) immediately provides an opening for radical critique. Laborers are necessarily alienated because their creative capacities are appropriated as the commodity labor power by capitalists. But we can broaden the question: what effect does the circulation of variable capital

(the extraction of labor power and surplus value) have on the bodies (persons and subjectivities) of those through whom it circulates? The answer initially breaks down into a consideration of what happens at different moments of productive consumption, exchange, and individual consumption.

Productive consumption

Productive consumption of the commodity labor power in the labor process under the control of the capitalist requires, *inter alia*, the mobilization of 'animal spirits,' sexual drives, affective feelings, and creative powers of labor to a given purpose defined by capital. It means: harnessing basic human powers of cooperation/collaboration; the skilling, deskilling, and reskilling of the powers of labor in accord with technological requirements; acculturation to routinization of tasks; enclosure within strict spatiotemporal rhythms of regulated (and sometimes spatially confined) activities; frequent subordinations of bodily rhythms and desires 'as an appendage of the machine;' socialization into long hours of concentrated labor at variable but often increasing intensity; development of divisions of labor of different qualities (depending upon the heterogeneity or homogeneity of tasks, the organization of detailed versus social divisions of labor); responsiveness to hierarchy and submission to authority structures within the work place; separations between mental and manual operations and powers; and, last but not least, the production of variability, fluidity, and flexibility of labor powers able to respond to those rapid revolutions in production processes so typical of capitalist development.

I supply this list (drawn from Marx's *Capital*) mainly to demonstrate how the exigencies of capitalist production push the limits of the working body - its capacities and possibilities - in a variety of different and often fundamentally contradictory directions. On the one hand capital requires educated and flexible laborers, but on the other hand it refuses the idea that laborers should think for themselves. While education of the laborer appears important it cannot be the kind of education that permits free thinking. Capital requires certain kinds of skills but abhors any kind of monopolizable skill. While a 'trained gorilla' may suffice for some tasks, for others creative, responsible workers are called for. While subservience and respect for authority (sometimes amounting to abject submission) is paramount, the creative passions, spontaneous responses, and animal spirits necessary to the 'form-giving fire' of the labor process must also be liberated and mobilized. Healthy bodies may be needed but deformities, pathologies, sickness are often produced. Marx highlights such contradictions:

[L]arge scale industry, by its very nature, necessitates variation of labour, fluidity of functions, and mobility of the worker in all directions. But on the other hand, in its capitalist form it reproduces the old division of labour with ossified particularities. We have seen how this absolute contradiction does away with all repose, all fixity and all security as far as the worker's life situation is concerned ... But if, at present, variation of labour imposes itself after the manner of an overpowering natural law, and with the blindly destructive action of a natural law that meets with obstacles everywhere, large scale industry, through its very catastrophes, makes the recognition of variation of labour and hence of the fitness of the worker for the maximum number of different kinds of labour into a question of life and death.

(Marx, 1976 edition, 617)

Marx sees these contradictions being worked out historically and dialectically (largely though not solely through the use of coercive force and active struggle). But part of what the creative history of capitalism has been about is discovering new ways (and potentialities) in which the human body can be put to use as the bearer of the capacity to labor. Marx observes (1976 edition, 617), for example, that 'technology discovered the few grand fundamental forms of motion which, despite all the diversity of the instruments used, apply necessarily to every productive action of the human body.' Older capacities of the human body are reinvented, new capacities revealed. The development of capitalist production entails a radical transformation in what the working body is about. The unfinished project of the human body is pushed in a particular set of contradictory directions. And a whole host of sciences for engineering and exploring the limits of the human body as a productive machine, as a fluid organism, has been established to explore these possibilities. Gramsci (1971 edition), among others, thus emphasizes again and again how capitalism is precisely about the production of a new kind of laboring body.

While such contradictions may be internalized within the labor force as a whole, this does not necessarily mean that they are internalized within the body of each laborer. Indeed, it is the main thrust of Marx's own presentation that the 'collective body' of the labor force is broken down into hierarchies of skill, of authority, of mental and manual functions, etc. in such a way to render the category of variable capital internally heterogeneous. And this heterogeneity is unstable. The perpetual shifting that occurs within the capitalist mode of production ensures that requirements, definitions of skill, systems of authority, divisions of labor, etc. are never stabilized for long. So while the collective laborer will be fragmented and segmented, the definitions of and relations between the segments will be unstable and the movements of individual laborers within and between segments correspondingly complex. It is not hard to see that in

the face of these contradictions and multiple instabilities, capitalism will require some sort of disciplinary apparatus of surveillance, punishment and ideological control that Marx frequently alludes to and which Foucault elaborates upon in ways that I find broadly complementary rather than antagonistic to Marx's project. But the instability never goes away (as witnessed by the whole historical geography of skilling, de-skilling, reskilling, etc.). While the instability is disconcerting, sometimes destructive, and always difficult to cope with, it provides multiple opportunities for subversion and opposition on the part of the laborers.

But whose body is inserted into the circulation of variable capital and with what effects? Marx does not provide any systematic answer to that question in part because this was not the primary object of his theoretical enquiry (he largely dealt with economic roles rather than with persons). Who exactly gets inserted where is a detailed historical-geographical question that defies any simple theoretical answer. Marx is plainly aware that bodies are differentiated and marked by different physical productive capacities and qualities according to history, geography, culture, and tradition. He is also aware that signs of race, ethnicity, age, and gender are used as external measures of what a certain kind of laborer is capable of or permitted to do. The incorporation of women and children into the circulation of variable capital in nineteenth-century Britain occurred for certain distinctive reasons that Marx is at pains to elaborate upon. This in turn provoked distinctive effects, one of which was to turn the struggle over the length of the working day and the regulation of factory employment into a distinctive struggle to protect women and children from the impacts of capitalism's 'werewolf hunger' for surplus value. The employment of women and children as wage laborers, furthermore, not only provided 'a new foundation for the division of labor' (Marx, 1976, 615), it also posed (and continues to pose) a fundamental challenge to many traditional conceptions of the family and of gender roles:

However terrible and disgusting the dissolution of the old family ties within the capitalist system may appear, large scale industry, by assigning an important part in socially organized processes of production, outside the sphere of the domestic economy, to women, young persons and children of both sexes, does nevertheless create a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of relations between the sexes... It is also obvious that the fact that the collective working group is composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages must under the appropriate conditions turn into a source of humane development, although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalist form, the system works in the opposite direction, and becomes a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery, since here the worker exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the worker.

In remarks on slavery, colonialism, and immigrants (e.g. the Irish into Britain), Marx makes clear that constructions of race and ethnicity are likewise implicated in the circulation process of variable capital. Insofar as gender, race, and ethnicity are all understood as social constructions rather than as essentialist categories, so the effect of their insertion into the circulation of variable capital (including positioning within the internal heterogeneity of collective labor and, hence, within the division of labor and the class system) has to be seen as a powerful force reconstructing them in distinctively capitalist ways.

There are a number of corollaries. Firstly, the productiveness of a person gets reduced to the ability to produce surplus value. To be a productive worker, Marx (1976, 644) ironically notes, 'is therefore not a piece of luck but a misfortune;' the only value that the laborer can have is not determined in terms of work done and useful social effect but through 'a specifically social relation of production ... which stamps the worker as capital's direct means of valorization.' The gap between what the laborer as person might desire and what is demanded of the commodity labor power extracted from his or her body is the nexus of alienation. And while workers as persons may value themselves in a variety of ways depending upon how they understand their productivity, usefulness and value to others, the more restricted social valuation given by their capacity to produce surplus value for capital necessarily remains central to their lives (as even highly educated middle-level managers find out when they, too, are laid off). Exactly what that value is, however, depends on conditions external to the labor process, hinging, therefore, upon the question of exchange.

Secondly, lack of productivity, sickness (or of any kind of pathology) gets defined within this circulation process as inability to go to work, inability to perform adequately within the circulation of variable capital (to produce surplus value) or to abide by its disciplinary rules (the institutional effects elaborated on by Rothman [1971] and Foucault [1995] in the construction of asylums and prisons are already strongly registered in Marx's chapters on 'The Working Day' and the 'So-Called Primitive Accumulation'). Those who cannot (for physical, psychic, or social reasons) continue to function as variable capital, furthermore, fall either into the 'hospital' of the industrial reserve army (sickness is defined under capitalism broadly as inability to work) or else into that undisciplined inferno of the lumpenproletariat (read 'underclass') for whom Marx regrettably had so little sympathy. The circulation of variable capital, being so central to how capitalism operates as a social system, defines roles of employed 'insiders' and unemployed 'outsiders' (often victimized and stigmatized) that have ramifications for society as a whole. This brings us back to the moment of exchange.'

Exchange of variable capital

The commodity which the laborer (*qua* person) exchanges with the capitalist is labor power, the capacity to engage in concrete labor. The basic condition of the contract is supposedly that the capitalist has the right to whatever the laborer produces, has the right to direct the work, determine the labor process, and have free use of the capacity to labor during the hours and at the rate of remuneration stipulated in the contract. The rights of capital are frequently contested and it is interesting to see on what grounds. While capitalists may have full rights to the commodity labor power, they do not have legal rights over the person of the laborer (that would be slavery). Marx insists again and again that this is a fundamental principle of wage labor under capitalism.

The laborer as person should have full rights over his or her own body and should always enter the labor market under conditions of freedom of contract even if, as Marx (1976, 272-3) notes, a worker is 'free in the double sense that as a free individual he can dispose of his labour-power as his own commodity, and that, on the other hand, he has no other commodity for sale, i.e. he is rid of them, he is free of all the objects needed for the realization of his labour power.' But the distinction between laborer as person and labor power has further implications. The capitalist has not the formal right to put the body of the person at risk, for example, and working practices that do so are open to challenge. This principle carries over even into the realm of the cultural and bodily capital (as Bourdieu defines them): hence much of the resistance to de-skilling, redefinitions of skill, etc. Of course, these legalities are continually violated under capitalism and situations frequently do arise in which the body and person of the laborer is taken over under conditions akin to slavery. But Marx's point is that preservation of the integrity and fullness of the laboring person and body within the circulation process of variable capital is the fulcrum upon which contestation and class struggle both within and without the labor process occurs. Even bourgeois legality (as incorporated in the Factory Acts then and in, say, Occupational Safety and Health regulations now) has to concede the difference between the right to the commodity labor power and the non-right to the person who is bearer of that commodity.

This struggle carries over into the determination of the value of variable capital itself, because here the 'neediness' of the body of the laborer forms the datum upon which conditions of contract depend. In *Capital*, Marx, for purposes of analysis, presumes that in a given place and time such needs are fixed and known (only in this way can he get a clear fix upon how capital is produced through surplus value extraction). But Marx well understood that these conditions are never fixed but depend on physical

circumstances (e.g. climate), cultural and social conditions, the long history of class struggle over what is a liveable wage for the laborer, as well as upon a moral conception as to what is or is not tolerable in a civilized society. Consider how Marx (1976, 341) presents the matter in his chapter on 'The Working Day':

During part of the day the vital force must rest, sleep; during another part the man has to satisfy physical needs, to feed, wash and clothe himself. Besides these purely physical limitations, the extension of the working day encounters moral obstacles. The worker needs time in which to satisfy his intellectual and social requirements, and the extent and number of those requirements is conditioned by the general level of civilization. The length of the working day therefore fluctuates within boundaries that are physical and social.

Marx's primary point of critique of capitalism is that it so frequently violates, disfigures, subdues, maims, and destroys the integrity of the laboring body (even in ways that can be dangerous to the further accumulation of capital). It is, furthermore, in terms of the potentialities and possibilities of that laboring body (its 'species being' as Marx [1964 edition] called it in his early work) that the search for an alternative mode of production is initially cast.

But surplus value depends upon the difference between what labor gets (the value of labor power) and what labor creates (the value of the commodity produced). The use value of the commodity labor power to the capitalist is that it can engage in concrete labor in such a way as to embed a given amount of abstract labor in the commodity produced. For the capitalist it is abstract labor that counts and the value of labor power and the concrete practices of the laborer are disciplined and regulated within the circulation of variable capital by the 'laws of value' which take abstract labor as their datum.

Abstract labor — value — is measured through exchange of commodities over space and time and ultimately on the world market. Value is a distinctive spatiotemporal construction depending upon the development of a whole array of spatiotemporal practices (including the territorialization of the earth's surface through property rights and state formation and the development of geographical networks and systems of exchange for money and all commodities, including that of labor power itself). The value of labor power to the capitalist is itself contingent upon the realization of values across a world of socially constructed spatiotemporal political-economic practices. This limits the value that the laborer can acquire in a particular place both in production and in the market. Furthermore, the conditions of exchange of labor power are limited in labor markets both by

systematic biases (gender and racial disparities in remuneration for comparative work are well documented) and by mobilization of an industrial reserve army (either *in situ* or through the migratory movements of both capital and labor searching for 'better' contractual conditions).

It is exactly at this point that the connection between what we now refer to as 'globalization' (see Chapter 4) and the body becomes explicit. But how should this be thought about.? Marx depicts the circulation of variable capital as a 'commodity for commodity' exchange: the worker exchanges the use value of labor power for the use value of the commodities that can be bought for the money wage. Exchanges of this sort are usually highly localized and place-specific. The worker must take his or her body to work each day (even under conditions of telecommuting). But labor power is inserted as a commodity into a Money-Commodity-Money circulation process which easily escapes the spatiotemporal restraints of local labor markets and which makes for capital accumulation on the world stage. Accumulation accelerates turnover time (it shortens working periods, circulation times, etc.) while simultaneously annihilating space through time while preserving certain territorialities (of the factory and the nation state) as domains of surveillance and social control. Spatiotemporality defined at one scale (that of 'globalization' and all its associated meanings) intersects with bodies that function at a much more localized scale. Translation across spatiotemporal scales is here accomplished by the intersection of two qualitatively different circulation processes, one of which is defined through the long historical geography of capital accumulation while the other depends upon the production and reproduction of the laboring body in a far more restricted space. This leads to some serious disjunctions, of the sort that Hareven (1982) identifies in her analysis of *Family Time and Industrial Time*. But as Hareven goes on to show, these two spatiotemporal systems, though qualitatively different from each other, have to be made 'cogredient' or 'compossible' (see Harvey, 1996, for a fuller explication of these terms) with each other. Thus do links between the 'local' and the 'global' become established. Different bodily qualities and modes of valuation (including the degree of respect for the bodily integrity and dignity of the laborer) achieved in different places are brought into a spatially competitive environment through the circulation of capital. Uneven geographical development of the bodily practices and sensibilities of those who sell their labor power becomes one of the defining features of class struggle as waged by both capital and labor.

Put in more direct contemporary terms, the creation of unemployment through down-sizing, the redefinitions of skills and remunerations for skills, the intensification of labor processes and of autocratic systems of surveillance, the increasing despotism of orchestrated detailed divisions of

labor, the insertion of immigrants (or, what amounts to the same thing, the migration of capital to alternative labor sources), and the coerced competitive struggle between different bodily practices and modes of valuation achieved under different historical and cultural conditions, all contribute to the uneven geographical valuation of laborers as persons. The manifest effects upon the bodies of laborers who live lives embedded in the circulation of variable capital is powerful indeed. Sweatshops in New York mimic similar establishments in Guatemala and subject the workers incorporated therein to a totalizing and violently repressive regime of body disciplines. The construction of specific spatiotemporal relations through the circulation of capital likewise constructs a connection between the designer shirts we wear upon our backs, the Nike shoes we sport, and the oriental carpets upon which we walk, and the grossly exploited labor of tens of thousands of women and children in Central America, Indonesia, and Pakistan (just to name a few of the points of production of such commodities).

The moment of consumption

The laborer does not only lie in the path of variable capital as producer and exchanger. He/she also lies in that circulation process as consumer and reproducer of self (both individually and socially). Once possessed of money the laborer is endowed with all the autonomy that attaches to any market practice:

It is the worker himself who converts the money into whatever use-values he desires; it is he who buys commodities as he wishes and, as the *owner of money*, as the buyer of goods, he stands in precisely the same relationship to the sellers of goods as any other buyer. Of course, the conditions of his existence - and the limited amount of money he can earn - compel him to make his purchases from a fairly restricted selection of goods. But some variation is possible as we can see from the fact that newspapers, for example, form part of the essential purchases of the urban English worker. He can save and hoard a little. Or else he can squander his money on drink. Even so, he acts as a free agent; he must pay his own way; he is responsible to himself for the way he spends his wages. (Marx, 1976, 1,033)

This is an example of Marx's tacit appeal to 'positionality in relationship to capital accumulation' as a practical definition of class relations. As the focus shifts so does the meaning of class positionality. The laborer has limited freedom to choose not only a personal lifestyle but also, through the collective exercise of demand preferences, he/she can express his/her desires (individually and collectively) and thereby influence the capitalist choice of what to produce. Elaboration on that idea permits us to see, as we

look at the circulation of variable capital as a whole, that what is true for the individual laborer is rather more limited when looked at from the standpoint of the collectivity:

The capitalist class is constantly giving to the working class drafts, in the form of money, on a portion of the product produced by the latter and appropriated by the former. The workers give these drafts back just as constantly to the capitalists, and thereby withdraw from the latter their allotted share of their own product... The individual consumption of the worker, whether it occurs inside or outside the workshop, inside or outside the labour process, remains an aspect of the production and reproduction of capital ... From the standpoint of society, then, the working class, even when it stands outside the direct labour process, is just as much an appendage of capital as the lifeless instruments of labour are.

(Marx, 1976, 713, 719)

Deeper consideration of what amounts to a 'company store' relation between capital and labor is instructive. The disposable income of the laborers forms an important mass of effective demand for capitalist output (this is the relation that Marx explores at great length in Volume 2 of *Capital*). Accumulation for accumulation's sake points towards either an increasing mass of laborers to whom necessities can be sold or a changing standard of living of the laborers (it usually means both). The production of new needs, the opening up of entirely new product lines that define different lifestyles and consumer habits, is introduced as an important means of crisis avoidance and crisis resolution. We can then see more clearly how it is that variable capital has to be construed as a circulation process (rather than as a single causal arrow) for it is through the payment of wages that the disposable income to buy the product of the capitalists is partially assured.

But all of this presumes 'rational consumption' on the part of the laborer - rational, that is, from the standpoint of capital accumulation (Marx, 1978 edition, 591). The organization, mobilization, and channeling of human desires, the active political engagement with tactics of persuasion, surveillance, and coercion, become part of the consumptuary apparatus of capitalism, in turn producing all manner of pressures on the body as a site of and a performative agent for 'rational consumption' for further accumulation (cf. Henry Ford's obsession with training social workers to monitor the budgets of his workers).

But the terms of 'rational consumption' are by no means fixed, in part because of the inevitable destabilizing effects of perpetual revolutions in capitalist technologies and products (revolutions which affect the household economy as well as the factory), but also because, given the

discretionary element in the worker's use of disposable income, there is as much potential for social struggle over lifestyle and associated bodily practices as there is in the realm of production itself. Struggles over the social wage - over, for example, the extent, direction, and distributional effects of state expenditures - have become critical in establishing the baseline of what might be meant by a proper standard of living in a 'civilized' country. Struggles over the relation between 'housework' and 'labor in the market' and the gender allocation of tasks within domestic settings also enter into the picture (cf. Marx's 1976 edition, 518, commentary on how the importance of domestic labor gets 'concealed by official political economy' and the revived debate in the 1970s on the role of housework in relation to the circulation of variable capital).

This moment in the circulation of variable capital, though not totally absent in Marx's account, is not strongly emphasized. With the United States (and, presumably, much of the advanced capitalist world) in mind, Lowe (1995, 67) now argues that:

Lifestyle is the social relations of consumption in late capitalism, as distinct from class as the social relations of production. The visual construction and presentation of self in terms of consumption relations has by now overshadowed the class relations of production in the workplace ... [Consumption] is itself dynamically developed by the design and production of changing product characteristics, the juxtaposition of image and sign in lifestyle and format, and the segmentation of consumer markets.

This suggests a double contradiction within the advanced capitalist world (and a nascent contradiction within developing countries). First, by submitting unquestioningly and without significant struggle to the dictates of capital in production (or by channeling struggle solely to the end of increasing disposable income), workers may open for themselves wider terrains of differentiating choice (social or individual) with respect to lifestyle, structures of feeling, household organization, reproductive activities, expressions of desire, pursuit of pleasures, etc. within the moment of consumption. This does not automatically deliver greater happiness and satisfaction. As Marx (1965 edition, 33) notes:

[Although the pleasures of the labourer have increased, the social gratification which they afford has fallen in comparison with the increased pleasures of the capitalist. Our wants and pleasures have their origin in society; we therefore measure them in relation to society; we do not measure them in relation to the objects which serve for their gratification. Since they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature.

Conversely, by locking workers into certain conceptions of lifestyle, consumer habits, and desire, capitalists can more easily secure compliance

within the labor process while capturing distinctive and proliferating market niches for their sales.

Struggles arise between how workers individually or collectively exercise their consumer and lifestyle choices and how capitalist forces try to capture and guide those choices towards rational consumption for sustained accumulation. Marx does not scrutinize such conflicts but no particular difficulty attaches to integrating them into his framework. Plainly, the process is marked by extraordinary heterogeneity at the same time as it is fraught with instability. For example, whole communities of lifestyle (such as those shaped by working classes in industrial settings or by distinctive cultural traditions) may be created within the circulation of variable capital only ultimately to be dissolved (even in the face of considerable resistance) by the same processes that led to their initial formation. The recent history of deindustrialization is full of examples of this.

A wide range of bodily practices and cultural choices with respect to consumption can in principle be embedded in the circulation of variable capital. The range depends, of course, upon the amount of discretionary income in the laborer's possession (and, plainly, the billion or so workers living on less than a dollar a day cannot exercise anywhere near the amount of influence as well-paid workers in the advanced capitalist countries). Variable capital does not determine the specific nature of consumer choices or even of consumer culture, though it certainly works to powerful effect. This means that production must internalize powerful effects of heterogeneous cultural traditions and consumer choices, whether registered collectively through political action (to establish a 'social wage' through welfare programs) or individually through personal consumption choices. It is in this sense that it is meaningful to speak of the moments of production and consumption as a matter of internal relations, the one with the other.

The circulation of variable capital as a whole

Consider, then, the figure of the laborer caught within the rules of circulation of variable capital as a whole. The experiential world, the physical presence, the subjectivity and the consciousness of that person are partially if not predominantly forged in the fiery crucible of the labor process, the passionate pursuit of values and competitive advantage in labor markets, and in the perpetual desires and glittery frustrations of commodity culture. They are also forged in the matrix of time-space relations between persons largely hidden behind the exchange and movement of things. The evident instabilities within the circulation of variable capital coupled with the different windows on the world constructed through moments of production, exchange, and consumption place the

laboring body largely at the mercy of a whole series of forces outside of any one individual's control. It is in this sense that the laboring body must be seen as an internal relation of the historically and geographically achieved processes of capital circulation.

When, however, we consider the accumulation process as a whole, we also see that 'the maintenance and reproduction of the working class remains a necessary condition for the reproduction of capital.' The working class is, in effect, held captive within a 'company store' relation to capital accumulation that renders it an appendage of capital at all moments of its existence. The capitalist, in short, 'produces the worker as wage laborer.' Marx (1973 edition, 717-18) continues:

The capital given in return for labour-power is converted into means of subsistence which have to be consumed to reproduce the muscles, nerves, bones and brains of existing workers, and to bring new workers into existence. Within the limits of what is absolutely necessary, therefore, the individual consumption of the working class is the reconversion of the means of subsistence given by capital in return for labour-power into fresh labour power which capital is then again able to exploit. It is the production and reproduction of the capitalist's most indispensable means of production: the worker.

The issue of reproduction is then immediately posed. Marx was less than forthcoming on this question leaving it, as the capitalist does, 'to the worker's drives for self preservation and propagation.' The only rule he proposes is that the laboring family, denied access to the means of production, would strive in times of prosperity as in depression, to accumulate the only form of 'property' it possessed: labor power itself. Hence arises a connexion between expanded accumulation and 'maximum growth of population - of living labor capacities' (Marx, 1973 edition, 608).

But it is also clear that as laborers acquire property on their own account or move to acquire cultural as well as 'human capital' in the form of skills, that this equation will likely change and generate different reproductive strategies, together with different objectives for social provision through class struggle within the working classes of the world. Furthermore, Marx's occasional commentaries on 'the family' as a socially constructed unit of reproduction (coupled with Engels's treatise on *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* with its emphasis upon division of labor between the sexes and propagation of the species) indicates a material point at which questions of sexuality and gendering intersect with political economy. Elaborations by socialist feminists in recent years here assume great importance. If the circulation of variable capital as a whole is about the reproduction of the working class in general, then the

question of the conditions of its biological and social reproduction must be posed in ways that acknowledge such complexities (cf. the controversy between Butler, 1998, and Fraser, 1997).

Potentialities for reaction and revolt against capital get defined from the different perspectives of production, exchange, consumption, or reproduction. Nevertheless, in aggregate we can still see how the pernicious capitalistic rules that regulate the process of circulation of variable capital as a whole operate as a constructive/destructive force (both materially and representationally) on laboring bodies across these different moments. Capital continuously strives to shape bodies to its own requirements, while at the same time internalizing within its *modus operandi* effects of shifting and endlessly open bodily desires, wants, needs, and social relations (sometimes overtly expressed as collective class, community, or identity-based struggles) on the part of the laborer. This process frames many facets of social life, such as 'choices' about sexuality and biological reproduction or of culture and ways of life even as those 'choices' (if such they really are) get more generally framed by the social order and its predominant legal, social, and political codes, and disciplinary practices (including those that regulate sexuality).

Study of the circulation of variable capital cannot, in and of itself, tell us everything we need to know. It is, to begin with, just one subset of a slew of different circulation processes that make up the circulation of capital in general. Productive, finance, landed, and merchant capitals all have their own modalities of motion and the circulation of bourgeois revenues generates complex relations between 'needs,' 'wants,' and 'luxuries' that affect lifestyle choices, status symbols, and fashions as set by the rich, powerful, and famous. These set relative standards for the laboring poor since, as Marx also insists, the sense of well-being is a comparative rather than an absolute measure and the gap between rich and poor is just as important as the absolute conditions of sustenance. Furthermore, the mediating activities of states (as registered through the circulation of tax revenues and state-backed debt) in determining social wages and setting 'civilized' and 'morally acceptable' standards of education, health, housing, etc. play crucial roles on the world stage of capital accumulation and in setting conditions within which the circulation of variable capital can occur. The point here is not to insist on any complete or rigorous accounting - either theoretical or historical - of these intersecting processes. But an understanding of the conditions of circulation of variable capital is indisputably a necessary condition for understanding what happens to bodies in contemporary society.

There are innumerable elaborations, modifications, reformulations, and even outright challenges to Marx's limited but tightly argued theory

of the production of the laboring body and of individual and collective subjectivities. There is much that is lacking (or only lightly touched upon) in Marx's schema, including the sexual and erotic, the gendering and racial identifications of bodies, the psychoanalytic and representational, the linguistic and the rhetorical, the imaginary and the mythical (to name just a few of the obvious absences). The roles of gender within the spatial and social divisions of labor have been the focus, for example, of a considerable range of studies in recent years (see, e.g., Hanson and Pratt, 1994) and the question of race relations or ethnic/racial discriminations within segmented labor markets has likewise been brought under the microscope (see, e.g., Goldberg, 1993) in ways that have given much greater depth and purpose to Marx's (1976 edition, 414) observation that 'labour in a white skin cannot emancipate itself where it is branded in a black skin.' So there are plenty of other processes - metabolic, ecological, political, social, and psychological - that play key roles in relation to bodily practices and possibilities.

But these absences cannot be cured by an erasure of either the method or substance of Marx's approach. The latter is something to build upon rather than to negate. The human body is a battleground within which and around which conflicting socio-ecological forces of valuation and representation are perpetually at play. Marx provides a rich conceptual apparatus to understand processes of bodily production and agency under capitalism. Just as important, he provides an appropriate epistemology (historical-geographical as well as dialectical) to approach the question of how bodies get produced, how they become the signifiers and referents of meanings, and how internalized bodily practices might in turn modify the processes of their self-production under contemporary conditions of capitalistic globalization.