

What are the frontiers to which the body takes us? What are the reasons that lead us to write about the body? Why is the body a recurrent theme throughout the history of humanity? And, after all, what is the body capable of?

The body is a disconcerting enigma, whether as a subject of science, with regard to its physical or organic dimensions; or as an instrument of the soul or in the body-soul relationship; or as a question imposed on thinking; or as a place for fighting the world; or as discursive and non-discursive practices. There are many questions because the body is vulnerable to the drifting nature of the problems.

Among the articles forming this dossier of *Interface*, attention is drawn to the diversity, plurality and complexity of the body as a study subject, through different conceptualizations. These start out from a common question: people produce and attribute meanings to the body. And the physical, esthetic, symbolic and affective modifications to the body imply transformations in caring for it and in relationships with others. Ultimately, the alterations or interventions that result from the desire to change, or from what we could call contingencies, modify the ways of seeing and perceiving life.

Just like a mosaic, the three texts are fragments pasted into a common structure, and therefore there are spaces between them that, for some readers, will represent wide separations and for others, narrow and tenuous separations. But we will have to stand back from the texts, just like we would do to appreciate a mosaic, if we want to discern the limits of the image.

The text **The production of meanings regarding body image** draws our attention to topics that the author identifies as “New public health questions”, such as the popularization of plastic surgery, biotechnology, aestheticization of health and body transformation by means of implants and prostheses. It also draws our attention to the impossibility for a single discipline to understand the complexity of the focuses allowed by the body, given that it would be between “the ego and society”, “nature and culture” and “the biological and the symbolic”. For the author to develop his arguments, he refers to studies within psychology, psychoanalysis, anthropology, sociology and philosophy in which the body is a subject of reflection and analysis.

**Body, sex and subversion: reflections on two queer theoreticians** presents the main ideas of two queer theoreticians and their definitions of sex and gender, in order to discuss the importance and place of the body. The authors deal with a topic that has been little explored in Brazil but which has especially mobilized debate within the French community, particularly because this topic turns readers upside down or “feet uppermost” if they are not attentive to the discussion, thereby provoking a certain degree of discomfort and uneasiness, since both of them seek to deconstruct the practices and discursive knowledge regarding the body.

**Reinventing life: a qualitative study on the cultural meanings attributed by amputees to body reconstruction through implantation of prosthetics** results from an investigation on the cultural meanings that amputees attribute to their bodies and their lives. The sample was defined by means of two criteria: having an amputation that was acquired through surgical intervention and being in the process of adapting to a prosthesis; or being a recent user. Addition or subtraction of body parts requires individuals to make adaptations that necessarily involve reassessment of the meanings of their own bodies.

With the aim of encouraging readers to peruse these texts, I would say that the articles have extra value through their thematic originality, capacity to unsettle and evocation of dilemmas: reinvention of the body; sex as a central subject of policy and governability; the body as flesh; the biological body; body and nature; technologies that change functions and behavioral patterns; mutant bodies; the body as a product of the subjectivity that permeates individuals, collective groups and institutions; passion, desire, frustration, loss, death and life. These are questions that run through the three texts.

However, we cannot forget the limits and possibilities of the authors’ own views on their samples and analysis possibilities, or else we might lose sight of other ways of exploring the virtual elements than provoke the body.

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