

BODY

For centuries, scientists, philosophers and academics have dealt with the connection between body and mind and asked themselves endless questions. The French philosopher René Descartes believed that the brain as the highest authority controls the body. He represented the theory of body and soul as separate units, so thinking is also possible without a body.

The French philosopher Michel Foucault sees the body as determined by social power structures. "The human body enters a machinery of power that permeates, dissects and reassembles it. The discipline thus fabricates subjugated and practiced bodies, submissive and docile bodies." For Foucault, the body is the surface on which power inscribes itself.

According to the philosopher Judith Butler, physical reality is also shaped by how we talk about something, so body and mind are subject to cultural norms. Butler, a feminist herself, rejects the dualism that links in with Descartes, between supposedly unchanging nature (sex) and culture (gender) - in other words, ultimately between body and mind. This upholds the separation between "man" and "woman" and the associated power relations. The body is thus never an autonomous body capable of acting, but always dependent on discourse and its norms. Who falls out of the norms and does not fit into the matrix cannot be an (intelligent) subject. For them it's about rethinking our bodies.

The question of physicality is a completely new one today, since surgical interventions or other technologies have made it possible to change the body in a way that was previously unimaginable. How do I perceive my body? Can body perception and awareness learn to build a safe and positive relationship with one's own body and to feel comfortable in one's own body?

The new media also raises the question of what role the body plays on the Internet.

Discussion plan: Body

- Are the body and the "I" one and the same?
- Can knowledge of consciousness and mind be gained through the exploration of our body?
- Can thoughts influence our body?
- How do we deal with our body?
- How important is our body to us?

Discussion plan: Body and Internet

- What role does the body play on the Internet?
- Do the majority of users make a difference between real and virtual bodies?
- What does the Internet do with our body?
- Is it possible to visualize the body through linguistic condensations and emotions on the Internet?
- Do real representations of the body predominate on the Internet?
- Does the body function as a medium of self-expression in cyberspace?
- Is the virtual being preferred to the real being?
- Since people equip themselves with virtual avatars, do they distance themselves from their biological physicality/ body?
- Can one recreate oneself in parallel worlds?
- Does the user of the Internet have a body?
- Can sexuality be detached from the real body on the Internet?
- What is the significance of personal identity in virtual space?
- What is the meaning of personal identity in the Internet?
- What is left of the body in the Internet?

Activity: Find a new physical appearance for yourself

Human beings can make statements through their physical appearance. Characteristics are not only clothing, style, colors, jewelry or tattoos, they can serve as carrier, signals this also applies to the sex.

Is it possible to separate from your body on the Internet? Does the biological sex also determine how the person acts and is perceived in society?

In online worlds such as Second Life, the possibilities of real possibilities of expression are often increased - spaces, forms and possibilities are found through which one can distance oneself from one's biological physicality and recreate oneself in a virtual parallel world.

Not only external changes of the body play a role, but also new inventions in the social context - virtual worlds are an opportunity for the finding of identity of the user. This may include a change of sex to avoid stereotypical opinions. Reinvent yourself; draw an avatar, draw yourself as a fantastic character on the Internet.

Discussion plan: Body

- Can thoughts influence our body?
- - What does the Internet do to our body?
- - What is the significance of personal identity in virtual space?
- - What is left of the body in the Internet?

Literature

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