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Beyond The Body Proper: Reading The Anthropology Of Material Life (Body, Commodity, Text)



Synopsis

Over the past several decades, scholars in both the social sciences and humanities have moved beyond the idea that there is a "body proper": a singular, discrete biological organism with an individual psyche. They have begun to perceive embodiment as dynamic rather than static, as experiences that vary over time and across the world as they are shaped by discourses, institutions, practices, technologies, and ideologies. What has emerged is a multiplicity of bodies, inviting a great many disciplinary points of view and modes of interpretation. The forty-seven readings presented in this volume range from classic works of social theory, history, and ethnography to more recent investigations into historical and contemporary modes of embodiment. *Beyond the Body Proper* includes nine sections conceptually organized around themes such as everyday life, sex and gender, and science. Each section is preceded by interpretive commentary by the volume's editors. Within the collection are articles and book excerpts focused on bodies using tools and participating in rituals, on bodies walking and eating, and on the female circumcision controversy, as well as pieces on medical classifications, spirit possession, the commodification of body parts, in vitro fertilization, and an artist/anatomist's "plastination" of cadavers for display. Materialist, phenomenological, and feminist perspectives on embodiment appear along with writings on interpretations of pain and the changing meanings of sexual intercourse. Essays on these topics and many others challenge Eurocentric assumptions about the body as they speak to each other and to the most influential contemporary trends in the human sciences. With selections by: Henry Abelove, Walter Benjamin, Janice Boddy, John Boswell, Judith Butler, Caroline Walker Bynum, Stuart Cosgrove, Michel de Certeau, Gilles Deleuze, Alice Domurat Dreger, Barbara Duden, Friedrich Engels, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Judith Farquhar, Marcel Granet, Felix Guattari, Ian Hacking, Robert Hertz, Patricia Leyland Kaufert, Arthur Kleinman, Shigehisa Kuriyama, Jean Langford, Bruno Latour, Margaret Lock, Emily Martin, Karl Marx, Marcel Mauss, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Nancy K. Miller, Lisa Jean Moore, John D. O'Neil, Aihwa Ong, Mariella Pandolfi, Susan Pedersen, Gregory M. Pflugfelder, Rayna Rapp, Nancy Scheper-Hughes, Kristofer Schipper, Matthew Schmidt, Peter Stallybrass, Michael Taussig, Charis Thompson, E.P. Thompson, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, Victor Turner, Terence Turner, Jose van Dijck, Keith Wailoo, Brad Weiss, Allon White

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