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The Culture of the Body: Genealogies of Modernity (The Body, In Theory: Histories of Cultural Materialism)

Dalia Judovitz

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What is the body? How was it culturally constructed, conceived, and cultivated before and after the advent of rationalism and modern science? This interdisciplinary study elaborates a cultural genealogy of the body and its legacies to modernity by tracing its crucial redefinition from a live anatomical entity to disembodied, mechanical and virtual analogs.
The study ranges from Baroque, pre-Cartesian interpretations of body and embodiment, to the Cartesian elaboration of ontological difference and mind-body dualism, and it concludes with the parodic and violent aftermath of this legacy to the French Enlightenment. It engages work by philosophical authors such as Montaigne, Descartes and La Mettrie, as well as literary works by d'Urfé, Corneille and the Marquis de Sade. The examination of sexuality and the emergence of sexual difference as a dominant mode of embodiment are central to the book's overall design. The work is informed by philosophical accounts of the body (Nietzsche, Foucault, Merleau-Ponty), by feminist theory (Butler, Irigaray, Bordo), as well as by literary and cultural historians (Scarry, Stewart, Bynum, etc.) and historians of science (Canguilhem, Pagel, and Temkin), among others. It will appeal to scholars of literature, philosophy, French studies, critical theory, feminist theory, cultural historians and historians of science and technology.
Dalia Judovitz is Professor of French, Emory University. She is also author of *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit* and *Subjectivity and Representation in Decartes: The Origins of Modernity*.

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