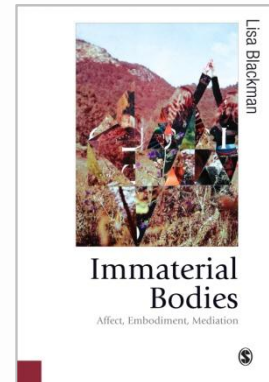


Immaterial Bodies

Affect, Embodiment, Mediation

Lisa Blackman *Goldsmiths College*



In this unique contribution, Blackman focuses upon the affective capacities of bodies, human and non-human as well as addressing the challenges of the affective turn within the social sciences. Fresh and convincing, this book uncovers the paradoxes and tensions in work in affect studies by focusing on practices and experiences, including voice hearing, suggestion, hypnosis, telepathy, the placebo effect, rhythm and related phenomena. Questioning the traditional idea of mind over matter, as well as discussing the danger of setting up a false distinction between the two, this book makes for an invaluable addition within cultural theory and the recent turn to affect.

In a powerful and engaging matter, Blackman discusses the immaterial body across the neurosciences, physiology, media and cultural studies, body studies, artwork, performance, psychology and psychoanalysis. Interdisciplinary in its core, this book is a must for everyone seeking a dynamic and thought provoking analysis of culture and communication today.

Contents

Preface / The Subject of Affect : Bodies, Process, Becoming / The Crowd And The Problem of Personality / Mental Touch: Media Technologies and the Problem of Telepathy / The Re-enchantment of Materialism: Affect and New Materialisms / Affect, Energy, Rhythm and Transmission / The Problem of Automatism: Divided Attention, Voice Hearing and Machinic Vision / Neuroscience: The Bicameral Mind and the Double Brain / Epilogue / References / Index

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'A wonderfully rich work which authoritatively outlines and defines the present moment in studies of the body. Essential reading for all those engaged in the 'turn to affect', curious about its genealogy, or seeking new inspiration from those strange precursors - suggestion, voice hearing, the paranormal, personality, doubles and hauntings. Lisa Blackman elegantly explains the history of our current ruminations and reaches important new conclusions for investigations of subjectivity, materiality, movement, individuality and entanglement'

- Margaret Wetherell, Emeritus Professor of Psychology, Open University, UK

'If the social and cultural sciences are to move beyond slogans in their engagement with matters corporeal, they need to engage seriously with what the contemporary life sciences are discovering about the complex enmeshing of bodies, brains, minds and milieu. Lisa Blackman's provocative new book shows how innovative and how productive such a dialogue could be'

-Nikolas Rose, Professor of Sociology, Kings College London, UK

'From its critical review of affect theory to its engagement with the reenchantment of materialism to its attention to voice-hearing and neuroscience, Immaterial Bodies: Affect, Embodiment, Mediation is a must read. Lisa Blackman has found a brilliant way to reintroduce mediation into a wide range of discussions ongoing in contemporary critical theory. Immaterial Bodies especially will make a difference in how we conceptualize mediated embodiment'

-Patricia Ticineto Clough, Professor of Sociology, Queens College and The Graduate Center CUNY

'Lisa Blackman's book is a fascinating investigation of aspects of the genealogy of approaches to affect and embodiment from the late nineteenth century to the present and an original intervention in current debates over the 'turn to affect''

-Ruth Leys, Henry Wiesenfeld Professor of Humanities, Johns Hopkins University, Maryland, US

'Imagine a sociology freed from its conventional preoccupation with "boundary-making" to focus on thresholds, potentialities and flows. Imagine a psychology that takes primary inspiration from the study of suggestion, telepathy and other such nonconscious, nonrational processes. In Immaterial Bodies, Lisa Blackman positions the transmission of affect as the central question of contemporary sociology and psychology, and brings out how this question was also of key concern to the founders of these disciplines. Her recuperation of the voices of William James and Gabriel Tarde, among others, sets the stage for a wide ranging and deeply illuminating conversation with current theorists over topics ranging from mental touch to automaticity. It emerges that it is not only bodies that matter, for the immaterial (the psychic, the spiritual, the media) matters too, both to the formation of the subject and to the foundation (and future) of the human sciences. This book presents a refreshing rebuke to the crude materialism and neuroreductionism that has become so prevalent in recent years, and throws open a window on the trans-subjective'

- David Howes, Concordia University, editor of Empire of the Senses and The Sixth Sense Reader, among other works

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