

Embodiment and experience

The existential ground of culture and self

University

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College

in Medicine,

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anthropology,
giving public
importance for many

health care in
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primary care

Edited by

Thomas J. Csordas

Case Western Reserve University



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Introduction: the body as representation and being-in-the-world

Thomas J. Csordas

Much has been written about the body in recent years. Beginning in the early 1970s, and with increased energy in the late 1980s, the body has assumed a lively presence on the anthropological scene, and on the stage of interdisciplinary cultural studies. Feminist theory, literary criticism, history, comparative religion, philosophy, sociology, and psychology are all implicated in the move toward the body. Anthropologists with interests ranging across medical and psychological anthropology, the anthropology of space, material culture, practice theory, performance theory, critical theory, and even cognitive anthropology have problematized the body in recent writings.

In her keynote address to the 1990 annual meeting of the American Ethnological Association dedicated to the theme of "The Body in Society and Culture," Emily Martin suggested that although the widespread interest in the body may be accounted for by the contemporary centrality of the body in Western social forms, it may also be due to the contemporary historical moment in which "we are undergoing fundamental changes in how our bodies are organized and experienced" (1992: 121). Citing Lévi-Strauss's observation that academic attention seems to become focused on phenomena precisely when they are ending, she suggests that we are seeing "the end of one kind of body and the beginning of another kind of body" (ibid.: 121).

Recent scholarship in the social sciences and humanities would appear to support Martin's claim: The kind of body to which we have been accustomed in scholarly and popular thought alike is typically assumed to be a fixed, material entity subject to the empirical rules of biological science, existing prior to the mutability and flux of cultural change and diversity and characterized by unchangeable inner necessities. The new body that has begun to be identified can no longer be considered as a brute fact of nature. In the wake of Foucault (e.g. 1979, 1980), a chorus of critical statements has arisen to the effect that the body is "an entirely problematic notion" (Vernant 1989: 20), that "the body has a history" in that it behaves in new ways at particular historical moments (Bynum 1989:

biology itself, as is evident in recent feminist theory that eliminates "passivity" as an intrinsic characteristic of the female body, and reworks both the distinction between sex and gender (Haraway 1991: 197-8), and the decoupling of female sexual pleasure from the act of conception (Jacobus 1990: 11, 22, 26; Bordo 1990: 103; Haraway 1990, Doane 1990; Keller 1990). With biology no longer a monolithic objectivity, the body is transformed from object to agent (Haraway 1991: 198; see also A. Frank 1991: 48). The body as an experiencing agent is evident in recent social science work on the experience of illness (Devisch and Gailly 1985; Kleinman 1988; Murphy 1987; Lock and Dunk 1987; Gordon 1990; Pandolfi 1991; Ots 1991; Kirmayer 1989, 1992; Good 1994), body image (G. Frank 1986), pain (Good et al. 1992), religious healing (Csordas 1990, 1993, 1994; Roseman 1991; Desjarlais 1992), and ethnographic practice itself (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987; Jackson 1989; Stoller 1989), as well as in the chapters included in the present volume.

The contemporary cultural transformation of the body can be conceived not only in terms of consumer culture and biological essentialism, but also in discerning an ambiguity in the boundaries of corporeality itself. Haraway points to the boundaries between animal and human, between animal/human and machine, and between the physical and non-physical (1991: 151-4). Feher, in his introduction to the influential *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, places the boundary between human and animal or automaton (machine) at one end of a continuum whose opposite pole is defined by the boundary between human and deity (1989: 11). Examining what takes place at these cultural boundaries is critical, given the circumstances of corporeal flux and bodily transformation sketched above. With respect to religion, the question goes beyond the distinction between natural and supernatural bodies, or between natural corporeality and divine incorporeality, to the question posed by Feher of the kind of body that members of a culture endow themselves with in order to come into relation with the kind of deity they posit to themselves (1989: 13). If we are to assert that the body is a cultural phenomenon, religion is one domain of culture that offers evidence rich enough to help us grasp the significance of that assertion, and it is thus no coincidence that several of the chapters in the present volume take up the relation between religious experience and embodiment.

Another inescapable transformation of the body in the contemporary world is being wrought by the incredible proliferation of political violence of all types: ethnic violence, sexual violence, self-destructive violence, domestic violence, and gang violence. As much as any of the transformations sketched above, this one has to do with the very meaning of being human as being a body that can experience pain and self-alienation. From Scarry's (1985) examination of the dissolution of self in torture to Feldman's (1991) portrait of the denatured body that exists in the climate of

permanent violence in Northern Ireland; from Scheper-Hughes's (1992) analysis of unarticulated bodily resistance to hegemonic oppression among impoverished residents of Brazilian slums, and again to the madness of "ethnic cleansing" and rape as a political weapon that characterizes the former Yugoslavia at the time of the writing of this introduction, the body appears as the threatened vehicle of human being and dignity. The moral and political urgency of this phenomenon is evident in the work of several contributors to the present volume.

Along with its critical and pragmatic implications for world civilization, the theoretical implications of the scholarly discovery that the body has a history and is as much a cultural phenomenon as it is a biological entity are potentially enormous. Also, if indeed the body is passing through a critical historical moment, this moment also offers a critical methodological opportunity to reformulate theories of culture, self, and experience, with the body at the center of analysis. The aims of this volume are to draw out some of those theoretical implications and to seize this methodological opportunity. Neither of these aims is to be taken for granted, since among anthropologists facing the "obsolescence of the body" and a related "death of the subject" the jury is still out as to whether the body will persist as a central analytic theme, the "existential ground of culture and self" (Csordas 1990), or whether interest in the body is merely an intellectual fad. At the 1990 meeting of the American Ethnological Society, dedicated to the theme of "the body in society and culture," it was evident that many participants were using the term "body" without much sense of "bodiliness" in their analyses, as if body were little more than a synonym for self or person. This tendency carries the dual dangers of dissipating the force of using the body as a methodological starting point, and of objectifying bodies as things devoid of intentionality and intersubjectivity. It thus misses the opportunity to add sentience and sensibility to our notions of self and person, and to insert an added dimension of materiality to our notions of culture and history.

What we are calling for here is a more radical role for the body than that typical in the "anthropology of the body" that has been with us since the 1970s. In studies that fall under that rubric, the body is an object or theme of analysis, often the source of symbols taken up in the discourse of cultural domains such as religion and social structure. Without attempting a bibliographical essay, I will summarize the approaches characteristic of the anthropology of the body in order then to distinguish a methodological standpoint more tailored to the above-stated aims.¹

A premise of much of this literature is what we might call an "analytic body" that invites a discrete focus on perception, practice, parts, processes, or products. By perception I mean the cultural uses and conditioning of the

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five external senses plus proprioception (our sense of being in a body and oriented in space), as well what Kant (1978 [1800]) called the inner sense of intuition or sensibility. Practice includes everything that falls under Mauss's (1950) classic notion of techniques of the body – swimming, dancing, washing, ritual breathing in meditation, posture, the variations in batting stance among baseball players – in which the body is at once tool, agent, and object. Parts of our anatomy such as hair, face, genitals, limbs, or hands have long been of interest to anthropologists for the social and symbolic significance they bear. Bodily processes like breathing (not as a technique but, for example, as the sigh), blushing, menstruation, birth, sex, crying, and laughing are of interest in their cultural variation. Finally, a great deal of cultural meaning can be distilled from the treatment of body products such as blood, semen, sweat, tears, feces, urine, and saliva.

Other literature in this field concentrates on the “topical body,” that is, an understanding of the body in relation to specific domains of cultural activity. The body and health, the body and political domination, the body and trauma, the body and religion, the body and gender, the body and self, the body and emotion, the body and technology are examples. The generation of abundant literatures on all these topical bodies has been quite recent and quite rapid, such that the body's existential ubiquity has become overwhelmingly apparent in scholarly production. This postmodern proliferation itself again begs the essentialist question of whether there is in fact any such thing as *the* body – whether the body is more than the sum of its topics. The paradoxical truth, in fact, appears to be that if there is an essential characteristic of embodiment, it is indeterminacy (Merleau-Ponty 1962; Csordas 1993).

Finally, there is what we might call the “multiple body,” with the number of bodies dependent on how many of its aspects one cares to recognize. Mary Douglas (1973) called attention to the “two bodies,” referring to the social and physical aspects of the body. Her distinction roughly reiterates that between mind and body, culture and biology. More precisely, Douglas differentiates between the use we make of our bodies and the way our bodies function, and emphasizes the way elements of physiology and anatomy can be taken up into the symbolic domain. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock (1987) give us “three bodies,” including the individual body, the social body, and the body politic. The first refers to the lived experience of the body as self, the second to representational uses of the body as a symbol of nature, society, and culture, and the third to the regulation and control of bodies. John O'Neill (1985) ups the ante to “five bodies.” For O'Neill, the world's body refers to the human tendency to anthropomorphize the cosmos. The social body refers to the common analogy of social institutions to bodily organs and the use of bodily processes such as ingestion of food to

define social categories. The body politic refers to models of city or country as the body writ large, forming the basis of phrases such as "head" of state or "members" of the body politic. The consumer body refers to the creation and commercialization of bodily needs such as for sex, cigarettes, labor-saving devices, or cars, a process in which doubt is created about the self in order to sell grace, spontaneity, vivaciousness, confidence, etc. The medical body refers to the process of medicalization in which an increasing number of body processes are subject to medical control and technology.

To greater or lesser degrees all these approaches study the *body* and its transformations while still taking *embodiment* for granted. In my view this distinction between the body as either empirical thing or analytic theme, and embodiment as the existential ground of culture and self is critical to capitalizing on the methodological opportunity identified above. But lest it be objected that if anything can be taken for granted it is embodiment, let us begin to reframe the problem this way. In his often-cited essay on "Techniques of the Body" Marcel Mauss (1950) argued that the body is at the same time the original tool with which humans shape their world, and the original substance out of which the human world is shaped. Yet of all the formal definitions of culture that have been proposed by anthropologists, none have taken seriously the idea that culture is grounded in the human body.² Why not then begin with the premise that the fact of our embodiment can be a valuable starting point for rethinking the nature of culture and our existential situation as cultural beings? I suggest that the promise of such a standpoint is to throw new light on questions traditionally asked by anthropologists and other scholars in the human sciences (see Fernandez 1990 for an example of a scholar reconsidering his own data in this way). It should also, as the chapters in this volume bear out, bring to light new questions and sources of data overlooked by thinkers in these fields. Finally, it offers the grounds for a fruitful rereading of the classic data of ethnography, where passages about bodily experience are tucked away in discussions of ritual and social organization, waiting to be rediscovered.

With regard to the last point, it is telling that what is perhaps the most vivid example of the body as a cultural phenomenon subject to cultural transformations is also one of the oldest in anthropology. Maurice Leenhardt, the anthropologist and missionary whose classic work on New Caledonian culture first appeared in 1947, described his discovery of the impact of Christianity on the cosmocentric world of the Canaques with the anecdote of a conversation between himself and an aged indigenous philosopher. Leenhardt suggested that the Europeans had introduced the notion of "spirit" to the indigenous way of thinking. His interlocutor contradicted him, pointed out that they had "always acted in accord with the spirit. What you've brought us is the body" (Leenhardt 1979 [1947]: 164). In brief, in

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the indigenous world view the person was not individuated, but was diffused with other persons and things in a unitary sociomythic domain:

[The body] had no existence of its own, nor specific name to distinguish it. It was only a support. But henceforth the circumscription of the physical being is completed, making possible its objectification. The idea of a human body becomes explicit. This discovery leads forthwith to a discrimination between the body and the mythic world. (1979 [1947]: 164)

Here is an explicit acknowledgment of what has only recently begun to be formulated by much of the literature cited above. In phenomenological terms it suggests the preobjective character of bodily being-in-the-world and likewise suggests two possible consequences of objectification, that is the individuation of the psychological self and the instantiation of dualism in the conceptualization of human being.

In the example from Leenhardt, cultural change in the colonial encounter reveals the play of the preobjective and objectified body in experience. We must emphatically not conclude here that the body in "primitive" culture is necessarily preobjective while the body in "civilized" culture is always objectified. Objectification is the product of reflective, ideological knowledge, whether it be in the form of colonial Christianity, biological science, or consumer culture. Our lives are not always lived in objectified bodies, for our bodies are not originally objects to us. They are instead the ground of perceptual processes that *end* in objectification (Merleau-Ponty 1962; Csordas 1990, 1993, 1994), and the play between preobjective and objectified bodies within our own culture is precisely what is at issue in many of the contemporary critiques.

What most clearly distinguishes the concern with embodiment from the various forms taken by the anthropology of the body is the methodological and epistemological problematization of a series of interrelated conceptual dualities, among which that between the preobjective and objectified is only the first we have mentioned. Immediately implicated is the conventional distinction between mind and body, along with a series of derivative distinctions between culture and biology, the mental and the material, culture and practical reason, gender and sex. It appears at times that there is, among champions of the body in contemporary human-science theorizing, a tendency to vilify what is usually called "Cartesian dualism" as a kind of moral abjection. Descartes himself introduced the doctrine as a methodological distinction, a valuable aid to analysis and a way to free scientific thought from subjection to theology and strict institutional supervision by the Church. The philosopher is doubtless not entirely to blame for the ontologization of the distinction, and the way it has become embedded in our ways of thinking.³

Perhaps the most lucid extended critique of the mind/body duality has

been provided by Leder (1990). From a phenomenological standpoint based in the work of Merleau-Ponty and others, he begins with the observation that in everyday life our experience is characterized by the *disappearance* of our body from awareness, describing how the "body not only projects outward in experience but falls back into unexperienceable depths" (ibid.: 53). On the other hand, the vivid but unwanted consciousness of one's body in disease, distress, or dysfunction is a kind of *dys-appearance*, a bodily alienation or absence of a distinct kind: "No longer absence *from* experience, the body may yet surface as an absence, a being-away *within* experience" (1990: 91). Predicated on this analysis, Leder rehabilitates the experiential core of Cartesian dualism, while at the same time identifying its fundamental error. For the dualist, "An experiential disappearance is read in ontological terms. Yet . . . this disappearance arises precisely from the *embodied* nature of mind. The body's own structure leads to its self-concealment" (ibid.: 115), and thus to a notion of the immateriality of mind and thought. Meanwhile, alienation from the body as it *dys*-appears in times of breakdown or problematic operation leads to a "natural bias of attention towards the negative" (ibid.: 127), a bias elaborated in the Western tradition by construing the body as the source of epistemological error, moral error, and mortality. Mind/body dualism is thus identified as a culturally shaped "phenomenological vector," that is "a structure of experience that makes possible and encourages the subject in certain practical or interpretive directions, while never mandating them as invariants" (ibid.: 150).

The example from Leenhardt gives us the body as an important site for analyzing the relationship between the preobjective and the objectified, and Leder's analysis shows how the duality of mind and body calls into question the further distinction between the experiential and the ontological. Close on the heels of these problematic relations is the perennial problem of the relation between subject and object. The indeterminacy of this relation is highlighted by the observation that, depending on one's methodological standpoint, both mind and body can be construed as either subject or object. Thus mind can be an object, a "central processing mechanism" (Shweder 1990) as it is for cognitive science and mainstream psychology, or it can be the Cartesian subject of rational thought and moral reflection. Body can also be either an object, as it is for contemporary technological medicine and conventional biological science, or it can be the subject of sensation, experience, and world. For anthropology, to understand the body as the biological raw material on which culture operates has the effect of excluding the body from original or primordial participation in the domain of culture, making the body in effect a "pre-cultural" substrate. Mind is then invariably the subject and body is an object either "in itself" or one that is "good to think." Little space remains to problematize the

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alternative formulation of body as the source of subjectivity, and mind as the locus of objectification.

The possibility, arising from the cultural and historical changes outlined at the beginning of this introduction, that the body might be understood as a seat of subjectivity is one source of challenge to theories of culture in which mind/subject/culture are deployed in parallel with and in contrast to body/object/biology. Much of our theorizing is heir to the Cartesian legacy in that it privileges the mind/subject/culture set in the form of representation, whether cast in terms of rules and principles by social anthropology, signs and symbols by semiotic/symbolic anthropology, text and discourse by structural/poststructural anthropology, or knowledge and models by cognitive anthropology. In the human-science literature relevant to cultural theory a critique of representation has begun to take shape. There is both a substantive and an epistemological form taken by this critique. The former is a cultural critique that objects to the ideological substance of representations and seeks more apt ones. The latter is a methodological critique that objects to the dominance of representation as an epistemological modality.

There are several discursive sites for the critique of representation. Feminist theory offers critiques of the way women are represented in terms of body, biology, emotion, sexuality, and instinct (Humm 1990; Suleiman 1986; Jaggar and Bordo 1989; Grosz 1991; Jacobus et al. 1990). Much of the feminist critique comes from disciplines such as literature and philosophy and operates in a poststructuralist semiotic paradigm that questions the content of specific representations while assuming the pragmatic and epistemological primacy of representation. Others challenge the bounds of representation, including existential features of subjectivity within a semiotic paradigm as in Julia Kristeva's (1986) notions of the semiotic chora and *jouissance*, arguing for the existential immediacy of bodily experience (Bigwood 1991), or taking issue with the exclusion of identity and agency in the Foucauldian account of the body (McNay 1991).

A second site of the critique of representation is the philosophy of agency/action. Charles Taylor (1985, 1989), for example, takes issue with a Cartesian theory that identifies subjectivity as internal representation in a "monological" form projected on a "pre-moral" world, opting instead to construe subjectivity as interpersonal engagement via a "conversational" form within a world constituted by existential concerns. Paul Ricoeur (1991) examines the bounds of representation in his attempt to move from a hermeneutics of text to a hermeneutic of action, and from a semiotic of metaphor to an experiential theory of imagination.

In anthropology the critique of representation has largely taken the form of a critique of ethnographic writing (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986; Stoller 1989). The substantive issues in this critique are

political and ideological: by what right do we represent the ethnographic other, what are the consequences of doing so, what are the best alternative modes of representation? Occasionally a more radical critique appears of representation as a privileged epistemological modality. From the direction of postmodernism, Tyler (1987: 58) asks "why not reject outright the whole idea of the sensorium, of representation, of the correspondence between inner and outer signifiers whether known as mind and body, thought and language, words and things, or any of the 'othering' dualisms that have trapped us?" He argues that the point of ethnographic "discourse is not to make a better representation, but to avoid representation," suggesting instead that ethnography would do better to "evoke" than to "represent" (ibid.: 205-8). From the direction of phenomenology, Jackson uncovers the representationalist bias in the anthropology of the body itself, particularly in the work of Douglas where "the human body is simply an object of understanding or an instrument of the rational mind, a kind of vehicle for the expression of a reified social rationality" (1989: 123). He argues that the "subjugation of the bodily to the semantic is empirically untenable ... meaning should not be reduced to a sign which, as it were, lies on a separate plane outside the immediate domain of an act" (ibid.: 122). He refers to the methodological standpoint that captures the existential immediacy of bodily existence as "radical empiricism," a term also adopted by Stoller (1989: 151-6) in his phenomenologically oriented effort to develop an evocative anthropology of the senses.

It will not do to identify what we are getting at with a negative term, as something non-representational. We require a term that is complementary as subject is to object, and for that purpose suggest "being-in-the-world," a term from the phenomenological tradition that captures precisely the sense of existential immediacy to which we have already alluded. This is an immediacy in a double sense: not as a synchronic moment of the ethnographic present but as temporally/historically informed sensory presence and engagement; and not unmediated in the sense of a precultural universalism but in the sense of the preobjective reservoir of meaning outlined above. The distinction between representation and being-in-the-world is methodologically critical, for it is the difference between understanding culture in terms of objectified abstraction and existential immediacy. Representation is fundamentally nominal, and hence we can speak of "a representation." Being-in-the-world is fundamentally conditional, and hence we must speak of "existence" and "lived experience."

In general terms, the distinction between representation and being-in-the-world corresponds to that between the disciplines of semiotics and phenomenology. There are without question equally as many variants of one as of the other, and to some extent the representation/being-in-the-

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world duality reappears within each. Thus within semiotics, broadly conceived there is the tension between text and discourse (Tyler 1987, Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990), while within phenomenology there is the tension between phenomenology proper and hermeneutics (Ricoeur 1991; Caputo 1986). In anthropology, phenomenology is a poor and underdeveloped cousin of semiotics, and Clifford (1986: 10) does not even mention it among the "proliferating positions" from which interdisciplinary theorizing about the limits of representation has issued.

The dominance of semiotics over phenomenology, and hence concern with the problem of representation over the problem of being-in-the-world, is evident in the relation between the parallel distinction between "language" and "experience." It is still common for those who express interest in the study of experience to confront an objection that runs something as follows: "You cannot really study experience, because all experience is mediated by language – therefore one can only study language or discourse, i.e. representation." I would argue that the polarization of language and experience is itself a function of a predominantly representationalist theory of language. One need conclude neither that language is "about" nothing other than itself, nor that language wholly constitutes experience, nor that language refers to experience that can be known in no other way. One can instead argue that language gives access to a world of experience in so far as experience comes to, or is brought to, language. Ricoeur (1991: 41–2) has pointed to the "derivative character of linguistic meaning . . . It is necessary to say first what comes to language" in processes of presence, memory, and fantasy, in stances such as certitude, doubt and supposition, and in degrees of actuality and potentiality that precede "the properly linguistic plane upon which the functions of denomination, predication, syntactic liaison, and so on come to be articulated." The notion that language is itself a modality of being-in-the-world can be traced at least as far as Herder and Humboldt, and is perhaps best captured in Heidegger's notion that language not only represents or refers, but "discloses" our being-in-the-world.

The dominance of semiotics over phenomenology is also evident in the prominence of the metaphor of textuality in contemporary cultural theory. The essay by Ricoeur (1991 [1971]) on the "model of the text" was pre-eminent in this respect, emphasizing the surpassing of the event by the meaning that constitutes the "paradigmatic function" of texts "with respect to the structuring of the practical field in which individuals figure as agents or as patients" (Ricoeur 1991: xiv, 144–67). Ricoeur did not abandon a concern with being-in-the-world in his influential essay, and in later work reversed his priorities, "allowing the concern with practice to reconquer the preeminence that a limited conception of textuality had begun to obliterate"

(1991: xiv). Anthropologists have by and large not followed this movement, but have tended to elaborate a reading of Geertz's (1973) version of the text metaphor, one that is more explicitly semiotic than Ricoeur's hermeneutic version. Geertz's version of the text metaphor leans toward the representational pole in so far as it is combined with the definition of cultures as systems of symbols and an extrinsic theory of thought that draws out dichotomies between cultural and biological/genetic, and between public and private sources of information. This elaboration has taken place in an intellectual climate influenced by Derrida (1976) and the partisans of deconstruction, who operate under the motto that there is nothing outside the text.

Without going so far as to suggest that the text metaphor has become a representationalist trap for cultural theory (cf. Fernandez 1985), it is in accord with the argument we have developed to place the body in a paradigmatic position complementary to the text rather than allowing it to be itself subsumed under the text metaphor. Already the human science literature is replete with references to the body as a kind of readable text upon which social reality is "inscribed." In such accounts the body is a creature of representation, as in the work of Foucault (1979, 1980), whose primary concern is to establish the discursive conditions of possibility for the body as an object of domination (see also Turner, Chapter 1 in this volume). What about the body as a function of being-in-the-world, as in the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1964), for whom embodiment is the existential condition of possibility for culture and self?

In defining this paradigmatic function it is useful to recall Barthes's distinction between "the work" as a material object that occupies space in a bookstore or on a library shelf, and "the text" as an indeterminate methodological field that exists caught up within a discourse and is experienced as activity and production (1986: 57-58). Instead of Barthes's "work" and "text," I prefer "text" and "textuality," and to them I would like to juxtapose the parallel figures of the "body" as a biological, material entity and "embodiment" as an indeterminate methodological field defined by perceptual experience and mode of presence and engagement in the world. Thus defined, the relation between textuality and embodiment as corresponding methodological fields belonging respectively to semiotics and phenomenology completes our series of conceptual dualities. The point of elaborating a paradigm of embodiment is then not to supplant textuality but to offer it a dialectical partner. That the paradigm of textuality is far ahead of the paradigm of embodiment is without question (see Hanks 1989), but the formulation of their relation promises the grounds for future examination of, for example, the relation between the semiotic notion of intertextuality and the phenomenological notion of intersubjectivity.

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The expectation that an approach claiming to be grounded in embodiment should be worked out with concrete empirical data is well met in the chapters that follow. Considerable cultural diversity is represented, with authors drawing their arguments from work among Cambodians, Fijians, Chinese, Salvadorans and other Latin American peoples, Euro-Americans, Sri Lankan Tamils, and Navajos. Several of the authors call upon their personal experience as data, not as "introspectionists," but in judicious, and sometimes courageous, use of ethnographic reflexivity. Much of the empirical material comes from experiences of affliction, either in the form of illness, of political violence, or of both. Indeed, a focus on the most vivid exemplars, in this case the modalities of affliction and suffering (see Kleinman and Kleinman 1991), is arguably necessary in the formative stages of an intellectual enterprise. Yet the authors in general are concerned less with affliction *per se* than with contributing to a theory of culture and self grounded in embodiment. It is this concern that has guided my organization of the chapters, an act that is inevitably rhetorical in nature, with consequences for how the volume is perceived. This consideration is all the more relevant when the interests of contributors overlap substantially. For example, the methodological stance of embodiment vis-à-vis biology does not receive its own section, yet is a concern addressed by Lyon and Barbalet, by Jenkins and Valiente, and by Csordas.

Part I consists of a chapter that extends the methodological critique of representation, and another that offers a synthetic argument for integrating embodiment into social theory. Terence Turner renews the work on bodiliness he began over a decade ago (Turner 1980), observing that the body in contemporary capitalist society is a site of both social inequality and personal empowerment. His argument that the appropriation of bodiliness is the fundamental matrix or material infrastructure of the production of personhood and social identity elaborates the notion of the body as existential ground of culture and self, and his distinction between the body as a set of individual psychological or sensuous responses and as a material process of social interaction captures the distinction between body and embodiment outlined above (see also Csordas 1990, 1993). Turner launches a frankly polemical critique of Foucault and poststructuralist theories of the body. He points to the crisis of subjectivity that has led to the prominence in social theory of a passive, representationalist body, and to it juxtaposes a body of being-in-the-world that collapses dualities between subjective and objective, meaningful and material. Beginning at the same historical moment but with a different point in mind than Bourdieu (1988) in his *Homo Academicus*, he identifies poststructuralism as an academic

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response to the Parisian events of May 1968. As a result, structure was replaced by power, *langue* by *parole*, and mind by body, but all without a corresponding substitution of subject for object. The absence of agency and the possibility for critique in the key concepts of power, discourse, and body leads Turner to define Foucault and his followers not as theorists of the body, but as "anti-bodies." In the wake of 1968 the body is the locus of personal politics, and control of the body is control of the relations of personal production. In conceiving these relations in terms of a body that is inherently plural, existing among other bodies, Turner implicitly offers a link between the political economic notion of relations of production and a phenomenological notion of intersubjectivity as the interactive integument of embodied existence, thus taking a step toward Merleau-Ponty's (1964: 25) unfinished project of linking perceptual reality with cultural and historical analysis.

In Chapter 2, Lyon and Barbalet offer a contrast between two views in contemporary social theory, that of the body as the passive object of ideological representation and as the active subject of embodied being-in-the-world. They note the objectification of the body in consumer culture and in medical practice, and argue that scholarly treatments in large part reflect the ideology embedded in these cultural domains and deny what, in similar vein to Turner, they regard as the intercommunicative and active nature of the body. Going beyond the observation by Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987) that emotion is the "mediatrix" among the individual body, the social body, and the body politic, Lyon and Barbalet suggest that close attention to the role of emotion in social life can be a corrective to undue objectification, so long as emotion is construed as both embodied and social or relational in its origins and its consequences. Building on an account of emotion in contemporary ethological and evolutionary theory, they emphasize the dual haptic and affective senses of "feeling." They further argue that the interactive and relational character of emotion offers a way for a phenomenologically grounded approach to embodiment to move beyond microanalytic, subjective, internal, individualist analysis toward an open horizon in which social institutions can be understood in terms of their characteristic bodily relations, and embodied agency can be understood as not only individual but institution-making (see also Jenkins and Valiente, Chapter 7 in this volume). The authors point to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception and Scheler's phenomenology of feeling as fruitful means to this end, means which are empirically elaborated in the contributions to the present volume by Ots and by Csordas.

Part II emphasizes the essentially intersubjective and social nature of bodily experience with respect to themes of form, appearance, and motion. In Chapter 3, Lindsay French examines the political economy of altered body morphology in a camp for Cambodians displaced by their recent civil

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war, focusing on the presence of substantial numbers of young men who have lost limbs to land mines. From the methodological standpoint which we elaborate in this volume, her work has the merit of examining the body under power and domination without losing the body as subject. Answering a call we made above, and made also in chapters by Turner and by Lyon and Barbalet, she defines her topic not only as the private experience of amputees, but also as public. It is thus a phenomenon constituted as bodily experience not only for the amputees themselves, but for the community which must adjust to a high proportion of its members who are dismembered – not only an intrasubjective experience but an intersubjective transformation of the behavioral environment and its habitus. In placing these concerns against the political economic context of the war, she contributes to the mediation of conceptual dualities by juxtaposing the work of Halliwell on self and Foucault on power. French offers a sophisticated analysis under the concepts of local moral world, power/knowledge, and the political construction of affect, successively examining the amputees' culturally defined sense of losing their capacity, competence and courage. In doing so she is able to balance the relation between the amputees' lived experience of karmic status within a Buddhist habitus, and their position as both marginally productive and abjectly subjected beings within a political ethos.

In Chapter 4, Anne Becker shows both how the social inscribes its values onto the body, and how the body is the ground of the self among Fijians. Whereas in the case described by French, amputation is a phenomenon traumatically forced upon the consciousness of the Cambodian community, among Fijians there is a culturally elaborated somatic mode of attention to body shape, weight gain or loss, and other bodily changes, along with a repertoire of cultural and moral meanings of hunger, appetite, food sharing, and the onset of pregnancy. Becker shows how changes in body morphology index the salient psychocultural theme of *care*, intriguingly reminiscent of Heidegger's notion of existential care (*Sorge*). Her description of how Fijians closely monitor changes in body shape combines aspects of textuality and embodiment, including both a sense of the reading of bodies as texts, and an intersubjective somatic mode of attending to others, grounded in the sensory determination of care. Finally, Becker compares the Fijian idealization of body shape with that common in Western cultures. The West, as shown in feminist critique and the critique of consumer culture, cultivates the body as a representation of self, hence alienating body and self. Fijians, however, cultivate one another's bodies as a group rather than a personal endeavor, such that the locus of collective representation is the changes wrought through the care of others.

Building in part on the work of Max Scheler, Thomas Ots points out in Chapter 5 that the very term "embodiment" can be misleading if it is

understood as referring not to an existential condition but to a process of putting culture or mind into a body that is objectified and thinglike. Instead he opts for the German term *Leib*, the live-body-self-subject for which no equivalent exists in English. Ots casts the relation between representation and being-in-the-world in Scheler's terms of the relation between mind and life, and their reconciliation in the "enlivenment of the mind." He uses these ideas to frame an analysis of *qigong*, a cathartic healing movement in the contemporary Peoples' Republic of China. In *qigong* practice bodily spontaneity is thematized and objectified in a cultural context where spontaneous movements are problematized in the face of cultural values on quietness, relaxation, and harmony in conjunction with a repressive political atmosphere. In the letters and poems of practitioners Ots encounters an exceedingly rich and *leibly* cultural phenomenology of movement, sensation, metaphor, and emotional transmutation.

The chapters in Part III share a remarkable success in suspending cultural accounts of bodily experience in the indeterminate space between the analytics of representation and being-in-the-world. In particular, Chapters 6 and 7 lend additional substance to Kirmayer's (1992) insight that metaphor is the critical meeting ground between textuality and embodiment. In her contribution, Setha Low problematizes the relation between mind and body, sensation and sense, and biology and culture in the embodied metaphor of *nervios* or "nerves" across five different cultural settings. Surveying data from Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Newfoundland, and Eastern Kentucky, she argues that the lived experience of *nervios* and the cross-cultural variety of "senses of the body" among *nervios* sufferers correspond to sociopolitical and cultural conditions of distress. Low's concern is for how *nervios* varies as an embodiment of distress across the various cultures she examines, and for how the body is thus a mutable mediator between self and society. However, her notion of *nervios* as an "embodied metaphor" refers not to a metaphor about the body or one that is imposed upon the body, but to a metaphor that is emergent in bodily experience. In elaborating this notion she outlines the analytic meeting point between understandings of the body as a source of meaning and as a representation of social forces.

In Chapter 7 Janis Jenkins and Martha Valiente take this analysis to a greater level of specificity by examining political, bodily, emotional, and psychopathological dimensions of one of the sensations typically associated with *nervios*/nerves among Salvadoran women refugees to the United States, that of intense heat or *calor*. Low had already observed in her contribution that if *nervios* is an embodied metaphor of distress, each of the sensations associated with it can also be understood as metaphors, either of nerves as a global condition or, more directly, of distress. In this chapter

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Jenkins and Valiente show how *calor* itself is a complex notion that can be described with vivid metaphoric language by the afflicted, and in doing so they further problematize the sensation/representation contrast. They identify at least three features of indeterminacy. First, *calor* is unevenly objectified in explicit cultural terms, some people recognizing it by name and others describing the experience without categorizing it as a general type of phenomenon. Second, from the women's narratives the authors distill an analysis of polytropy, the use of multiple figures of speech, as evidence of the essential indeterminacy of the experience across narrative accounts and categories of psychiatric diagnosis. Third, by placing it in the sociopolitical context of domestic violence and the violence of *la situacion* in the Salvadoran civil war, they show how *calor* is existentially isomorphic with, and not a representation of, anger and fear. Jenkins and Valiente argue for consideration of the body as a generative source of culture rather than as a *tabula rasa* upon which cultural meaning is inscribed. They conclude by identifying a series of methodological assumptions that are thrown into question from the standpoint of embodiment.

While adding significantly to the theme of inseparability of bodily experience and cultural meaning elaborated by Low and by Jenkins and Valiente, Carol Laderman's approach to food and self in Chapter 8 should also be read in light of Becker's discussion in Chapter 4, which was oriented around the notion that cultural values are encoded in body morphology. For Laderman it is the practices of food ingestion and avoidance that are of concern as she describes the relation between sensory reality and symbolic structure in East Malay culture. First, Laderman analyzes Malay hot and cold humoral reasoning with regard to illness attributed to superheated spirit attacks or humoral imbalance, and humoral effects of diet in the causation and treatment of illness. Unlike other treatments of humoral reasoning, Laderman's includes a sensory component, including self-perceptions of metabolic changes induced by ingesting certain kinds of foods. Second, she examines the concept of *bisa*, which combines the meanings of "poison" and "power," showing how it articulates food-avoidance practices pertaining both to physiological and symbolic danger. Third, she explicates the Malay notions of *semangat* (Spirit of Life) and *angin* (Inner Winds) as keys to understanding the intellectual, cosmological, emotional, sensible, and temperamental dimensions of the Malay self. Fourth, she offers an intriguing reflective description of her own incorporation of elements of Malay embodiment in her reactions to humorally hot or cold foods, the experience of Inner Winds during trance, and the flight and return of her Spirit of Life during an illness. She concludes with a reflection on the relation between representation and being-in-the-world in terms of the mooring of symbolic systems in the experiential world.

The contributors to Part IV each deal in their own way with the relation between language and bodily experience by struggling to articulate the essentially mute preobjective world of pain. In Chapter 9, Jean Jackson takes up the problematic of subject/object, mind/body, and language/experience in the context of one of the greatest challenges for a theory of culture and self grounded in embodiment, namely the medical condition of chronic pain. Based on a study of patients in a specialized inpatient pain treatment center in New England, she carefully sorts out the inherently indeterminate relations among pain behavior, the experience of pain, and the emotional states accompanying pain. She examines the dialectic of subjectification and objectification as an existential struggle over the "reality" of pain and its experience as self or not-self. She vividly illustrates the cultural immediacy of the Cartesian duality (Leder 1990) in patients' attempts to define control in terms of mind over matter or matter over mind. Jackson pays close attention to language and the communication of pain-experience between patients and non-sufferers and among patients themselves. Distinguishing carefully between pain and its causes, physical and emotional pain, and pain as sensation and emotion, she highlights the existential shock for her afflicted interlocutors of moving back and forth between the "pain-full world" and the world of everyday life.

In Chapter 10, E. Valentine Daniel turns our attention from the authorless pain of the medical patient to the intentionally inflicted pain of political torture. The juxtaposition of these chapters highlights the tragic irony that the social origin of the latter form of pain does not render it less, but perhaps more unrepresentable. Daniel examines the experience of people tortured during the ongoing vicious civil war in Sri Lanka, and through their pain traces the limits of representation in semiotic anthropology. Unlike Jackson's sufferers from chronic pain who were able to develop a community of meaning, Daniel sees in the affectively flat memory of pain among the tortured, and their unwillingness to accept that others have been tortured, their experience of the "sheer worthlessness of all attempts to communicate something that was so radically individuated and rendered unshareable." He identifies beauty, as the preeminent example of what Peirce called "qualisigns," as a semiotic first with the felt quality of prereflective, immediate, uncategorized experience. Pain, on the other hand, is a "sinsign" in which the immediacy of semiotic firstness is overwhelmed by the alienated otherness of secondness. He goes on to identify terror and art as cultural forms for objectifying pain, allowing the opening out into semiosis of experience that had been "compacted in pain." In a vivid portrayal of his tortured interlocutors' ascent from speechlessness to the ability to form elementary metaphors, he captures the experiential trajectory of objectification that outlines the existential moment of relation between represen-

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In Chapter 11, Cathy Winkler analyzes another form of pain as a result of political violence, rape. Drawing courageously on her personal experience of this trauma, she examines the mind/body dissociation consequent on rapists' "forcefully inserting land mines of emotional upheaval into the bodies of their victims." Her argument underscores the urgent need for a paradigm of embodiment in the era of Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas, Desiree Washington and Mike Tyson. Here is the struggle between one's own self-objectification and the objectification of self by the violence of others. Unlike Daniel, who could only observe his Tamil interlocutors' struggle for semiosis, Winkler as "investigator-victim" is able to deal with her ethnographic informants as "victim-investigators." In a unique, inverted ethnographic relationship, the anthropologist provides her informants with an analytic framework, and they take responsibility for editing the texts of their interviews. Beginning with a critique of the symptoms and stages abstracted as "rape trauma syndrome," Winkler identifies a series of five overlapping contexts of trauma that define the cultural and existential meaning of rape. The existential ground of culture, in particular of emotional meaning, becomes especially vivid in the body's visceral, prereflective recognition of the rapist, even while the victim is unable to evoke a definite visual/representational memory of his face.

Finally, Chapter 12 is my attempt at a cultural phenomenology of the physical and existential pain suffered by a young Navajo man afflicted with a tumor-induced seizure disorder. Framed by reflections on Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, it is also an attempt to anticipate two potential objections to a phenomenological paradigm of embodiment: first, that the domain of preobjective experience is somehow "pre-cultural;" and second, that "embodiment" throws out the biology with the bathwater. The young man's strategy for making sense of his affliction combines elements of Navajo Peyotist healing and spirituality with elements of Anglo-American explanatory models and biomedical treatment, and presupposes a complex interaction between biology and culture. I analyze the patient's narrative in order to show the cultural formation of preobjective experience, and that language can be understood not only as representation but as disclosure of reality and being-in-the-world. I also show the bodily immediacy in which schemas of contamination by lightning, the ritual number four, and being shot through with an object by witchcraft come into play. Phenomenology and neurology are brought into dialogue with a discussion of how the behavioral syndromes associated with temporal-lobe lesions and the effects of ritual peyote ingestion derive existential meaning in the context of a bodily synthesis of language, thought, religious experience, and healing.

Given the early stage of development of a paradigm of embodiment, it should come as no surprise that the contributions to this volume do not adhere strictly to any one paradigmatic position. The reader will note variations in use of the term embodiment itself: most authors regard it as an existential condition, others as a process in which meaning is taken into or upon the body, yet others prefer the term *bodiliness* over embodiment. Nevertheless, problematizing the body and embodiment places each author within the nexus of dualities I have elaborated above, to work out his or her own position with respect to the relations between preobjective and objectified, mind and body, subject and object, representation and being-in-the-world, semiotics and phenomenology, language and experience, textuality and embodiment. Their collective assertion is that these pairs of terms define a critical moment in theorizing about culture and self, and further that although none of these dualities is spurious, neither are the polar terms irreconcilably opposed. We are well reminded, for example, of Peirce's inclusion of habit in his semiotics and Merleau-Ponty's concern with signs in his phenomenology. In this light our purpose is to identify the terrain on which opposed terms meet, whether they are understood to remain in tension or to collapse upon one another. That terrain is marked by the characteristic reflectiveness and the process of objectification that define human consciousness, giving substance to representation and specificity to being-in-the-world.

NOTES

- 1 For different perspectives and thorough bibliographic reviews see Frank (1991), B. Turner (1991), and Lock (1994).
- 2 Lakoff (1987) and Johnson (1987) have argued that many of the metaphors that structure our experience are derived from body-based image schemas. They suggest that the body and its inherent orientations are "taken up" into culture, becoming "the body in the mind," without attempting to account for the reciprocal sense in which one can simultaneously speak of "the mind in the body." Despite its intent their approach thus entertains a complex flirtation with reductionism, dualism, and intellectualism. Following Merleau-Ponty, I would argue that the body is always already cultural, and that rather than asking how metaphors instantiate image schemas it is more apt to begin with the lived experience from which we derive image schemas as abstract products of analytic reflection. By the same token, Quinn's (1991) critique of Lakoff and Johnson to the effect that culture takes priority over the body does no more than invert their argument, and is thus misplaced by presuming a distinction between body and culture that a priori excludes the bodily from the cultural.
- 3 In anthropology, the mind/body separation is cast predominantly in terms of a dichotomy between culture and biology. Not only is this dichotomy institutionalized in the distinction between cultural and physical anthropology, but within cultural anthropology reference to the body has, until recently, tended to be synonymous with an invocation of biology (Csordas 1990).

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