

On Changing and Differing Types of Bodies and Their Relationships to Their Souls or/and Minds in Western Culture

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Abstract:

On Changing and Differing Types of Bodies and Their Relationships to Their Souls or/and Minds in Western Culture is a collection of loosely connected chapters that answer the question of how to make Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology more inclusive. The first chapter, devoted to Jean-Luc Nancy, serves as an introduction to the topic of alternative embodiments and the question of the soul in the body. In the following chapters, Merleau-Ponty is confronted with selected authors associated with Actor-Network Theory (ANT). First, the comparison with Bruno Latour shows that the integrity of all beings and entities, including the most privileged humans, is not to be taken for granted. The pathologies in the *Phenomenology of Perception* and Annemarie Mol's depiction (*enactment*) of atherosclerosis are then used as an analogy for the inferior status of women in our society, while the fourth chapter shows the empowerment that can grow out of it through an interpretation of Elfriede Jelinek's novel *The Piano Teacher*. The last two chapters focus on unconventional modes of intersubjectivity and kinships as ways of being in the world. The confrontation with Eduardo Viveiros de Castro destabilizes established ontological categories while attempting to incorporate alternative worldviews of the Indigenous peoples of (present-day) Americas. Drawing on texts by Donna Haraway, Helen Verran, Anna Tsing, and Déborah Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, the very last chapter provides examples of complicated but necessary cooperation between different human cosmologies and between humans and other species.

Key words: phenomenology, actor-network theory, anthropology, science studies, Indigenous studies, flat ontology, ontological turn, embodiment, subjectivity, intersubjectivity, kinship, material semiotics, praxiography, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Luc Nancy, Bruno Latour, Annemarie Mol, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Donna Haraway, Helen Verran, Anna Tsing, Déborah Danowski, Elfriede Jelinek