



Fabricating the Body: Effects of Obligation and Exchange in Contemporary Discourse

Sarah Himsel Burcon

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Fabricating the Body: Effects of Obligation and Exchange in Contemporary Discourses is comprised of nine chapters that revolve around the body, and more specifically, issues related to identity. The text draws on a variety of criticism - including disability, gender, and psychoanalytic studies - to theorize aspects relevant to the human body historically. For example, Rachel Herzl-Betz's "A Paratactic 'Missing Link': Dorian Gray and the Performance of Embodied Modernity" uses disability studies as a lens through which to examine Oscar Wilde's literary debt to the atavistic discourse of late-Victorian freak shows. Moving forward in time, Melissa Ames' chapter, "Bodies of Debt: Interrogating the Costs of Technological Progress, Scientific Advancement, and Social Conquests through Dystopian Literature" is a pedagogy-focused chapter. In the chapter, Ames discusses a college course in which she asked students to consider contemporary debates, such as cloning, stem cell research, human trafficking, and so forth, in tandem with fictional texts that relate these issues. Ultimately, the class wrestled with the question of: what do we do when human survival and societal progress come at extreme costs? As a whole, the text works to stimulate conversations surrounding the body, and specifically, bodies that can be labeled "indebted." Fabricating the Body brings together issues of gender, class, and identity, and investigates ethical concerns along with topics related to marginalization and the mind/body split. Ultimately, the text situates the body as a productive space for academic research.

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