



Neoliberal Rhetorics and Body Politics: Plastinate Exhibits as Infiltration (Cultural Studies/Pedagogy/Activism)

By Tara Pauliny

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Neoliberal Rhetorics and Body Politics: Plastinate Exhibits as Infiltration (Cultural Studies/Pedagogy/Activism) By Tara Pauliny

Neoliberal Rhetorics and Body Politics: Plastinate Exhibits as Infiltration uses transnational feminist rhetorical analyses to understand how the global force of neoliberalism infiltrates all parts of life from nation-state relationships to individual subject formation. Focusing on the hugely popular and profitable exhibits of preserved, dissected, and posed human bodies and body parts showcased in Body Worlds and BODIES...The Exhibition—plastinate shows offered by the German anatomist Gunther von Hagens and the US company Premier Exhibitions—the book analyzes how these exhibits offer examples of neoliberalism's ideological reach as they also present a pop-cultural lens through which to understand the scope of that reach. By rhetorically analyzing the details of the exhibits themselves, their political and cultural contexts, their marketing literature and showcased artifacts, and their connection to historical displays of bodies, the book articulates how neoliberalism creates a grand narrative while simultaneously permeating daily living. As such, *Neoliberal Rhetorics and Body Politics* argues that these public, for profit exhibitions offer familiar, tangible, and rich sites within which to understand neoliberalism's impact beyond the purview of public policy and economics. Predicated on the idea that neoliberal practices are not uniform, the book not only articulates how neoliberal discourses are embedded in these shows, but it also traces the ideological and material consequences of that inculcation. It focuses its analysis on the shows' rhetorical deployment of necropolitics, biopolitics, intimacy, and affect, and details how the exhibits communicate neoliberalism's guiding principles of self-reliance, individual choice, and freedom through market participation. In doing so, it answers a number of challenges posed by feminist transnational rhetorical studies; namely, that scholars extend their analyses to understand how information circulates, that we pay more attention to the affective aspects of transnational rhetorics, and that we recognize how pedagogy functions outside the classroom. In attending to these concerns, the book ultimately illustrates not only neoliberalism's strong rhetorical force, but also reveals its deep cultural infiltration.

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Editorial Review

Review

Pauliny's book is an excellent addition to a growing spate of rhetorical scholarship on neoliberal economics and culture. Her focus on literal bodies furthers the conversations rhetoricians are having about economics, policy, migration, and immigration by materially situating those conversations "on the body." Throughout the book, Pauliny demonstrates how the bisecting and presentation of actual cadavers in the *BODIES* exhibit enacts a type of bodily literacy that adheres to dominant and normalizing discourses, and thus she shows the *BODIES* exhibit to be an important site for neoliberal rhetorical analysis. (Jennifer Wingard, University of Houston)

Tara Pauliny's book compellingly shows readers how insidious and pervasive neoliberal logic can be, especially when there are state-sponsored values, such as constituting a "healthy" or "ideal citizen's" body, at stake. Neoliberal Rhetorics and Body Politics is a disturbing case study in how globalized capitalism exerts shame and control over both the bodies on display and those that encounter plastinate body exhibits." (Rebecca S. Richards, St. Olaf College)

About the Author

Tara Pauliny is assistant professor of English at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

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