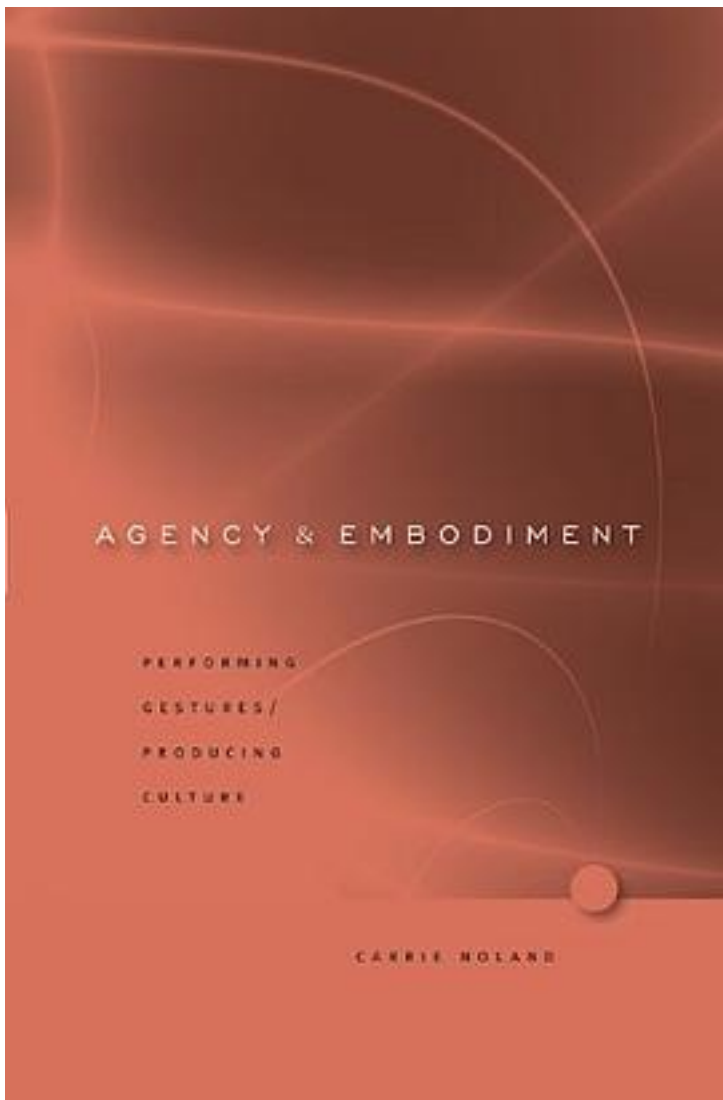


Agency and Embodiment



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著者:Carrie Noland

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In "Agency and Embodiment", Carrie Noland examines the ways in which culture is both embodied and challenged through the corporeal performance of gestures. Arguing against the constructivist metaphor of bodily inscription dominant since Foucault, Noland maintains that kinesthetic experience, produced by acts of embodied gesturing, places pressure on the conditioning a body receives, encouraging variations in cultural practice that cannot otherwise be explained. Drawing on work in disciplines as diverse as dance and movement theory, phenomenology, cognitive science, and literary criticism, Noland argues that kinesthesia - feeling the body move - encourages experiment, modification, and, at times, rejection of the routine. Noland privileges corporeal performance and the sensory experience it affords in order to find a way beyond constructivist theory's inability to produce a convincing account of agency. She observes that despite the impact of social conditioning, human beings continue to invent surprising new ways of altering the inscribed behaviors they are called on to perform. Through lucid close readings of Marcel Mauss, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Bill Viola, Andre Leroi-Gourhan, Henri Michaux, Judith Butler, Frantz Fanon, Jacques Derrida, and contemporary digital artist Camille Utterback, Noland illustrates her provocative thesis, addressing issues of concern to scholars in critical theory, performance studies, anthropology, and visual studies.

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