



The body-trace: arguments

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“The *body-trace*: arguments”

Translation by Isobel Hié (2018) de:

Galinon-Mélénec Béatrice “Le *corps-trace*: arguments”,Préface de *L'Homme-trace*, tome IV, (Galinon-Mélénec B. dir),

CNRS éditions, 2017, pp 9-11).

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“The *body-trace*: arguments”¹Béatrice Galinon-Mélénec²

Caught in the abyssal giddiness caused by the question of traces, the 21st century finds itself constantly at risk of straying from meaning. The CNRS *Human Trace* series³ shows how the trace is cognized in different disciplines and why reductive interpretive processes impose a *deconstruction of the processes at work in the human interpretation of the notion of trace*.

With the social and cultural dimension playing a major role, a situated analysis was necessary beforehand to distinguish between western and eastern cultural traditions whereby the former envisions a disconnection between the thinking subject and the object, between the body and mind, between the outside and inside of the body of the thinking human.

With the Human-Trace paradigm, we put forward a radical challenge to this idea of Human. Human beings are conceived as being “*constructed by the traces of their interaction with their environment, whatever the nature of this might be; the environment in return bearing the traces of human actions, both of them retroacting in a systemic dynamic*” (Galinon-Mélénec, 2011).

This anthropological conception is the condition of an episteme which is not restricted to the humanities. Hence the gradual opening of the series’ works to researchers from all disciplines agreeing to position themselves in relation to the definition of a *human condition of the Human-Trace conceived as a blurred structuring of the processes of knowledge of the Real and as an epistemological obstacle to identify* in order to integrate it better in the history of the sciences.

¹ Translator : Isobel Hié (UK). Source: Galinon-Mélénec Béatrice “Le *corps-trace*: arguments”, Préface de *L'Homme-trace*, tome IV, (Galinon-Mélénec B. dir), CNRS éditions, 2017, pp 9-11).

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The dynamic of this paradigm has led us to place it as the *keystone* of different scientific works and articles which, in uniting *praxis* and *episteme*, aim to provide a deep understanding of “the complexity of the notion of trace” (Jeanneret, 2011).

An attempt to identify the hidden life of the trace processes operating in the interpretation of the real is all the more difficult as their resultants appear only in the form of *sign-trace*, i.e. as signs which integrate the origin of the production and interpretation (Galinon-Mélénec, 2011). With this terminological transfer, we wish to show that the use of the terms trace and sign taken alone leave those who use them to think that they carry a set meaning whereas, as Derrida said, it is revealed to each in their difference (Derrida, 1967)⁴.

Volume IV of the Human-Trace series questions specifically the *body traces* of the *Human-Trace*. While recognizing the interest of the type of anthropology which allows – for example - the doctor to consider a patient’s body as an object of analysis independent of her own body, the Human-Trace anthropology requires examination of the “*interpreted-body*” of the patient and the “*interpreting-body*” of the doctor, as a body in co-presence, *living body-traces* crossed by flows resulting from the process of permanent interaction inside the body, from inside to outside and from outside to inside.

Considering the body as a “body-trace” invites one to study the processes which have participated in its formation, that they come out of the ecological multifactorial system with which it is in interaction as a living-body present in the world or as an heir to the generations that preceded it in history.

By bringing together the viewpoints of researchers from different disciplines, Volume IV’s purpose is to bring to the reader’s understanding points of reference to be known by all who question themselves about the implications of using techniques which, integrating the non-living with the living and the living with the non-living, blur the frontiers of the body image that human beings have of themselves and their identity.

This work is consistent with the series’ volumes, one of whose objectives is to lay down the foundations of an interpretation of the real by a *Human-Trace* conceived as unconfined by the boundaries between body and mind, nature and culture, human and environment, present, past and future.

By lifting the veil on the system of values which underpin the new relationships between humans and their bodies, human beings, animals and robots, and, more generally, information and communications technologies, it is possible to make readers face the consequences of their choices, be they on themselves, contemporary society or on the evolution of the human condition.

⁴ In using the term *differance* with an “a” instead of an “e”, as in the usual spelling of the term “difference”, we wish to refer the reader to the texts of Derrida (Derrida J., *Of Grammatology, Speech and Phenomena. Writing and Difference*, 1967).