



Missing Bodies: The Politics of Visibility (Biopolitics)

By Monica Casper, Lisa Jean Moore



Missing Bodies: The Politics of Visibility (Biopolitics) By Monica Casper, Lisa Jean Moore

We know more about the physical body—how it begins, how it responds to illness, even how it decomposes—than ever before. Yet not all bodies are created equal, some bodies clearly count more than others, and some bodies are not recognized at all. In *Missing Bodies*, Monica J. Casper and Lisa Jean Moore explore the surveillance, manipulations, erasures, and visibility of the body in the twenty-first century. The authors examine bodies, both actual and symbolic, in a variety of arenas: pornography, fashion, sports, medicine, photography, cinema, sex work, labor, migration, medical tourism, and war. This new politics of visibility can lead to the overexposure of some bodies—Lance Armstrong, Jessica Lynch—and to the near invisibility of others—dead Iraqi civilians, illegal immigrants, the victims of HIV/AIDS and "natural" disasters.

Missing Bodies presents a call for a new, engaged way of seeing and recovering bodies in a world that routinely, often strategically, obscures or erases them. It poses difficult, even startling questions: Why did it take so long for the United States media to begin telling stories about the "falling bodies" of 9/11? Why has the United States government refused to allow photographs or filming of flag-draped coffins carrying the bodies of soldiers who are dying in Iraq? Why are the bodies of girls and women so relentlessly sexualized? By examining the cultural politics at work in such disappearances and inclusions of the physical body the authors show how the social, medical and economic consequences of visibility can reward or undermine privilege in society.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Missing Bodies* focuses our attention on what is not there, and thus brilliantly illuminates just what is! This is a creative, thoughtful, exciting book, a fine contribution to the growing literature on the sociology of the body."

-Barbara Katz Rothman, author of *Recreating Motherhood*

"Shows the structural and symbolic processes underlying bodily erasure and exposure; a major accomplishment."

—Nelly Oudshoorn, author of *The Male Pill*

"As a commentary on the consequences of neoliberalism, a critique of contemporary Western culture, and a recovery effort of the unseen, *Missing Bodies* is a provocative and thought provoking work that situates our understandings of the bodies that are seen and obscured in new light."-Erin L. Pullen, *Sociology of Health and Illness*

"*Missing Bodies* is a well-written book that asks scholars of rhetoric productive questions not only about discursive constructs that constrain, expose, or advertise the body, but also the methods through which we gather information about the role of the body in discourse."-*Journal of Advanced Composition*

"Overall the book opened my eyes to the experiences of the missing and what they mean for the rest of us who are visible and can do something about giving them a voice. It also makes me ask more questions about other missing bodies not mentioned, which, I believe, is the fundamental intent of the book."-*PsycCritiques*

"This book is written in a vivid style, endowed with a straightforward and pleasant way of expressing the authors' engaged analysis."

-Claire Beaudevin, *Social Anthropology*

About the Author

Monica J. Casper is Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Women's Studies, and Director of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies, at Arizona State University's New College. She is author of *The Making of the Unborn Patient*.

Lisa Jean Moore is Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies at Purchase College SUNY. She is at work on a book about urban beekeeping in NYC.

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