



Spare Parts: Organ Replacement in American Society

Renee C. Fox, Judith P. Swazey

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The developments that have occurred in the field of organ transplantation during the 1980s and early 1990s, and the simultaneous rise and fall of the Jarvik-7 artificial heart are the subject of this vividly written and absorbing new volume. In *Spare Parts*, fascinating, interconnected stories of organ transplantation and the artificial heart are recounted in an interpretive framework that explores the vision of the "replaceable body." Themes of uncertainty, gift exchange, and the allocation of scarce material and non-material resources underscore a discussion that openly examines the escalating ardor about the goodness of repairing and remaking people with transplanted organs. Likewise, the stories open questions of life and death, identity, and solidarity. This important book offers insights into the symbolic and anthropomorphic meanings associated with the human body and its organs, and into the ways that medical professionals come to terms with the concomitant aspects of transferring vital body parts. Both artificial and donor organs, as well as the process of transplantation, are the subject of a thoughtful discussion which touches on the medical myths and rituals that they generate. Chronologically, *Spare Parts* begins where the authors' previous book, *The Courage to Fail*, leaves off. More than a sequel, however, this work reflects their increasingly troubled and critical reactions to the expansion of organ replacement. Likely to be controversial, this book is must reading for bioethicists, medical sociologists and anthropologists, health-care lawyers, planners and administrators, nurses and physicians, medical journalists and science writers, and concerned lay readers.

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