

Essays in Medical Sociology: Journeys into the Field



This outstanding collection of essays by Renee C. Fox encompasses almost thirty years of original, pioneering research in the sociology of medicine. Based on fieldwork in a variety of medical settings in the United States, Belgium, and Zaire, these ethnographic essays examine chronic and terminal illness, medical research, therapeutic innovation, medical education and socialization, and bio-ethics. Within this framework, three empirical cases have been singled out for special scrutiny: the process of becoming a physician, the development of the artificial kidney machine and organ transplantation, and the evolution of medical research in Belgium.

Without ignoring social structural or psychodynamic factors, Dr. Fox has explored basic cultural phenomena and questions associated with health, illness, and medicine: values, beliefs, symbols, rites, and the nuances of language: ethical and existential dilemmas and dualities; and the complex interrelationships between medicine, science, religion, and magic. She draws systematically and imaginatively upon anthropological, psychological, historical, and biological insights and integrates observations and analyses from her own studies in American, Western European, and Central African societies.

This second, augmented edition includes Professor Fox's more recent contributions to the expanding field of the sociology of medicine. They are *The Evolution of Medical Uncertainty*; *The Human Condition of Health Professionals*; *Reflections on the Utah Artificial Heart Program*; *Is Religion Important in Belgium?*; *Medical Morality is Not Bioethics*; *Medical Ethics in China and the United States*; and *Medicine, Science and Technology*. The work also includes a new introduction, *Endings, Beginnings and Continuities*. Now, anthropologists, sociologists, medical educators, scientists, researchers, and students can join her on

her journeys into the field and share with her the priceless insights to be gained from the physicians, nurses, medical students, patients, and their families, who are working, living, and dying on the edge of what is known, scrutable, and remediable on the edge of medical science.

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