

Continuing Margaret Lock. Twice Dead.

Class Business.

Theory—discourse about the gift; commodity exchanges in the market; organ transplantation in the United States

Presenter: Professor Erica James

Page 299-377—Margaret Lock—starts talking about how the process of dissection and concerns for anatomy, the Western tradition, created an interior for the body, the relative ease for which the body can easily be commodified in the West.

Argument: Greek/Roman tradition situated in a collective group located in a lineage of ancestors. When Christianity became more popular, stories of Lazarus raised from the dead and Jesus resurrected and focus went to the body, without the ritual ceremony or practices. Shift to individual, to the material body that can be resurrected and death. Changed the value of the corpse, Christian saints were believed to have symbolic power.

In the Islamic tradition, the body can have spiritual power for healing through supplication, touch—idea that corporeal body can still have an essence, fertility to it.

Medieval and renaissance dissection vs. vivisection (alive)

With dissection's popularity, it moved into spectacle/performance/theater into the public sphere. Important for medicine but also for discipline—Foucauldian torture, public space and the visible sign of the Sovereign.

Public dissections almost have a punitive function. Even dissections occurred in church spaced, but eventually secularized and quintessential to creating doctors.

Anatomy lab is still a very ritual space for doctors. (Premeds, keep in touch and let her know how it is.) Provided a way to commodify bodies. Then, a market was created for dead bodies. Ideas of body snatchers.

How even today, unclaimed bodies, how reducing it to a commodity can provide for trade. Notion of body and slavery—going on at the time. Lock does not make an explicit connection to that. Unclaimed bodies used for medical education.

Western hyper-focus on the body. The way we view the body is embedded in media, art, literature. These forms not only represent the body but also shape ideas about the body.

Jeremy Bentham donated his body for dissection.

Lock focuses on question on human experimentation and how others in Japanese history, technologies for biological warfare created mistrust among the public.

How body is used against their will for science?

Lock used vignettes to enliven the experience. K'aila, Chipewyan Indian, had rare liver disease; parents did not provide transplantation, would violate spiritual identity. Instead, the physician charged the family with neglect, for not acting in the best interest of the child. Went to court and was dismissed.

What is death and what is the meaning of life? What is a “diminished life”? Must we pursue all heroic measures to prolong life? (Hopefully you are thinking about these questions and we don't need to answer them today.)

Marcel Mauss's idea of the Gift. The idea of obligation for reciprocation and return. The gift of organ—particular cultural framings will not accept, e.g., difficult for Japanese. Can there be another cultural way of framing of organ donation that it wouldn't preclude people from giving? What does gift giving mean in Christian context, notions of charity? By giving, the person is lesser, of unequal position of power.

General Question: Regarding acts of charity, e.g., sending money overseas, do you think that giving necessarily means there is a power inequality between the giver and the receiver? Is it possible to give, e.g., humanitarian assistance? If both donor and recipient are willing, shouldn't it be up to them?

- To receive an organ from a cadaver, there wouldn't be responsibility to reciprocate.
- What about sperm donation? Should the person who eventually is born from the material be able to know the identity of the person?
- From the point of the donor, s/he may want to be anonymous.
- Lack of anonymous donations might discourage donation.
- The experience of having the organ inside the body. Waiting for a Jewish kidney.
- The attempt to say that the body has no spirit or identity. Animistic identities. The process of understanding changes in these bodies.
- The economy of organ transplants, high rates of rejection, equitable allocation, sale or not, the ways that it links to ideas of commodity/property?
- Notion of the “shortage of organs.”

In the end, perhaps the brain dead diagnosis is a problem. Rather, think about the death of the social person has occurred. It might alleviate some problems of that.

Controlled donation—don't want to have any more treatment and donate organs when they are still alive. Through a series of steps, death is facilitated in an active way. This could allow organs to be harvested, rather than see that the doctor is killing the patient.

Comes to the point that the divide between nature and culture—hard to separate. Hybrid figures, and not quite living, not solely biological or sustained artificially. How are these figures in liminal positions causing anxiety.

Paul Farmer—very charismatic, very political, MD/anthropologist/activist and doing his best to change the world and with some success. Partners in Health.

The problems of humanitarian assistance.

Video: Journeyman: Your Money or Your Life

Escalating AIDS problem in South Africa. The top of the world countries struck by AIDS.

26 year old woman, trying to reduce stress to avoid exacerbating HIV/AIDS.

“Africa” is not only afflicted by AIDS but also sleeping sickness (not eradicated), requires tests to identify parasite.

Male partner does not know that the female partner has AIDS/HIV. They do not want to die alone. Male partner continues infecting other people. Tears families apart, parents fall ill.

ARV (anti-retrovirals) that are effective but are extremely expensive. Patents prevent use of cheap, generic drugs. Where does industry’s duty begin and end? Where does government responsibility begin and end?

Opportunistic infections: sleeping sickness.

Have responsibility to pharmaceutical industry. Neglected diseases would not reflect well on shareholders of the company.

Politics: does HIV even cause AIDS?

The information that they are going to die—woman would prefer that the child die too, rather than become orphaned. Now she is taking AZT and doing much better.

Misunderstanding of sleeping sickness—witchcraft, food, sexual contamination.

TAC—Treatment Action Campaign defends right for affordable medicine. “Take responsibility, don’t take risks.” English is spoken in the class.

People cannot afford the drugs. Helsinki Declaration—strict regulations. Patient woman, barely 20 years old, has no other choice but to try experimental drugs—“better than nothing,”

Pretoria Supreme Court, very important case with South Africa Supreme Court, whether constitutional necessity to provide affordable drugs to people

According to pharmaceutical companies, it violates patent law and world trade law.

(will complete movie next week.)