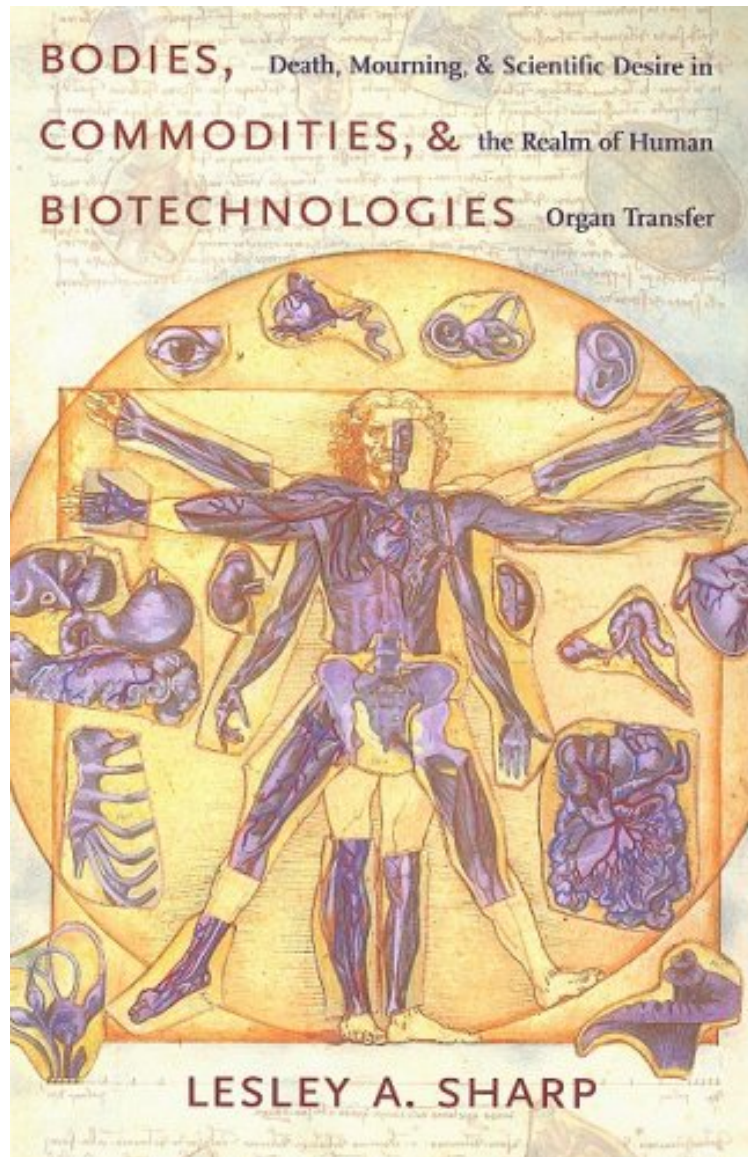


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## **Bodies, Commodities, and Biotechnologies: Death, Mourning, and Scientific Desire in the Realm of Human Organ Transfer (Leonard Hastings Schoff Lectures)**

*Lesley Sharp*

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#1760697 in Books Lesley A Sharp 2008-12-31 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.80 x .50 x 5.20l, .40  
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Scientific Desire in the Realm of Human Organ Transfer | File size: 21.Mb

**Lesley Sharp : Bodies, Commodities, and Biotechnologies: Death, Mourning, and Scientific Desire in the Realm of Human Organ Transfer (Leonard Hastings Schoff Lectures)**

before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bodies, Commodities, and Biotechnologies: Death, Mourning, and Scientific Desire in the Realm of Human Organ Transfer (Leonard Hastings Schoff Lectures):

In the United States today, the human body defines a lucrative site of reusable parts, ranging from whole organs to minuscule and even microscopic tissues. Although the medical practices that enable the transfer of parts from one body to another most certainly relieve suffering and extend lives, they have also irrevocably altered perceptions of the cultural values assigned to the body. Organ transfer is rich terrain to investigate especially in the American context, where sophisticated technological interventions have significantly shaped understandings of health and well-being, suffering, and death. In *Bodies, Commodities, and Biotechnologies*, Lesley Sharp probes the ideological assumptions underlying the transfer of body parts, the social significance of donors' deaths, and the medico-scientific desires surrounding complex forms of body repair. Sharp also considers the experimental realm, in which nonhuman species and artificial devices present further opportunities for recovery and for controversy. A compelling scientific investigation and social critique, *Bodies, Commodities, and Biotechnologies* explores the pervasive, and at times pernicious, practices shaping American biomedicine in the twenty-first century.

From Booklist Medical anthropologist Sharp has adapted three of her oral presentations on what she calls the commodification of transplantable human organs. In them she brings forward practices such as the unique language--what she calls "rhetorical policing" or "semantic message"--that frames any area of medicine and is often the cause of extreme discomfort for potential organ donors and their families. Organs, she says, even though they aren't sold (that is illegal), are rapidly becoming such hot commodities that the future of organ transfer requires modifying American attitudes toward death and how the presence or absence of life is perceived. She points out the anomaly in the way the medical community tries to memorialize deceased organ donors, whom it endeavors to keep anonymous, while it simultaneously vies for organs to save lives through tremendously expensive medical procedures. Finally, she discusses the problematic issues involved in such prospective medical advances as biotechnological organ replacements, xenotransplantation, and organogenesis, or the bioengineering of whole organs from cell cultures. Sharp makes a complex topic comprehensible. Donna Chavez Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Sharp makes a complex topic comprehensible. (Donna Chavez Booklist) About the Author Lesley A. Sharp is professor of anthropology at Barnard College, and senior research scientist in sociomedical sciences at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University.