



Observing Bioethics

Renee C. Fox, Judith P. Swazey

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Observing Bioethics examines the history of bioethics as a discipline related not only to modern biology, medicine, and biotechnology, but also to the core values and beliefs of American society and its courts, legislatures, and media. The book is written from the perspective of two social scientists--a sociologist of medicine (Renee C. Fox) and a historian of medicine (Judith P. Swazey)--who have participated in bioethics since the emergence of this multidisciplinary field more than 30 years ago.

Fox and Swazey draw on first-hand observations and experiences in a variety of American bioethical settings; face-to-face interviews with first- and second-generation figures in the genesis and early unfolding of bioethics; a detailed examination of the theatrical media coverage of what was considered to be a banner event in the annals of bioethics (the creation and birth of the cloned sheep, Dolly); case studies of how bioethics has internationally developed; and a large corpus of primary documents and secondary source materials.

While recognizing the intellectual, moral, and sociological importance of American bioethics, Fox and Swazey are critical of its characteristics. Foremost among these are what they identify as the problems of thinking socially, culturally, and internationally in American bioethics; the 'tenuous interdisciplinarity' of the field; and the troubling extent to which the 'culture wars' have penetrated bioethics.

This book will appeal to a wide range of doctors, scientists, and academics who are involved in the history and sociology of bioethics.

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