



# Anticipatory Corpse, The: Medicine, Power, and the Care of the Dying (Notre Dame Studies in Medical Ethics)

*Jeffrey P. Bishop*

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## **Anticipatory Corpse, The: Medicine, Power, and the Care of the Dying (Notre Dame Studies in Medical Ethics)** Jeffrey P. Bishop

In this original and compelling book, Jeffrey P. Bishop, a philosopher, ethicist, and physician, argues that something has gone sadly amiss in the care of the dying by contemporary medicine and in our social and political views of death, as shaped by our scientific successes and ongoing debates about euthanasia and the “right to die”—or to live. The Anticipatory Corpse: Medicine, Power, and the Care of the Dying, informed by Foucault’s genealogy of medicine and power as well as by a thorough grasp of current medical practices and medical ethics, argues that a view of people as machines in motion—people as, in effect, temporarily animated corpses with interchangeable parts—has become epistemologically normative for medicine. The dead body is subtly anticipated in our practices of exercising control over the suffering person, whether through technological mastery in the intensive care unit or through the impersonal, quasi-scientific assessments of psychological and spiritual “medicine.” The result is a kind of nihilistic attitude toward the dying, and troubling contradictions and absurdities in our practices. Wide-ranging in its examples, from organ donation rules in the United States, to ICU medicine, to “spiritual surveys,” to presidential bioethics commissions attempting to define death, and to high-profile cases such as Terri Schiavo’s, The Anticipatory Corpse explores the historical, political, and philosophical underpinnings of our care of the dying and, finally, the possibilities of change. This book is a ground-breaking work in bioethics. It will provoke thought and argument for all those engaged in medicine, philosophy, theology, and health policy.

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