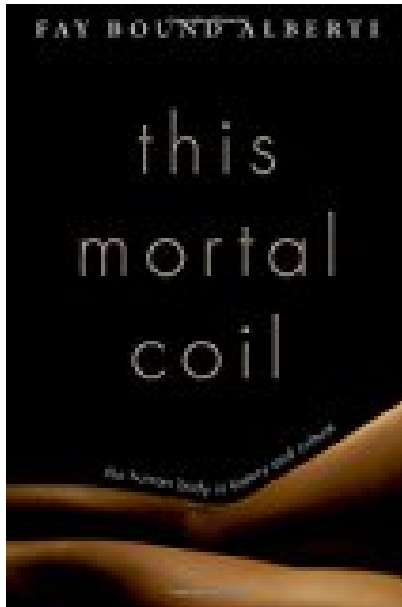


This Mortal Coil The Human Body in History and Culture



BOOK DETAILS

- Author : Fay Bound Alberti
- Pages : 304 Pages
- Publisher : Oxford University Press
- Language : English
- ISBN : 0199793395

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BOOK SYNOPSIS

The body has a history. Although Hamlets "mortal coil" is said to speak universal and unchanging truths about our physical and emotional experiences, conceptions of the body in Shakespeares time were very different from our own today. The way the body is understood to move, feel, breathe and engage with the world differs across time, culture, and religious tradition, whether Jewish, Hindu, Christian, or Islamic. For centuries "we" were composed of souls that were part of the body and inseparable from the heart, the blood and the viscera. Now "we" exist in our heads, and the brain is the vessel for something indefinable and elusive - the "true self." In this path-breaking book, which will be scholarly yet provocative and accessible, Fay Bound Alberti explores these changes. The themes that This Mortal Coil explores, concerning the nature of the self, the relationship between the brain and the heart, the gendering of our physical and emotional selves and the need to accommodate mind and body, emotions and experience within a comprehensive framework we can live with, are concerns as old as time. Focusing both on the center of the body and the surface, she provides a rich and intriguing history of the meanings of each layer (in medicine, art, and religion) as well as the ways historians have interpreted those layers: from the bones to the skin, from the senses to the sexual organs, each part has been seen in radically different ways through the ages. Together these account for the making of the modern body and a new understanding of how we view our selves.

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