



The Transparent Body: a cultural analysis of medical imaging (In vivo)

José van Dijck, José van Dijck

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From the potent properties of X rays evoked in Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* to the miniaturized surgical team of the classic science fiction film *Fantastic Voyage*, the possibility of peering into the inner reaches of the body has engaged the twentieth-century popular and scientific imagination. Drawing on examples that are international in scope, *The Transparent Body* examines the dissemination of medical images to a popular audience, advancing the argument that medical imaging technologies are the material embodiment of collective desires and fantasies - the most pervasive of which is the ideal of transparency itself. *The Transparent Body* traces the cultural context and wider social impact of such medical imaging practices as X ray and endoscopy, ultrasound imaging of fetuses, the filming and broadcasting of surgical operations, the creation of plastinated corpses for display as art objects, and the use of digitized cadavers in anatomical study.

In the early twenty-first century, the interior of the body has become a pervasive cultural presence - as accessible to the public eye as to the physician's gaze. José van Dijck explores the multifaceted interactions between medical images and cultural ideologies that have brought about this situation. *The Transparent Body* unfolds the complexities involved in medical images and their making, illuminating their uses and meanings both within and outside of medicine. Van Dijck demonstrates the ways in which the ability to render the inner regions of the human body visible - and the proliferation of images of the body's interior in popular media - affect our view of corporeality and our understanding of health and disease. Written in an engaging style that brings thought-provoking cultural intersections vividly to life, *The Transparent Body* will be of special interest to those in media studies, cultural studies, science and technology studies, medical humanities, and the history of medicine.

José van Dijck is professor of media and culture and chair of the Media Studies Department, University of Amsterdam. She is the author of *Imagination: Popular Images of Genetics and Manufacturing Babies* and *Public Consent: Debating the New Reproductive Technologies*.

"*The Transparent Body* is significant not simply because the issues it addresses are timely, but also because it develops a sophisticated critical perspective on a nexus of disciplinary practices: new media, film, literary and cultural studies, biology, and, of course, critical studies of the body." - T. Hugh Crawford, Georgia Institute of Technology

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