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978-1-107-01562-3 - Medical Humanities: An Introduction
Thomas R. Cole, Nathan S. Carlin and Ronald A. Carson
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Medical Humanities

This textbook brings the humanities *to* students in order to evoke the humanity *of* students. It helps to form individuals who take charge of their own minds, who are free from narrow and unreflective forms of thought, and who act compassionately in their public and professional worlds. Using concepts and methods of the humanities, the book addresses undergraduate and premed students, medical students, and students in other health professions, as well as physicians and other health care practitioners. It encourages them to consider the ethical and existential issues related to the experience of disease, care of the dying, health policy, religion and health, and medical technology. Case studies, images, questions for discussion, and role-playing exercises help readers engage in the practical, interpretive, and analytical aspects of the material, developing skills for critical thinking as well as compassionate care.

Thomas R. Cole is the McGovern Chair in Medical Humanities and Director of the McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. Dr. Cole has published many articles and several books on the history of aging and humanistic gerontology. His *The Journey of Life: A Cultural History of Aging in America* (1992) was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. His book, *No Color Is My Kind*, and accompanying film, *The Strange Demise of Jim Crow* (1997), were nominated for a National Humanities medal. His work has been featured in the *New York Times*; on National Public Radio, Voice of America, and PBS; and at the United Nations.

Nathan S. Carlin is Associate Professor at the McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics and Director of the Medical Humanities and Ethics Certificate Program at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston. He has coauthored two previous books, *Living in Limbo: Life in the Midst of Uncertainty* (2010) and *100 Years of Happiness: Insights and Findings from the Experts* (2012). He has also published more than 100 journal articles, book chapters, and book reviews in about a dozen different journals.

Ronald A. Carson is Professor Emeritus at the Institute for the Medical Humanities, University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. He has received fellowships from the Institute on Human Values in Medicine, the Council for Philosophical Studies, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He is an elected Fellow of the Hastings Center, a former president of the Society for Health and Human Values, and a recipient of that society's annual award. He has written many articles, chapters, and book reviews. He is coeditor of four books, including *Practicing the Medical Humanities: Engaging Physicians and Patients* (2003).

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An Introduction

Thomas R. Cole
University of Texas Medical School at Houston

Nathan S. Carlin
University of Texas Medical School at Houston

Ronald A. Carson
University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston



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PREFACE

This volume represents the first textbook in medical humanities. After decades of teaching in both medical and undergraduate schools, we wrote the book because there was still no single resource for interested students and faculty. While there are edited volumes in medical humanities, these books do not offer a coherent vision of or engagement with the field. We wrote this book to present such a vision and engagement.

We define medical humanities as *an inter- and multidisciplinary field that explores contexts, experiences, and critical and conceptual issues in medicine and health care, while supporting professional identity formation*. Our vision of the field is rooted in the humanistic educational ideal that aims to form individuals who take charge of their own minds, who are free from narrow and unreflective forms of thought, who are compassionate, and who act in the public or professional world. The book aims to stimulate and enhance both critical thinking and character development. We aim not only to bring the humanities *to* students but also to evoke the humanity *of* students.

The book is designed to serve as the backbone of courses in medical humanities, whether they are general introductory courses or more specialized courses (e.g., in literature, history, philosophy, religious studies, or social science). The chapters can be assigned sequentially or by section, or by the theme of a particular chapter (e.g., the history of medical technology, death and dying, just health care, or suffering and hope). The volume can be used with undergraduate students, graduate students, medical students, or other students in the health professions. It contains additional resources and materials that will engage advanced students and enable teachers to use the book in graduate courses.

The chapters are structured to maximize ease of comprehension and student interaction. All chapters open with an abstract and close with a summary. In addition, most chapters contain several distinctive elements: (1) a case study or primary source to engage students more actively in the practical, interpretive, or analytical aspects of the materials; (2) a visual image – a photograph, print, or painting – along with commentary, questions, and references for further exploration; (3) exercises for critical thinking and character formation, including

questions for discussion, role playing, and suggested writing exercises; and (4) further resources, including suggested reading and viewing as well as lists of relevant journals and related organizations or groups.

Writing the book was a huge undertaking. It has grown out of many years of collegueship and friendship, which has made the process more enjoyable (if such a thing can be said of writing a textbook) and has made possible consistency in perspective and authorship. Ronald A. Carson served as director of the Institute for the Medical Humanities at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston and built it into a leading medical humanities research and teaching center from 1982 until 2005. Carson mentored Thomas R. Cole, who went to work at the Institute in 1982, where he founded the first graduate program in medical humanities and directed it for more than a decade. In 2004, Cole moved to Houston to found the McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston. There he began working with and mentoring Nathan S. Carlin, who went to work at the McGovern Center in 2009, where he serves as director of the Certificate Program in Humanities and Ethics and also administers a program in interprofessional ethics. Cole and Carson had wanted to write a textbook together for years. But writing a textbook is hard – and especially so for a field as diverse and vast as medical humanities – so they recruited Carlin (because he has somewhat of an architectural mind) to coauthor the book with them.

The book that you are holding took more than four years to produce. Perhaps a word about the process of writing this book is in order. Carlin proposed the original structure of the book, dividing it into four sections: history, literature, philosophy, and religion. This made intuitive sense to Cole and Carson, so the next step was to divide the writing assignments. Cole, a trained historian, wrote the history section. As a teacher of literature and medicine, Carson authored the literature section. And Carlin, a pastoral theologian, wrote the religion section. The philosophy section was divided among all three authors. With a few exceptions, this is how the writing assignments were determined. Cole also enlisted Benjamin Saxton to coauthor almost all of his chapters. Saxton, whose graduate training is in English, coauthored Chapters 1–6, 8, and 15. Carlin and Cole wrote the Introduction, and Cole wrote the Epilogue.

This book was a collaborative effort in every respect. For example, Carlin wrote the first draft of the book proposal and the introduction and then received feedback from Cole and Carson, revising accordingly. The rest of the book followed this basic process: an author would draft a chapter, then the others would critique it, and the author would make appropriate revisions. In the course of writing this book together, the authors engaged each other in numerous day-long meetings and conference calls, critiquing each other's work. At the last stage, Cole went through every chapter and made editorial suggestions to help unify the book. This collaborative process is what gives the book a more consistent

voice than is possible in an edited volume. We should also note that we made every effort to remain faithful to various forms of academic discourse, meaning that sometimes the chapters vary – intentionally – in style. Finally, we should note another editorial decision to insert birth and death dates after the first mention of significant persons born before 1951.

There are many people to whom we are grateful, both personally and professionally, and many of these persons helped bring this book into being. We would like to thank Beatrice Rehl, Anastasia Graf, and Isabella Vitti at Cambridge University Press. Many colleagues provided extensive feedback, including Amir Cohen-Shalev, Jack Coulehan, Jason Glenn, Andrew Lustig, James Schafer, and Delese Wear – this book is much stronger for their feedback. Other colleagues also provided us with valuable feedback and/or insightful conversations along the way, including Andrew Achenbaum, Bryant Boutwell, Marcia Brennan, Howard Brody, Jai Gandhi, Brian Hurwitz, Tess Jones, Marc Kaminsky, Samuel Karff, Steven Linder, Rebecca Lunstroth, Laurence McCullough, Kate de Medeiros, William Metcalf Deutsch, Guy Micco, Kirsten Ostherr, Steven Smith, and Jeffrey Spike. Others provided other forms of help: Beatriz Varman served as a fact checker, Angela Polczynski looked up sources, and Shirley Pavlu helped with administrative responsibilities relating to the book's production.

We would also like to thank two research consultants in particular: Andrew Klein and William Howze. Klein helped with the team's early efforts to orient the project within the field of medical humanities and also contributed to the chapters' supplementary materials (e.g., case studies and abstracts). Howze, an art historian and video producer, selected the works of art that accompany each chapter and wrote the reflective essays embedded within the chapters. Howze previously collaborated with Cole to edit and produce the documentary *The Strange Demise of Jim Crow*. Many of the works come from the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

To secure images of works of art used in this book, a number of individuals were particularly helpful. For their generous assistance to select these works and to provide image files, we wish to thank Rebecca Dunham, Veronica Keyes, and Marti Stein. Several works are by Texas artists represented by Moody Gallery in Houston. For her enthusiastic support of this project, we wish to thank Betty Moody and her associates Lee Steffy and Adrian Page. Artist and teacher Gael Stack, also represented by Moody Gallery, offered thoughtful advice and heartfelt encouragement. For bringing to our attention the striking sculpture by Stephen De Staebler in front of the Moores Opera House at the University of Houston, we wish to thank Ted Estess, and for permission to reproduce it here, we are grateful to Michael Guidry and Jill Ringler. Without the patient assistance of rights managers at other museums, picture agencies, and similar organizations, it would not be possible to publish the range of images included in this book. In particular, we wish to thank Emma Aderud, Casey Anderson, John

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Benicewicz, Capucine Boute, Beth Braun, Natalie Costaras, Clive Coward, Joe Maloney, Emilie Le Mappian, Kay Menick, Katie Mishler, Maria Elena Murguia, Kathleen Mylen-Coulombe, Michael Slade, Alison Smith, Kajette Solomon, Alison Strum, and Judith Thomas.

We would like to thank the John P. McGovern Foundation for its continued support for the McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics. And Cole would like to thank UTHealth, especially President Giuseppe Colasurdo, for a sabbatical during the 2013–2014 academic year.

Finally, a few dedications: Cole would like to dedicate this book to the memory of Christopher Lasch. Carlin would like to offer his dedication to Donald Capps. And Carson offers these words: “For Richard C. Reynolds and Melvyn H. Schreiber, to whom I owe a debt I cannot repay but herewith gratefully acknowledge.”

Thomas R. Cole, Nathan S. Carlin, and Ronald A. Carson
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