

sophically informed scientists, each interested in the philosophical aspects of a particular area of medicine, to write for this new contribution to the series. Of the 19 contributors to this volume, 12 are scientifically minded philosophers and 7 are philosophically minded scientists; some hold to the analytical school of philosophy. Three of the contributors have MD degrees; of these, 2 are practicing physicians.

These authors discuss many cogent, controversial concepts of both medical science and medical practice. Among the topics concerned primarily with medical practice discussed from a philosophical standpoint are concepts of health and disease, evidence-based medicine, group judgment and the medical consensus conference, uncertainty in clinical medicine, brain death, the logic of diagnosis, nursing service, and public health. Among the considered topics primarily related to scientific medical investigation and experimentation are medical ontology, theories and models of medicine, reduction in biology and medicine, causal inference and medical experiments, patterns of medical discovery, frequentist vs Bayesian clinical trials, and conceptual foundations of biological psychiatry.

This book is not easy reading, and for the reader not conversant with philosophical language, the going will be tough indeed. Philosophical language is quite different from the language of medicine, and many readers will need a dictionary when approaching this book. This is not to say that philosophical concepts are not clearly understandable, but to make them understandable one must know and understand the specific language of philosophers. This difficulty might result in the book being used only as a reference book, shelved in academic medical libraries. Indeed, it should be, for it does what it was created to do superbly. But I think it probably will not find a place in most physicians' personal libraries.

The philosophical consideration of the various subjects listed above is well done by each writer. All contributors creating the different chapters have done a superb job of dealing with the specific topic or topics the editors have asked them to address. In every chapter, concepts and explanations are organized in a most logical way, as one would expect in the writings of superb philosophers. This makes the subject understandable, provided readers are familiar with the language used.

*Philosophy of Medicine* will be attractive to physicians and medical investigators in academic medicine, because the material in the various chapters will provide them with a clear understanding of the logic of their work. It also will be of interest to practitioners of medicine who are inclined to appreciate philosophical readings as a hobby. The practicing physician not conversant with philosophical studies will perhaps not find this book an interesting read. Even physicians conversant with philosophical studies will find this book tough to take in—but if they stick with it, they will find it wonderful and intellectually satisfying. To be sure,

this book is certainly a must-have for every medical library.

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**Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** The author has completed and submitted the ICMJE Form for Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest and none were reported.

### BONES BOOKS & BELL JARS: PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE MÜTTER MUSEUM COLLECTION

by Andrea Baldeck

132 pp, 106 images, \$35.00

Philadelphia, PA, The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 2012

ISBN: 978-0-9849406-0-8

*BONES BOOKS & BELL JARS* IS A GORGEOUS PHOTOGRAPHIC TOUR of the Mütter Museum of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia as well as a creative tour de force. The flavor of the book is reverential, historical, and on occasion a tad spooky. Think *Twilight Zone* meets *Antiques Roadshow*. The photography is imaginative. The use of only black-and-white photographs imparts a stark, retro look to the book. Yet mysteriously the work comes alive, more akin to a living documentary than a static collection of still life photographs. Some of the pictures are haunting—a wax model (moulage) of a child's face studded with molluscum contagiosum, a disarticulated fetal skeleton, and an anencephalic fetus, for example.

Other images are less provocative and include anesthesia apparatus (complete with a chloroform container), apothecary instruments, a Civil War surgeon's field kit, ear syringes and otoscopes, Gladstone bags, a 19th-century microscope, obstetric and urologic instruments, retinal anatomy models and ophthalmoscopes, a ship surgeon's dental kit, a traveling drug salesman's things, and vintage x-ray tubes. All of these items are artfully arranged. One photograph cleverly displays a skull and the bones of an arm and hand resting on top of an open anatomy textbook by Andreas Vesalius. The angle of the upper extremity and its relationship to the skull faithfully mirror the positioning depicted in Vesalius' drawing. The effect of the layout is that of a contemplative skeleton seemingly sprouting from the pages of a classic anatomical text.

The commentary that accompanies the images is sparse; the author has decided to let the photographs do most of the talking. At times, however, her frugal remarks effectively frame the pictures. For example, readers might close their eyes and imagine the wet specimen room of the Mütter Museum as the author affectionately describes its silent inhabitants: "Bereft of a brain, an anencephalic wears a face strangely sage and ageless./A dwarf, its limbs foreshortened, appears serenely meditative behind its wall of glass. Conjoined twins in suspended animation float in large jars,/fated by an error in early development to share



Left, Fractured skull, articulated arm and hand, anatomy text (Vesalius). Middle, Anatomical illustrations (Antomarrchi, Disdier). Right, Scoliotic spine and ribcage, dissection kit, anatomy text (Vesalius). Reproduced with permission from The College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

bone, viscera or brain. To gaze at them is to ponder on individuality and inseparability, about “otherness” and how the parameters of normal are defined. Responses to these remarkable beings may range from the visceral to the philosophical, and prompt reflection on what it is to be human.”

Exploration is the major theme of this book, and it occurs on 3 levels. Most conspicuously, the author (a physician and professional photographer) spends hours alone experiencing the venerable medical museum and searching for interesting items. Granted virtually unlimited access to the museum’s collections, she forages in the basement, peeks in the attic, checks out the book stacks in the library, and goes behind the scenes in the storage rooms. Her exploration continues on a less architectural level as she investigates individual pieces in the museum’s various collections, examining unique objects and mulling over them in the context of ownership, culture, and history. On a less macro, and much more subtle level, she explores the patient-

physician relationship as suggested by some of these medical relics. The quaint technology and old-fashioned medical tools portrayed in these photographs look as if they are lonely. Missing the animated spirit infused by a physician’s mind or a surgeon’s hands along with the need and willingness of an ill patient, the apparatus appears incapable of curing. Instead, the instruments seem cold and even malevolent. Another theme is the relevance of art to the medical profession and its importance in medical education.

The author of *Bones Books & Bell Jars* applies an artist’s eye along with a physician’s training in capturing the essence of the curious, and at times astounding, medical matter contained in the collections of the Mütter Museum. Cameras do not lie: *Bones Books & Bell Jars* is a thing of beauty.

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