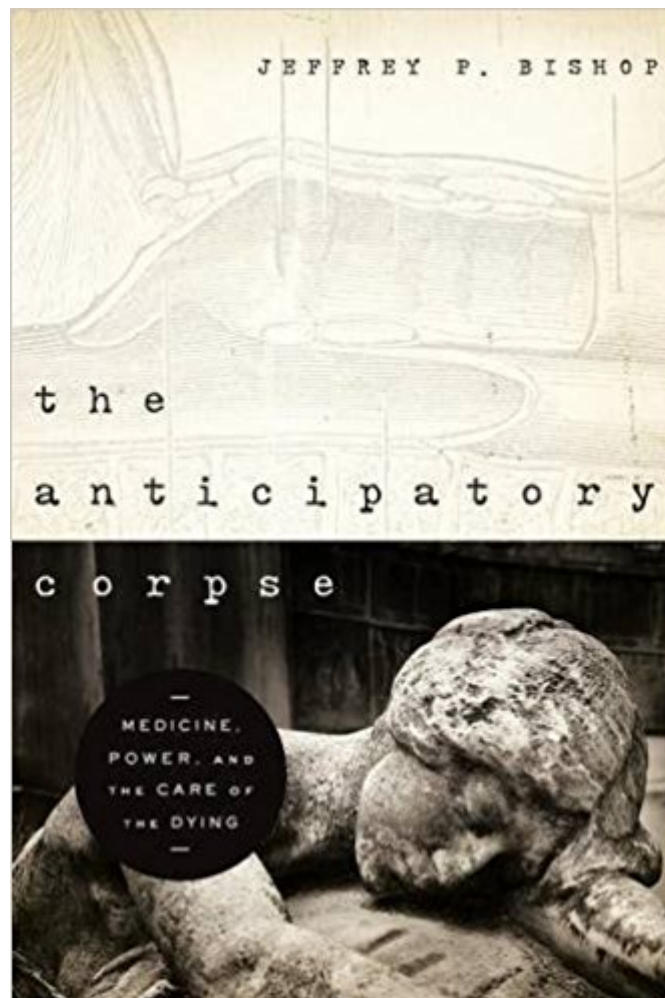




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The Anticipatory Corpse: Medicine, Power, And The Care Of The Dying (ND Studies In Medical Ethics)



Synopsis

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. A ground-breaking work in bioethics, this book will provoke thought and argument for all those engaged in medicine, philosophy, theology, and health policy. "With extraordinary philosophical sophistication as well as knowledge of modern medicine, Bishop argues that the body that shapes the work of modern medicine is a dead body. He defends this claim decisively with with urgency. I know of no book that is at once more challenging and informative as *The Anticipatory Corpse*. To say this book is the most important one written in the philosophy of medicine in the last twenty-five years would not do it justice. This book is destined to change the way we think and, hopefully, practice medicine." --Stanley Hauerwas, Duke Divinity School "Jeffrey Bishop carefully builds a detailed, scholarly case that medicine is shaped by its attitudes toward death. Clinicians, ethicists, medical educators, policy makers, and administrators need to understand the fraught relationship between clinical practices and death, and *The Anticipatory Corpse* is an essential text. Bishop's use of the writings of Michel Foucault is especially provocative and significant. This book is the closest we have to a genealogy of death." --Arthur W. Frank, University of Calgary "Jeffrey Bishop has produced a masterful study of how the living body has been placed within medicine's metaphysics of efficient causality and within its commitment to a totalizing control of life and death, which control has only been strengthened by medicine's taking on the mantle of a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model. This volume's treatment of medicine's care of the

dying will surely be recognized as a cardinal text in the philosophy of medicine." --H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., Rice University, Baylor College of Medicine

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jeffrey P. Bishop is Tenet Endowed Chair in Health Care Ethics and director of the Albert Gnaegi Center for Health Care Ethics at Saint Louis University.

Want to know why our medical system works the way it does? Bishop analysis is unparalleled. He will make you think-- and feel!

The Anticipatory Corpse will wrack your brain and stir your heart, and make you long (or work for!) a renewed way to care for the seriously ill. Jeffrey Bishop, a physician and philosopher (MD & PhD) has offered his peers a thought-provoking, soul-searching masterpiece examining the perplexing and pressing problems of the state of Western medicine today. As a physician, he admits the ease of diagnosing over the vexing challenges of pondering new possibilities. Bishop's chapters form a litany of issues and sometimes scathing critiques - solidly grounded in a breath of endnotes - from medical school training, organ donation, and the ICU, to Kubler-Ross' stages of grief, clinical chaplaincy, social work (what he cleverly names biopsychosocialspiritual medicine), and palliative care. Yet, the author's deconstruction comes from a practitioner and offered in a spirit of good will, as his acknowledgments reflect, "So, I hope what follows will be read in the spirit of friendship, as if

we were enjoying good food and wine." As I read the work, I couldn't help but think about my physician friends who passionately care about their patients, yet are clearly calloused by their practice. Bishop's analysis explains my friends' dispirited doctoring as the result of a metaphysics of medicine that no longer views them as a practitioner of an art, but as efficient causes. They have become components - efficient causes - of a mechanized system. They once aspired to care and share in another's suffering, yet they have become embedded in the subtle violence of a medical system that taught (and rewards) them to dose, to replace, to exert control, to fix, and to dominate the body and its systems. Here, Bishop's strength shines with his robust understanding of the history and contemporary realities of the medical clinic. As a scholar, he respectfully restrains himself to his disciplines of medicine and philosophy, yet he peers into the terrain of theology, citing Pope John Paul II - philosopher and theologian - in the opening chapter. Bishop makes the philosophical points clear and accessible but leaves the theology undone, which is why his final hope sounds a call for theology to offer medicine a different telos - a different end. The cadaver - the first patient the medical school student ever sees - should be neither the starting point nor the endpoint for physicians. Just maybe, physicians (and systems) can learn to value the art of "being-there-with and suffering-there-with" the patient. Quite profoundly, to offer (com)passion, or quite possibly - love.

This book provides a deep and insightful analysis into the history of medicine, especially as it pertains to what values have driven current practices, and where they came from. It is a fascinating read, with many lines and concepts that will stick with you. It is also quite insightful in that it is able to pull in statistics, sociology and philosophy and show how other disciplines have contributed ideas and concepts to the current state of medicine, one that is arguably almost entirely focused on efficient causes, the animation of matter and the keeping of certain numbers within certain goal ranges, be they vital signs or epidemiologic/statistical data. However, Dr. Bishop is not satisfied with the current state, and gives a very cogent critique and wonders where medicine can go next, and how it might get there. Is there anything more to medicine than just keeping organs going? If so, what is it and why? Is there a true purpose to medicine? Or is medicine just tasked to keep the molecules/tissues/organs going until someone who has the authority says "stop?" The strength of this book comes from the fact that Dr. Bishop is both a physician and philosopher, so he brings a careful, thoughtful philosopher's approach to his years of experience as a physician, and can speak to both the philosopher and physician reader. This may not be for every casual reader, as there are a few more heady philosophical concepts, but this is an important work and contribution to the

understanding of medicine, where it has come from, and most importantly, where we want to take it and how to get it there. It will be one of those books that I will refer to for years to come in my own career.

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