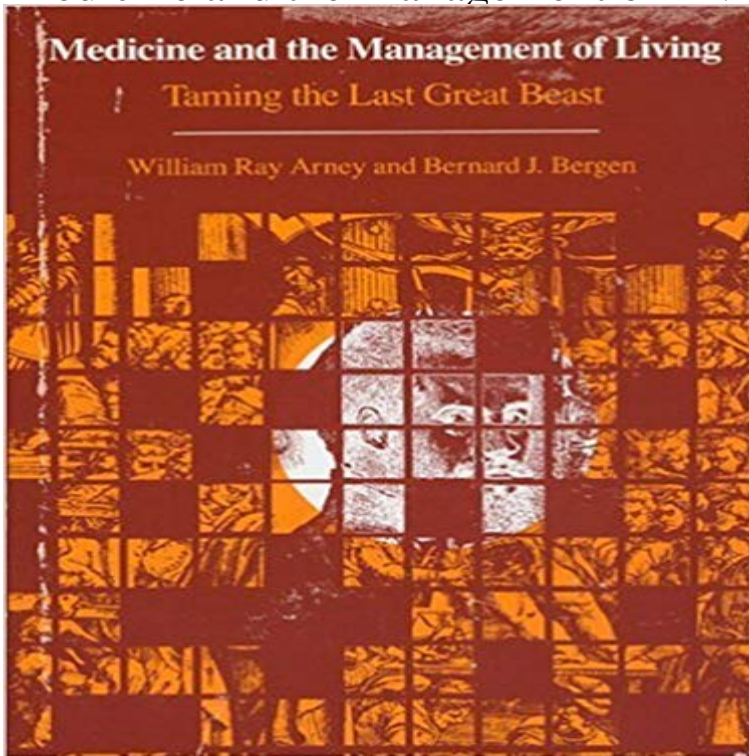


Medicine and the Management of Living: Taming the Last Great Beast



In recent years, relations between patients and physicians in America have undergone a dramatic change. The growing acceptance of natural childbirth, support groups for patients with serious illnesses, health maintenance organizations, and hospices for a happy death among family and friends is part of a redefinition of medical practice and reformulation of the field of medical power. No longer is medical practice confined to taming the beast of death and fighting the diseases observable in the human body. The modern practitioner is now a manager of the living, taking an ecological view of the patient as a whole person in a network of relationships. Medicine and the Management of Living questions how it has been possible for the patient to change from a silenced specimen observed in the clinic to a person whose subjective experience of illness is important to medical practice and discourse. Arney and Bergen ask, What incited the demand that medicine take the whole person, including the patient's presentation of his or her illness, into consideration? And in whose terms are patients speaking about themselves? The authors argue that the inclusion of patients' experiences in medical discourse that has come about since the 1950s is not so much a result of a patient rebellion as an activity precipitated by the medical establishment itself. Drawing inspiration from the work of Michel Foucault, Arney and Bergen examine the structure of medical power, contending that new social technologies like support groups make the patient's subjectivity available for medical evaluation, judgment, and manipulation. Throughout this sensitively written discussion, the authors vivify the issues they raise with excerpts from many sources: the writings of a poet dying of cancer, the comments of doctors pondering their own fatal illnesses, and excerpts from

popular magazines, medical journals, and sociological studies. They examine the changing role of the medical profession through history, using a modern advertising image and woodcuts from Vesalius Renaissance anatomy text to show the symbolic portrayal of health and medicine. Their wide-ranging concerns lead the reader through such topics as teenage pregnancy; the historical treatment of medical anomalies like hermaphrodites and the elephant man (John Merrick); and literary representations of illness in Sartre, Chekhov, and Brian Clarks recent Broadway drama, *Whose Life Is It Anyway?* In a provocative yet thoughtful way, *Medicine and the Management of Living* points the way for a radical reassessment of medical power and the medical establishment.

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