

Putting the Humanit(y/ies) in Health Care

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“Ichthyosis” by Jennifer Culkin

“But that isn’t the whole story...”

Jennifer Culkin

Ichthyosis

I know I will not remember her name. I remember instead the labels attached to her. Ichthyosis. Hydrocephalus. Looking back, I realize there was probably some error in her very fabric. There’s a text, *Smith’s Recognizable Patterns of Human Malformation*, that I think of as the syndrome bible: nearly a thousand pages on what happens when the most basic stuff of a body goes wrong. There are pictures of malformed babies and children, hundreds of them, all with black marks, like blindfolds, over their eyes. Protection for their privacy, their identities. But there is also the prurient eye of the camera, recording the places where the coding of a human being stumbles. Where cells, multiplying one by one in the darkness of a womb, branch away from the well-lighted, well-provisioned road of normality.

I loved the language of medicine from the first, and I still love it—the precision of it, the way it gives shape to chaos. If I look up ichthyosis and hydrocephalus in *Recognizable Patterns*, I may find some imperfect understanding of where her cells failed her. I may find a photo of a baby with an immense head, a wasted body, and the skin of a fish, along with a bloodless description of how such a baby might come to be in the world. I would take comfort in it. The language of medicine names the unspeakable, and moves on.

Yet her name is all she had to announce herself, and I’ve forgotten it. That feels like failure.

I can see her, though. The fine scattering of reddish hair that covered her huge, fluid-filled head, the dilated blue of her veins mapping out her scalp. I see how the bones of her skull were like islands, separated by wide straits of soft tissue. And I see the scales that covered every inch of her, except for the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet. Scales that flicked off, left raw

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Human, Humanity, Humanities

Oneself as Another **by Paul Ricoeur**

Who is speaking?

Who is acting?

Who is recounting about himself or herself?

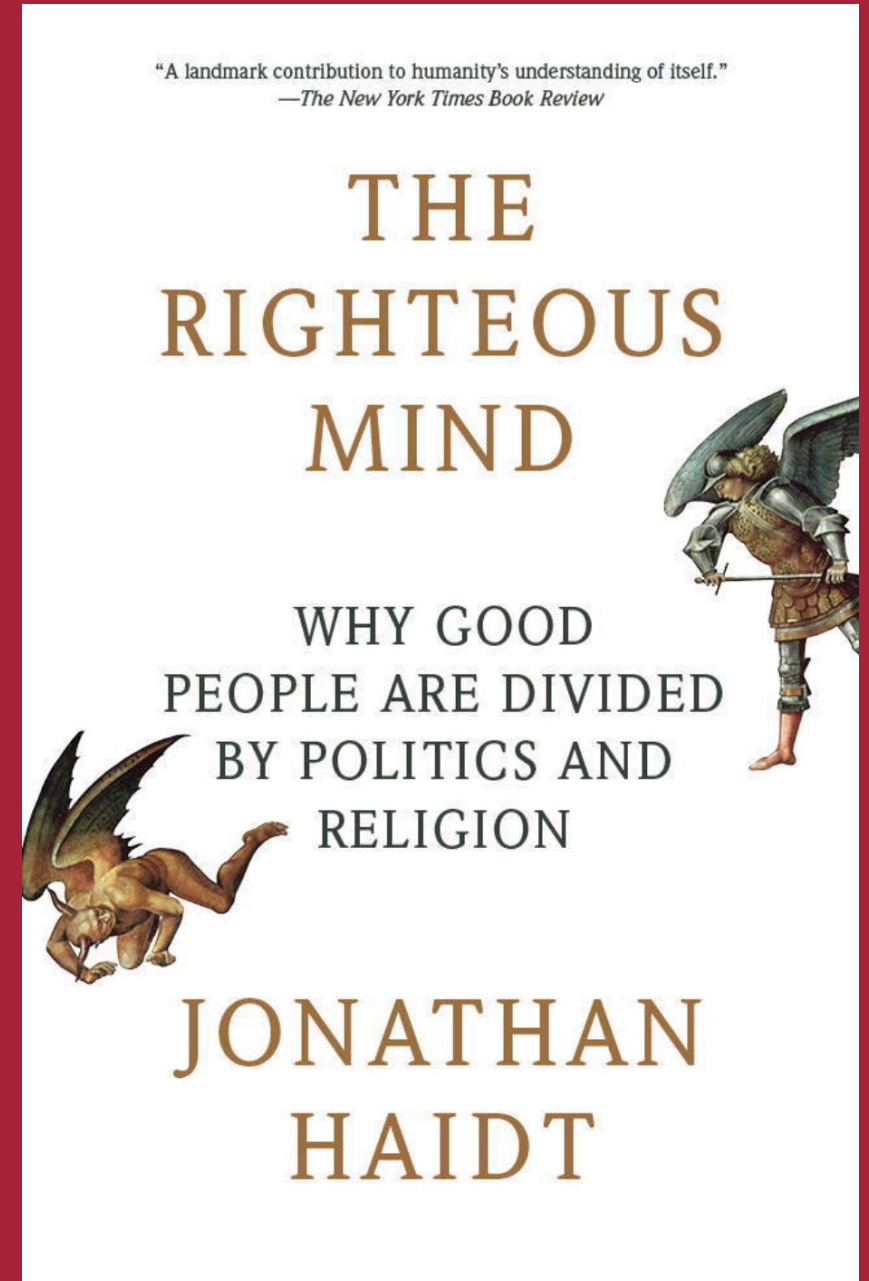
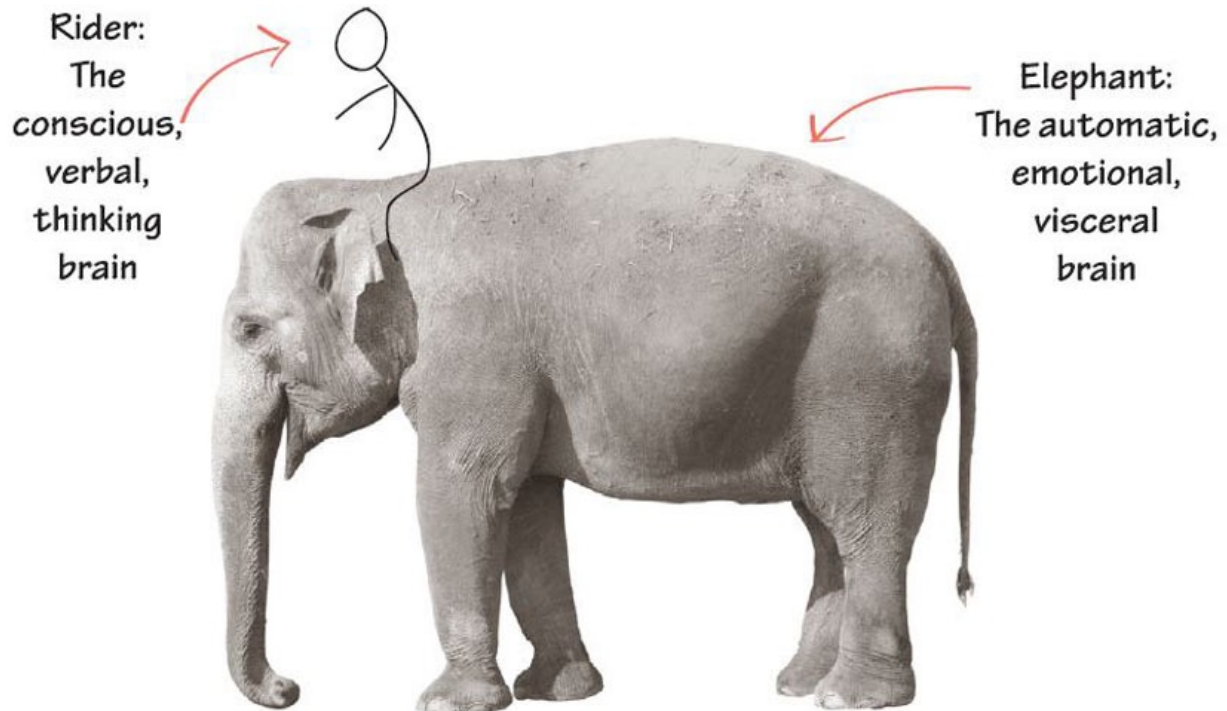
Who is the moral subject of imputation?"

PAUL RICOEUR

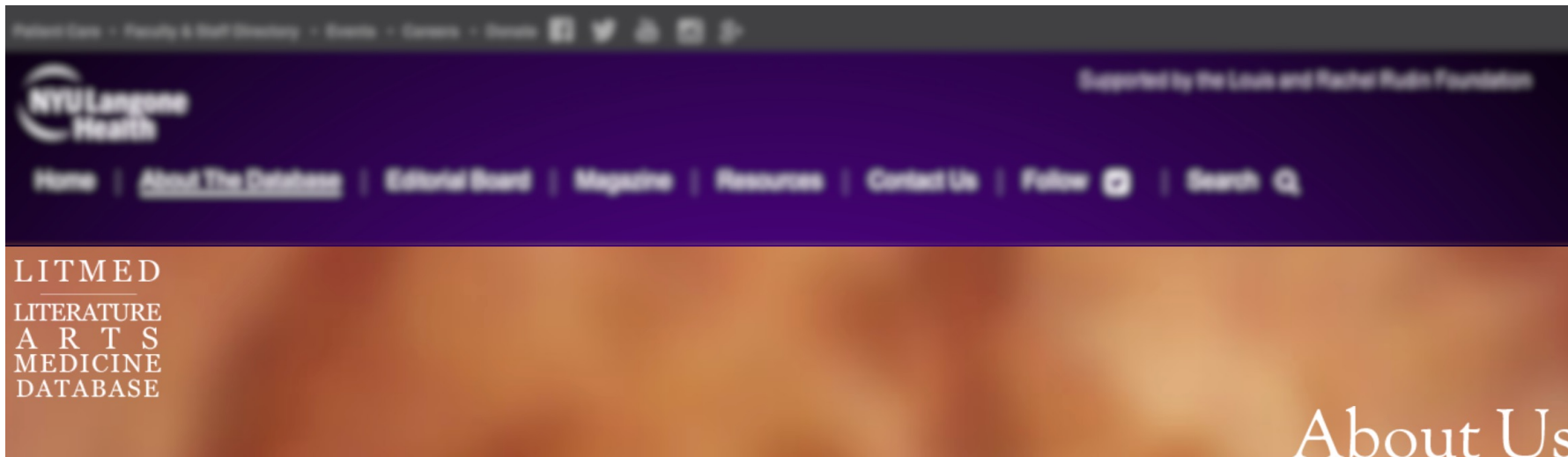
Oneself *as* Another

Translated by Kathleen Blamey

The Righteous Mind **by Jonathan Haidt**



The Humanities



Humanities, Social Sciences & The Arts in Relation to Medicine & Medical Training

The Literature, Arts and Medicine Database (LITMed) is a collection of literature, fine art, visual art and performing art annotations created as a dynamic, comprehensive resource for scholars, educators, students, patients, and others interested in medical humanities. It was created by faculty of the New York University School of Medicine in 1993. The annotations are written by an invited editorial board of scholars from all over

We define the term "medical humanities" broadly to include an interdisciplinary field of humanities (literature, philosophy, ethics, history and religion), social science (anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, sociology), and the arts (literature, theater, film, multimedia and visual arts) and their application to healthcare education and practice. The humanities and arts provide insight into the human condition, suffering, personhood, and our responsibility to each other. They also offer a historical perspective on healthcare. Attention to literature and the arts helps to develop and nurture skills of observation, analysis, empathy, and self-reflection -- skills that are essential for humane healthcare. The social sciences help us to understand how bioscience and medicine take place within cultural and social contexts and how culture interacts with the individual experience of illness and the way healthcare is practiced.



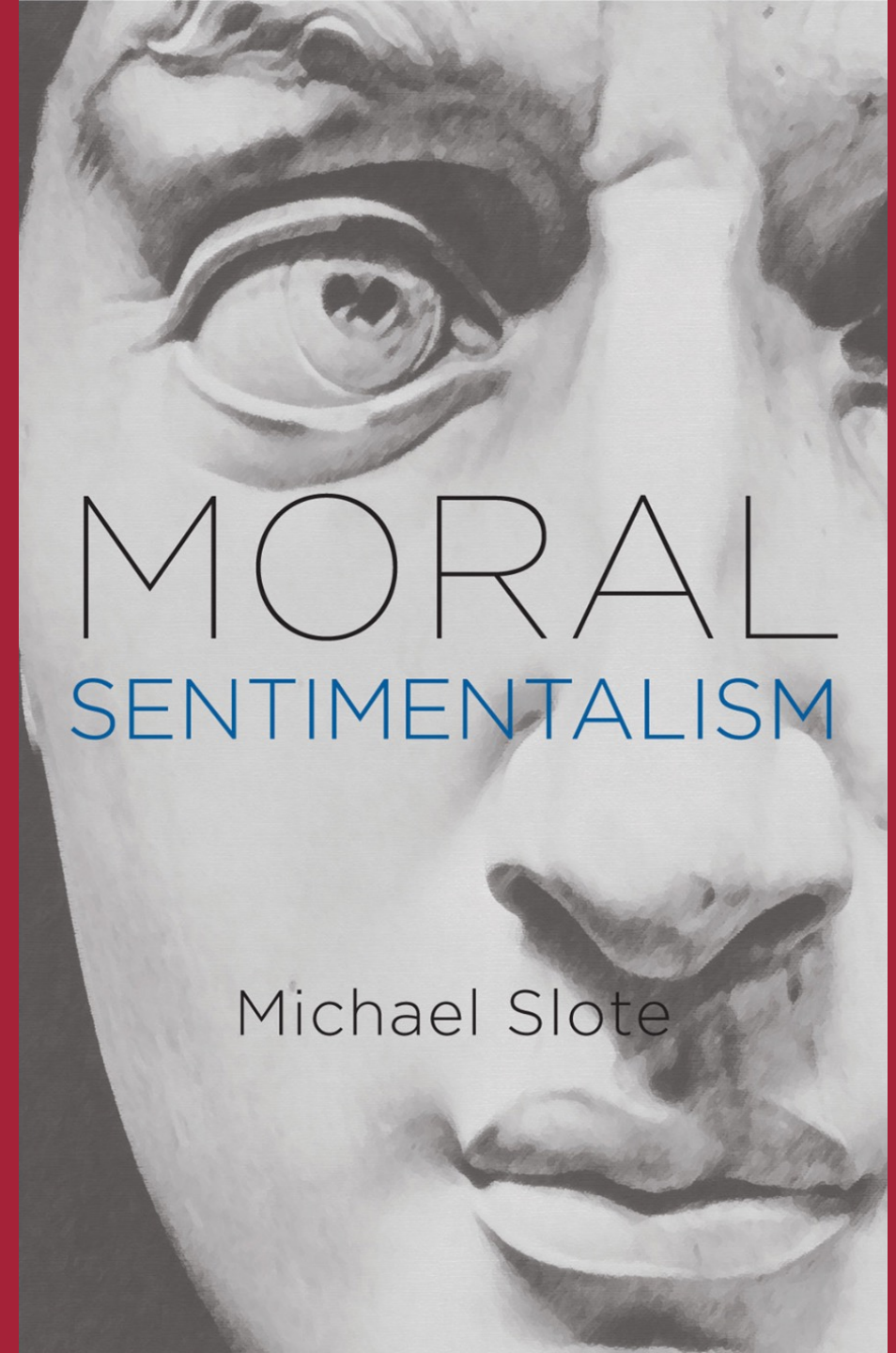
Moral Sentimentalism **by Michael Slote**

Empathy...

“the cement...of sentimentalism as a total, present-day theoretical approach to moral issues.”

“The difference between sympathy and empathy,” he writes, “corresponds to the distinction between feeling (sorry) for someone who is in pain and (like Bill Clinton) feeling their pain.”

“empathy involves having the feelings of another (involuntarily) aroused in ourselves, as when we see another in pain.”



Caring by Nel Noddings

Empathy...

“I do not project; I receive the other into myself and I see and feel with the other. I become a duality.”

“Nel Noddings’s deeply original book shows us how to think afresh about this most primeval of human relationships.”—Jack Miles, author of God: A Biography and Christ: A Crisis in the Life of God

NEL NODDINGS
SECOND EDITION, UPDATED



CARING

A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education

Empathy and the Novel by Suzanne Keen

Narrative Empathy...

“...the sharing of feeling and perspective-taking induced by reading, viewing, hearing, or imagining narratives of another’s situation and condition.”

“‘Empathy’ becomes yet another example of the Western imagination’s imposition of its own values on cultures and peoples that it scarcely knows, but presumes to ‘feel with,’ in a cultural imperialism of the emotions.”

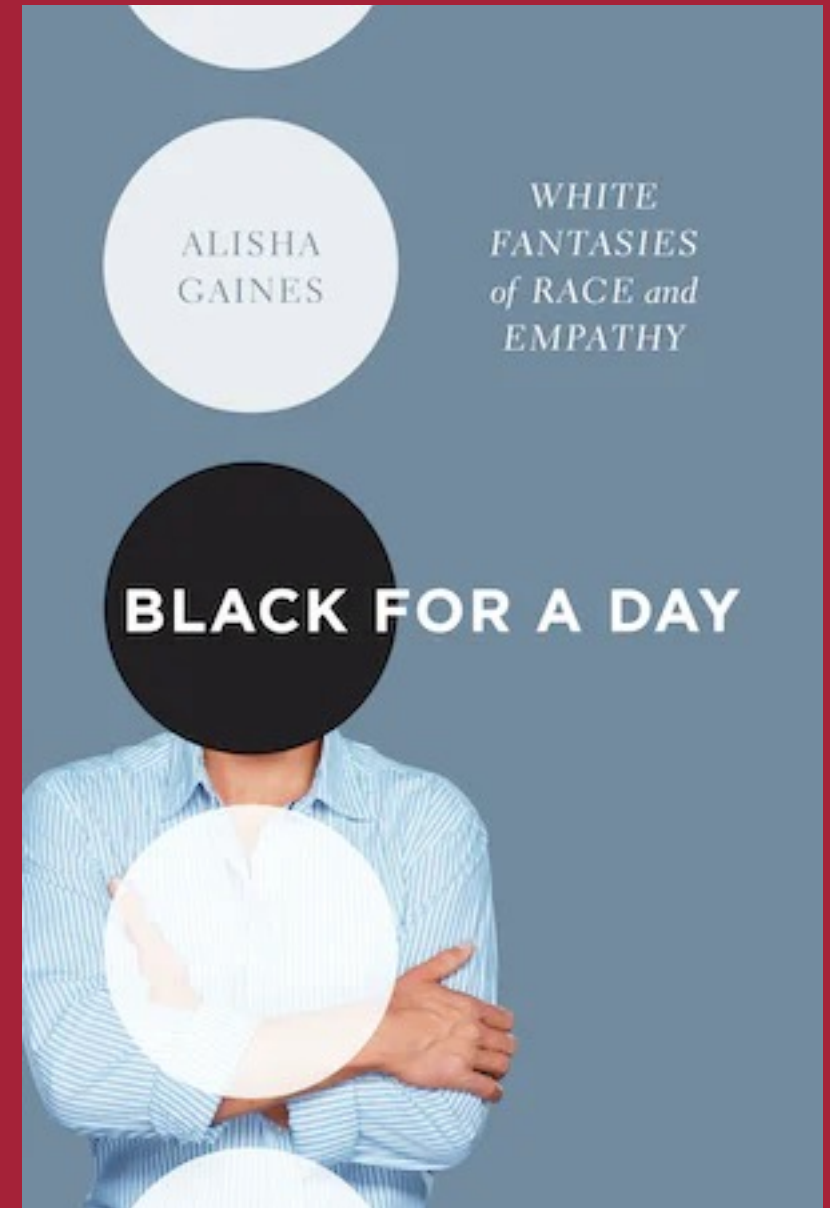


EMPATHY AND THE NOVEL

SUZANNE KEEN

Black for a Day **by Alisha Gaines**

“Empathetic racial impersonation”



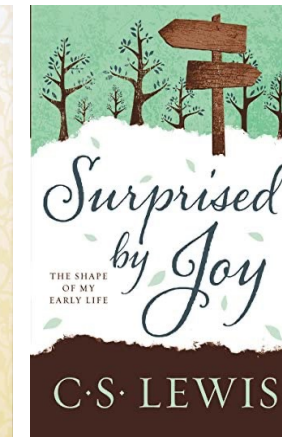
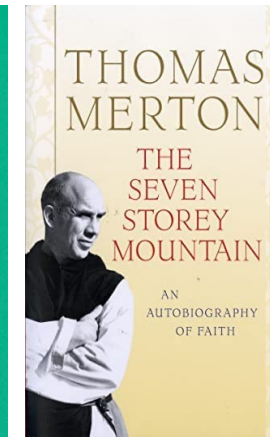
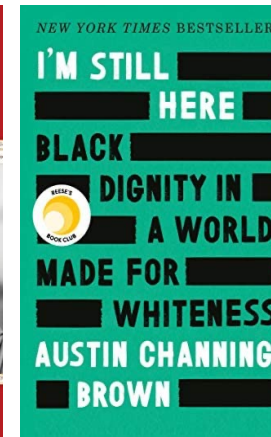
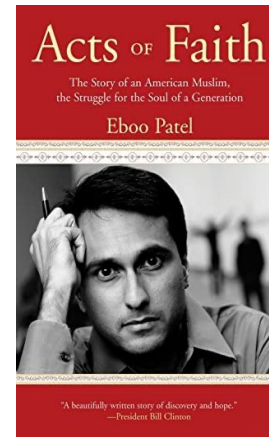
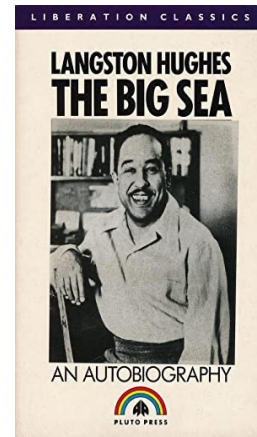
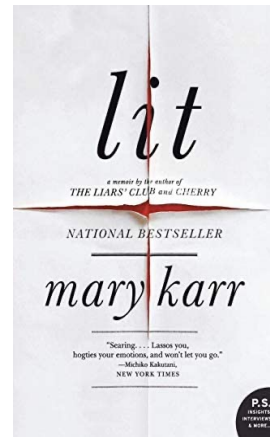
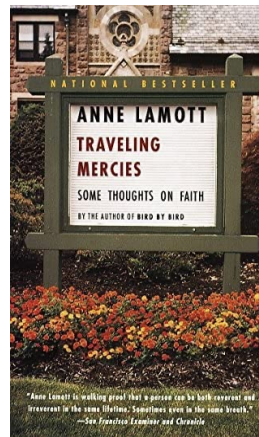
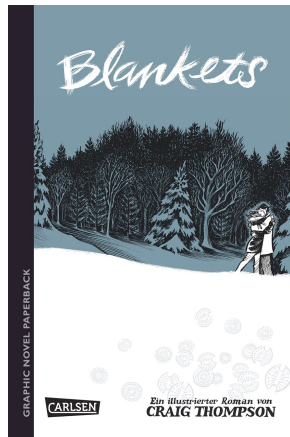
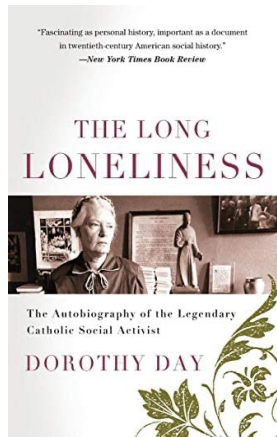
Disaffected by Xine Yao

Complicating Empathy...

To acknowledge sympathy only as feeling across difference erases its violent origins in the matrices of domination that produce the system of racial difference. We should instead apprehend the hierarchies built into sympathy, a concept that has been foundational to the geopolitical configurations of modernity—including the construction of the United States.



Stories of Belief



The diagnosis: Bifurcation

The remedy: Transdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinary Research **by Allen F. Repko & Rick Szostak**

Interdisciplinary Studies...

“...a process of answering a question, solving a problem, or addressing a topic that is too broad or complex to be dealt with adequately by a single discipline and draws on the disciplines with the goal of integrating their insights to construct a more comprehensive understanding.”



Transdisciplinarity

(as opposed to multi- or inter-disciplinarity)

“...exemplifies one of the historically important driving forces in the area of interdisciplinarity, namely, the idea of the desirability of the integration of knowledge into some meaningful whole” (Petrie).

“...integrates the natural, social and health sciences in a humanities context, and transcends their traditional boundaries” (Choi and Pak).

Going Forward...

- encourage students training for healthcare professions to branch out and take courses in Humanities disciplines
- the integration of literature into already existing nursing courses
- more opportunities for collaboration across disciplines to explore specific topics

Thank you!





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