



Mending Bodies, Saving Souls: A History of Hospitals

Guenter B. Risse

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By chronicling the transformations of hospitals from houses of mercy to tools of confinement, from dwellings of rehabilitation to spaces for clinical teaching and research, from rooms for birthing and dying to institutions of science and technology, this book provides a historical approach to understanding of today's hospitals. The story is told in a dozen episodes which illustrate hospitals in particular times and places, covering important themes and developments in the history of medicine and therapeutics, from ancient Greece to the era of AIDS. This book furnishes a unique insight into the world of meanings and emotions associated with hospital life and patienthood by including narratives by both patients and care givers. By conceiving of hospitals as houses of order capable of taming the chaos associated with suffering, illness, and death, we can better understand the significance of their ritualized routines and rules. From their beginnings, hospitals were places of spiritual and physical recovery. They should continue to respond to all human needs. As traditional testimonials to human empathy and benevolence, hospitals must endure as spaces of healing.

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