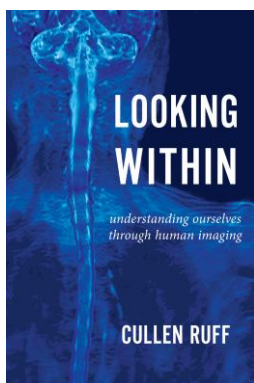


Book shelf

Looking Within: Understanding Ourselves Through Human Imaging

Ruff

REVIEW INFO



Publisher:
Torchflame Books

ISBN:
978-1-611-53320-0

RRP:
£12.99 / eBook £1.48

REVIEW

Book reviewed by Dr Arpan K Banerjee, trustee and former chair, British Society for the History of Radiology.

Of all the radiology books I have had the privilege of reviewing throughout the years this must surely stand out as one of the most unusual. Usually one is sent books aimed at trainees to help them with their postgraduate examinations; or there may be the large comprehensive reference work on different specialities; or occasionally a scholarly sole author monograph on a particular branch of the vast subject modern radiology has become. The single author tome has become rarer as the years have gone by and super-specialisation makes mastering complete areas almost impossible.

This book does not fall into any of these categories. It is essentially a unique humanistic introspective reflective collection of stories by the author who reflects on his vast experience as an office-based general radiologist who has collected the tales of his patients as they have embarked on their perilous journeys of ill health, and the roles imaging has played in these encounters. These range from imaging techniques, such as CT, that have clinched the diagnosis (for example pancreatic cancer) when the answer eluded the fine clinical minds attending the patient; head scans that have confirmed trauma or strokes; and plain film studies that have detected child abuse.

Patients who have been helped by radiology such as early detection of breast cancer and others in denial of diagnosis are all here, with many examples of how radiology is also often futile in altering outcomes – patients know they are terminal but hunting the diagnosis with imaging often does not alter the inevitable death. Each story – whether from the author's medical school days, experience as a radiology resident trainee or as a practising general radiologist – is patient centred and essentially a heart-warming tale of the varieties of the human illness experience.

I could not put the book down, such was the effect of the writing. Each case
review continues ...

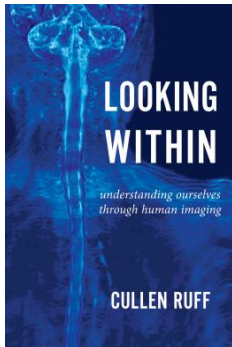
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... review continued

was illustrated with the imaging the patient had undergone.

The author has tried heroically to put some of the humanism back into radiology, which has often been criticised for its remoteness from the clinical experience. The author sadly concludes that with advancing digitisation, AI and teleworking the radiologist is more likely in the future to be even more detached from the patients. A speciality that looks at people from within, oblivious to the outside physical appearance, can play a major role in the patient pathway in all settings ranging from the emergency room or hospital outpatients to community settings – provided that radiologists communicate with their patients and the referring clinicians. Clinical radiology will only survive if these criteria continue to be met or doctors in this field risk becoming no more than dehumanised technicians with poorer job satisfaction.

The true stories of patients in this volume will be profitably read by all and serve as a reminder about the importance of a humanistic approach to healthcare, how imaging can help enhance the understanding of a patient's condition and help us understand ourselves better so we can be more kind and caring practitioners of this noble art of healing.

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December 16, 2020.*