

26TH ANNIVERSARY SERIES



UM INSTITUTE FOR BIOETHICS AND HEALTH POLICY PRESENTS

DIALOGUES IN RESEARCH ETHICS

DIALOGUE 182

Anatomy in “Nazi” Germany – Politics, Science, Ethics and Legacy

Sabine Hildebrandt, MD

Boston Children’s Hospital and Harvard Medical School

12 noon, Friday, March 9, 2018

Mailman Center for Child Development, Room 3023

Lunch provided; first come, first served.

The systematic exploration of the interaction between the anatomical sciences and the National Socialist (NS) regime in Germany has only recently begun. Anatomists, in their role as physical anthropologists and racial hygienists, contributed to the scientific justification of the biologicistic NS ideology. After 1933, most of those anatomists not dismissed for “racial” or political reasons joined the NS party. Some served as leaders in the teaching and implementation of eugenics, and all of them profited from changes in traditional anatomical body procurement, which included increasing numbers of victims of the NS regime. Anatomists used these bodies for teaching and research purposes. A few researchers left the traditional paradigm of knowledge gained through work with the dead for a new paradigm of working with the “future dead” in human experiments on prisoners who were subsequently murdered. Legacies from this history inform deliberations on the use of human bodies in current medical education.

Dr. Hildebrandt is assistant professor of pediatrics in the Division of General Pediatrics, Department of Medicine, Boston Children’s Hospital, and a lecturer on Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School. After medical studies at the University of Marburg, Germany, and a professional start in experimental rheumatology, she became an anatomical educator. Her book, *The Anatomy of Murder: Ethical Transgressions and Anatomical Science during the Third Reich*, (Berghahn, 2016) is the first systematic study of anatomy during National Socialism.

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