of the provision of family planning services worldwide will find this booklet useful. Those who realise that man has the privilege of living *sub specie aeternitatis* will have to look elsewhere for the justification, which I believe to exist, for the employment of contraception.

REX GARDNER

The Sensitive Scientist: Report of a British Association Study Group

David Morley
London, SCM Press, 1978, pp 131,
£1.95

The wilting flower on the cover and the somewhat vague title of this book arouse misleading expectations. It is not about bashful physicists, touchy chemists, and the bruised spirit of the contemporary biologist, but about the handling of ethical issues in science. In 1973 the British Association in consultation with the British Council of Churches established a study group on science and ethics, consisting of Professor John Ferguson, Mr H J Blackham, Professor Sir Hermann Bondi, Professor G R Dunstan, the Bishop of Durham, Dr H G Miller, Dr Magnus Pyke, Sir Lincoln Ralphs and Dr S M Walters. This group met over a three year period and its report has been written up with such exemplary grace and clarity by David Morley that it is hard to find any trace of the disjointed mess and infelicity so characteristic of committee papers.

There are still some scientists who believe that their project is

effectively independent of value considerations, and many who, while acknowledging that the scientific enterprise engages significant ethical issues, feel great uncertainty in handling these questions. To both these groups as well as to those others who are already deeply concerned with questions of values in science this book will have helpful, suggestive, and perhaps provocative things to say. It proceeds largely by way of clarifying the ethical issues arising in a series of case-studies. The question of the desirability of publishing results whatever the consequences and however these results may be used is examined in special relation to Jensen and Eysenck's work on race and intelligence. The ethics of experimentation on animals and balancing priorities in the provision and withholding of medical care are carefully discussed. We are shown how the work of the food scientist on the one hand and space research on the other lead directly to tricky questions of public policy regarding the allocation of resources for research and the consequences of that research. Questions of conflicting values in matters of conservation and ecology occupy two chapters, and there is an illuminating discussion of issues of secrecy and moral responsibility in defence research.

The second part of the book is concerned with more general issues arising from the recognition of the importance of ethics in science. Scientific education should provide far more fully than is usual for the consideration of ethical and social issues; otherwise it perpetuates a false and dangerous dichotomy

between facts and values. The selection of topics for research always involves value assumptions which are frequently quite unexamined. Also the natural and physical scientist often has a distinct perspective which, in interaction with that of the social scientist, can help in the treatment of a wide range of social problems. The message of the book is summed up thus: 'The scientist must be aware that, even in the practice of his craft, he is implicitly making value judgements which may have ethical implications. Moreover, whenever his activities affect the community at large, then he has special responsibilities which he cannot abrogate. He must weigh the probable consequences of his work, even though he cannot be certain that he can see them all, for good or ill. In all such cases, whenever the conventions of science become inadequate and other values need to be considered, it is important that decisions are consciously reached, and that due weight is given both to the underlying principles and values involved, and also to the consequences of particular courses of action.'

This book does not so much answer questions as raise issues which are of great importance, but still often neglected, and clarify the kind of considerations which are relevant to their proper handling. A great deal more work needs to be done in this area by scientists, ethicists, and social scientists. This book could hardly be bettered as a stimulus to further discussion of vital issues of ethical responsibility in science, and it deserves to be widely read.

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