

corners and has slipped into errors which confuse. Few geneticists for example, would feel happy with the sentence: 'The genes occupying identical loci on homologous chromosomes also are homologous' (pp 9/10). This could well confuse the novice when he or she comes to grips with dominant and recessive inheritance and with homozygosity or heterozygosity. A criticism relevant to those readers outside the USA is that most of the legislation discussed (of patents, commercial law, state law etc) is relevant only in the USA.

Now I should come clean! A feeling that confronts me each time I dip into this book is that Professor Holtzman is telling us what should be done, not providing us with facts and a balanced discussion. In my view this is the major issue in medical genetics and ethics today. Everyone should be open about those matters which are within the individual's freedom of choice and that choice should be clear. Legal frameworks do give room for personal choice; those who survey the field have a responsibility to emphasise that fact. I would agree with and give high importance to many of Professor Holtzman's opinions. However, the barrage of his opinions – all mixed-up with the facts – means that the lay reader might be too punch-drunk to disagree!

I agree very much with the need for adequate provision of genetic counselling services (p 157). In the USA the medical care systems may well encourage diagnostic and laboratory facilities to be made available at the expense of those involving genetic counselling. Perhaps Holtzman envisages a more directive genetic counselling approach than would most geneticists.

In conclusion, Holtzman offers his own recommendations. These emphasise the inevitability of genetic screening, notwithstanding its dangers. Holtzman rightly stresses the need for community knowledge to be increased and for rigorous quality control.

What advice would I give to those who are involved in or interested in the ethics of genetic screening? Buy the paperback version. Do not read it through and through; use it as a source of information. Do not assume that Holtzman's conclusions must be agreed with; use them to provoke your own thoughts and ideas. Above all read other publications which impinge on this important topic for example: Wald N, ed. *Antenatal and Neonatal Screening*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984;

Warnock M. *A Question of Life*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1985, and Church of Scotland. *Abortion in Debate*. Edinburgh, Quorum Press, 1987.

In fairness to Professor Holtzman, I am sure that such scepticism is exactly the response that he wishes.

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By What Right?: Studies in Medicine, Ethics and the Law

Edited by Peter de Cruz and David McNaughton, 73 pages, Newcastle-under-Lyme, £7.00, Penrhos Publications, 1989

This book is the outcome of a weekend conference held in 1987 to mark the launching of a one-year part-time Diploma in Medical Ethics, which is offered by the Departments of Law and Philosophy at the University of Keele. All but one of the essays are revised versions of papers delivered at the conference. It is therefore to be expected that the contents of the book do not contribute to a single theme. There are five essays: The Leonard Arthur case by Peter de Cruz (doctor); Killing and letting die by David McNaughton (philosopher); Construction and working of a district hospital ethics committee by Christopher Rice (clinical lecturer); Human experimentation by Calliope Farsides (philosopher); The ethics of infertility treatment and embryo research by David Jabbari (lawyer). The essays all make interesting contributions individually, and no doubt it was a good conference. It is less obvious that the essays cohere as a unified book.

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Undergraduate Medical Ethics Education

F Baylis and J Downie, 142 pages, London, Ontario, Canada, \$8.95, Westminster Institute for Ethics and

Human Values, 1990

This book provides a useful survey of medical ethics education in the sixteen Canadian medical schools, and complements studies done in Britain, the United States and other countries. The survey was carried out in 1989 by the use of a wide-ranging questionnaire sent to each medical school.

Information was sought on the amount of ethics teaching, the curriculum and content, the stages in the undergraduate course that teaching took place, and the methods of teaching. This book summarises and tabulates the responses, and there emerges a mixed picture with some ethics being formally taught in all but one of the schools, but wide variation in both methods of teaching, curriculum time and content. Where ethics is taught there is also formal student evaluation, but methods of evaluation are equally diverse.

In conclusion, the study specifically reinforces many of the recommendations of the British *Pond Report* (1), emphasising the importance of ethics in health-care practice and pointing out the need for well-planned ethics teaching throughout the undergraduate course. Also needed is further training in medical ethics for many teachers, and multi-disciplinary co-operation in planning and carrying out the teaching.

This book will provide information on the various approaches that are being adopted in Canada, for those who are involved in teaching health care ethics to medical students. At a stage where the subject is developing rapidly this is a useful summary of the current position.

Reference

- (1) Boyd K, ed. *Report of a working party on the teaching of medical ethics: the Pond Report*. London: IME Publications Ltd, 1987.

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Birthrights: Law and Ethics at the Beginnings of Life

Edited by Robert Lee and Derek Morgan, 222 pages, London, £9.99, Routledge, 1990

This book, first published in Spring 1989, returns with a preface which surveys and comments on the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill (now Act). The book contains eleven original essays aimed at 'student and lay person alike' but the variety and depth of subjects is likely to appeal to others, particularly academics and clinicians.

The book wins in several ways. It offers a rich mosaic of perspectives. Celia Wells conveys the agony of choice concerning the question of treatment of severely injured infants and seeks to justify non-treatment where continuation of life would not be in an infant's best interests. Derek Morgan sifts the stock of values and meanings surrounding surrogacy and Katherine O'Donovan illuminates how anonymity and secrecy are paralleled in adoption and gamete donation.

Her aim is to encourage critical analysis of the assumptions built into the responses of law and medicine to parentage. A similarly critical approach is forcefully presented by Robert Lee and Derek Morgan in their challenge to the courts' marshalling of facts in *Re B* in which the House of Lords upheld the authorisation of sterilisation on a severely mentally handicapped woman. In a separate essay Lee offers an equally pungent exposure of the hidden values which have directed the judiciary when deciding wrongful birth and wrongful life arguments.

Another of the book's values is the tension between approaches. Linda Clarke asserts a woman's right to choose whether or not to undergo abortion. The ontological status of the embryo or fetus is subsumed by the paramountcy of the woman's choice. John Harris, on the other hand, accepts the status of the embryo for the purposes of examining the ethics of embryo experimentation.

Most of the essays survey comprehensively the recent clinical and legal responses in particular areas. Frances Price offers a short review and comment on the medical profession's response to three problematic areas: multiple egg and embryo transfer, selective feticide, and egg donation by known donors. John Dewar examines the practice of and official responses to AID and reveals the male-centred shepherding of debate on the subject.

There are certain minor deficiencies in the book. For a volume entitled *Birthrights*, there is a noticeable lack of analysis of the language of rights. For example, Morgan and Lee speak of the right to reproduce as equivalent to the right to have one's reproductive capacities safeguarded. Yet the former

may be wider than the latter. It may place an obligation on the state to facilitate reproduction. Only Elizabeth Kingdom addresses the difficulties in rights language; specifically, the problems for women in appeals to equal rights and the illusionary alternative of special rights, which may be no more than a sophisticated re-description of the former.

There is engaging variety and scope in this book, although Robert Lee is the only author who points to the economic map on which all these issues are located. His observations are timely and significant. The debate on birth is likely to be joined by the issue of resource allocation, with far-reaching implications for health care generally. On the whole, this book is a rich collection of stimulating responses to the complexities of and interrelations between law, ethics, and practice in the area of human reproduction.

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Keepers: Inside Stories from Total Institutions

Sholom Glouberman, 148 pages, London, £9.95, King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, 1990

This is a strange and, in the end, a rather unsatisfactory book. The author, in a short introduction, explains that his purpose in writing it (apart from a personal aspiration to 'confront the most dreaded aspects of physical and mental decline and death') is to address the role of staff members in various forms of total institutions (a prison, a psychiatric hospital, a hospital for physically and mentally handicapped children, a geriatric wing in a long-stay hospital etc), whom he calls collectively 'keepers'. Glouberman claims, rightly, that in organisational literature the place of keepers is given little detailed study, or is treated in an oddly dehumanised way: 'We are reminded of schoolteachers who are thought by their pupils to have no life outside the classroom and the school. They are not really people and cannot have normal human relationships. They do not have the normal range of human emotions. Most especially they lack sympathy'. The present book is, then, an attempt to redress the imbalance, by presenting a series of twelve interviews conducted by the author with the 'keepers', ostensibly to explore some of the complexities of

the keeper/inmate relationship. This is a promising idea, and a very useful book could have been written on what is clearly an important subject. Unfortunately this book does not do the job.

The interviews are tidily (though surely quite misleadingly) presented in the form of interviewee monologue, with all the questioner's promptings and inquiries omitted. This gives the reader the strange impression that all Glouberman's interviewees had the habit of jumping from one subject to another in an unpredictable way (a characteristic of 'keepers'?). Prior to each printed interview, however, the author sets out his thoughts on the interviewee. These comments do not just place the interview in context, but are often very strong in personal terms. Before we read the statement of a senior prison officer in a maximum security prison in response to the author's undeclared questions, the author warns us that: 'Here is a man who does lie You review what he says and take it that his real feelings are almost diametrically opposed to what he says. My guess is that the results are then not far wrong . . .'. An interview with a different maximum security prison officer is prefaced by the comment: 'Mr Rathwell is a distinguished and somewhat military looking man of 60. He has a quiet calm manner. He treats all convicts as prisoners of war'. Ironically, the author then claims that Mr Rathwell 'seems the least stereotypical of the keepers. I was then left feeling unsure of who was doing the stereotyping and very distrustful of the author's summaries.

What this book is crying out for is a proper theoretical framework or rationale within which the material the author has gathered can be usefully examined and assessed. We need a much expanded introduction to the book, which would address the underlying issues in the inmate/keeper relationship, such as personal autonomy, control and surveillance, power and dependence and role-restriction. As it stands, the whole project suffers from being much too subjective and impressionistic. In the end the only conclusion to draw (the author makes no attempt to offer one) is that 'keepers' (like interviewees) 'are human, too!' This does not take us very much further in getting to grips with the important issues underlying this book.

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