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[Book Review of] *Bioethics*, edited by Thomas A. Shannon

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moral matters. The essay by Gorovitz and MacIntyre, "Toward a Theory of Medical Fallibility," argues for a science of particulars, which would revise societal response to medical error, the physician's liability for error and the patient's attitude toward the physician.

— Thomas L. Kenealy, S.J.
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Bioethics

Thomas A. Shannon, Editor

Paulist Press, 1865 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10023, 1976. 523 pp., \$9.95 (paper).

The fast-growing literature in "bioethics" (still an infant science) is already becoming unwieldy. Good editorial work, to collect the most valuable contributions, is and will be an essential task. Thomas Shannon has successfully addressed this need in *Bioethics: basic writings on the key ethical questions that surround the major modern biological possibilities and problems*.

Twenty-nine reprinted articles by Callahan, Bok, Gustafson, McCormick, Capron, Kass, Veatch, Walters, Childress, Lappé, Roblin, Outka, the Fletchers, and others are included. The hefty book is arranged in topical sections: 1) abortion, 2) severely handicapped children, 3) death and dying, 4) research and human experimentation, 5) genetic engineering and genetic policy, 6) allocation of scarce resources, and 7) behavior control.

In his introductory essay, Shannon neatly summarizes the development of Roman Catholic tradition in moral theology. He chides those who expect simplicity here, or who capitulate to inappropriate authoritarianism. He is careful to draw the crucial distinction between the Church's attempts to mediate the wisdom of long experience and reflection, and Her capacity to make definitive immutable pronouncements (the latter *never* having been employed for *any* moral/ethical question).

Some of the papers found here are milestones, even "classics" in bioethics. For example, an article by Lappé *et al.* (1972), on issues in genetic screening, was probably influential in the framing of a major book on that subject (B. Childs *et al.*, 1975, National Academy of Sciences).

The notion of *justice* has received renewed attention lately. Shannon demonstrates his awareness of this important trend by inclusion of excellent articles by Jonson, Outka, and Childress in his selection on allocation of scarce resources.

The strength of this compendium is in the disparity of the opinions expressed within it. The book is designedly pluralistic, to stimulate critical thinking among students, professionals, and other interested persons. It is highly recommended as a source-book, reference, or college text.

— Robert Roger Lebel, S.J.,
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