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## [Book Review of] *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, edited by Warren T. Reich

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controversy cannot be settled, the parties to the controversy should back off from the partisan excesses which characterize the dispute in order to avoid the normative chaos to which these excesses are leading.

Such a conclusion is unlikely to be acceptable to the contesting parties. For example, the concern to develop consensus and to avoid normative chaos is likely to seem less important to the anti-abortionist than the protection of unborn life. Moreover, the anti-abortionist is not irrational if he or she regards the arguments that the humanity of the embryo is not settled to be less than definitive. Many questions readily come to mind: why should lack of consensus on the question of the humanity of the fetus be decisive? Is one's body identical with his corpse in the same way as it is identical with the embryo from which one came? How can a living human being be distinguished from his or her living body? If monsters are doubtfully human, why should any embryo be also doubtfully human? If the issue can't be settled on empirical or conceptual grounds, why *must* the decision be in some measure arbitrary? Does our pluralistic legal and moral system contain no norms which may be used to justify *favoring* the membership of disputed classes in humanity?

So it is by no means settled that the question of the humanity of the embryo is unsettled. The arguments about whether or not this question and others like it are settled are inevitably part of the partisan controversy. This inevitability suggests that a Catholic university might better execute its civic responsibility on issues like abortion by promoting the debate or formally getting into it than by attempting to discuss or to re-orient the debate. If this were done, perhaps the anti-abortion position which the editors regard as unsophisticated would get the academic elaboration which many Americans feel it deserves.

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## *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*

Warren T. Reich, Editor

*The Free Press, New York, N.Y., 1978. 4 volumes, \$200.00.*

When the first tentative questions and articles in bioethics began to emerge some two decades ago, few realized the tremendous impact these questions would have. Now we have the *Encyclopedia of Bioethics* which surely was not envisioned when such questions were first raised, but which serves as an authentic confirmation both of the importance of bioethics as a field of study in itself and its value in helping to address many contemporary dilemmas in the life sciences and health care. The basic purpose of the encyclopedia is not "to freeze knowledge, but to summarize and analyze the historical and current state of knowledge in bioethics." Another purpose is to stimulate future research, surely a unique goal for an encyclopedia. In the following, a general overview of the encyclopedia is given first, and then specific articles on the following topics are criticized: abortion, death, informed consent and population ethics.

One test of the promise of a project such as this is the quality of the editorial staff, the editorial advisory board, and the authors. Many of the editors and

authors of the *Encyclopedia of Bioethics* have been involved with bioethics from the beginning and have made excellent contributions to the field. The authors of the individual articles are among the best writers in bioethics, and they represent a variety of professions, interests, and orientations. High scholarship, therefore, is assured along with a balanced interdisciplinary orientation and diversity of viewpoints.

With respect to the content, there are six basic levels: specific ethical problems, concepts and principles used as guides for analysis, ethical themes, religious traditions, history of medical ethics, and information about disciplines bearing on bioethics. Within this general framework, there are 314 articles. To achieve coherence, some articles are arranged under one major entry. Thus, the entry on infants has articles on medical aspects and ethical dilemmas, ethical perspectives on the care of infants, public policy and procedural questions, and infanticide. Also several entries, each with their own group of articles, deal with different perspectives of a problem; for example, major entries under population ethics include elements of the field, religious traditions, and policy proposals. The entry on the history of medical ethics is outstanding in terms both of its historical dimensions and international perspectives. Essays of this nature will surely help individuals gain a better perspective on the development of ethical themes and how different cultures handle similar problems. There are entries on how the major world religions face bioethical problems, while other articles present strictly philosophical orientations. Every major problem in bioethics is either alluded to or is the subject of an article, and there are even articles on civil disobedience, violence, and warfare and their relation to bioethics. The latter give a rather unique viewpoint and are especially welcome.

An appendix to the *Encyclopedia* reprints codes of ethics and professional statements related to health care. This section includes introductions to the codes themselves, general codes related to the practice of medicine, directions for human experimentation, the patient's bill of rights, and codes of specialty health care systems. The appendix is very useful since it presents a variety of information which is often difficult to obtain.

Bibliographies following each entry refer to the author's sources, as well as to other source materials. The entries are also cross referenced, and there is a general index at the end of the fourth volume. This increases the usefulness of the encyclopedia, especially since the cross referencing is well done. One feature of special interest to librarians, and those who wish to own a well-printed book is the paper used. It is a special acid-free stock with a shelf life of 400 years. Care in selecting the paper is one more indication of the high quality that went into the production of the encyclopedia. Moreover, the print is easy to read, and the page format is well designed. Space is not wasted, but neither are the pages overpowering because of crowding.

The first entry in the encyclopedia, on abortion, has six parts: medical, Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant perspectives, contemporary and legal aspects and contemporary perspectives on the problem. The authors have all done major work in the topic assigned. The entry is 31 pages long, and each section has an excellent bibliography. The articles are clearly written and present the main points of each topic; the tone is neither argumentative nor ideological; pros and cons, as well as different perspectives are presented so that the reader will have an excellent overview plus a summary understanding of the basic positions and problems in the abortion debate.

The medical aspects of abortion have to do with the reasons for an abortion: the saving of maternal life, preserving an average life span of the mother and for fetal indications. The article also includes a definition of abortion: the termination of a pregnancy, spontaneously or by intention, previous to viability. There is

a description of abortion procedures by trimester: the first trimester, suction curettage and "D & C"; second trimester, surgical (hysterotomy) and medical (saline or prostaglandin). Since the use of prostaglandins do not directly kill the fetus and the use of saline does, an ethical issue is raised: does abortion under this procedure imply the death of the fetus or only separation of a fetus from the mother? The latter is the position of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology but has not been resolved legally.

The next three articles on abortion present the perspectives of the three major western religions. The article on Judaism develops that teaching in terms of the Torah, the Mishnah, and Rabbinical authors. These are discussed in terms of problems such as the impact of the holocaust and Tay Sachs disease. Important to note in the development of the Jewish tradition is that abortion is not murder (nor more than murder) and that therapeutic abortion (to save the mother's life) is permitted and mandated. This is the case primarily because the rights of the fetus are secondary to those of the mother. The reason for this teaching is clearly developed, as are its implications. The article on Roman Catholicism traces both the constant stand of Roman Catholicism against abortion and a variety of debates related to abortion: formed versus an unformed fetus, immediate versus delayed animation, and the role of church authority. The article presents the main lines of the debate and shows how the tradition developed. The section on Protestantism begins with the repetition of the Roman Catholic position among the Reformers, though they occasionally held this position for different reasons. It also indicates other elements that border on the development of a Protestant position on abortion: a new view of marriage which stressed companionship, an examination of the role of women, and a view of Protestantism within society. These perspectives are woven into a final section which looks at church tradition, biblical teaching, and a variety of teachings of Protestant authors. The article on the contemporary debate is well organized, clearly and fairly presented and representative of many positions and issues. The article has two main divisions: when does truly human life begin (defined as human life deserving the values, rights and protection due to a human person) and the values and rights of the fetus. The various answers to these questions are presented in good detail and with an indication of some of the shortcomings and implications of the positions. The author strikes a good balance between presenting the positions fairly, but within a context that allows evaluative comment.

The article on legal implications of abortion presents three models of regulating abortion: restriction for the sake of the child, either for its own sake or for the sake of social interests; restriction for the sake of uniform medical practice, which suggests professional control of abortion; general availability for the sake of the woman's freedom which allows any abortion for any reason if performed by a medically qualified person. The presentation of these models is followed by two fine discussions of the impact of the United States Supreme Court's abortion decisions and several legally unclear issues. The article concludes with a small discussion of international law, focusing on the French law of 1975 as a model.

All these articles make the entry on abortion thorough, fair, and informative. In the article on the medical aspects of abortion, I would have preferred to see a little more material on the historical involvement of the profession of medicine in abortion procedures. But other than that, the entire entry presents a very comprehensive picture of the major debates on the abortion issue.

The second entry for review is death. Here the three major sections: "death: death and dying"; "euthanasia and sustaining life"; and "death: definition and determination of" cover 86 pages and 11 divisions, one having four subdivisions. The first major section in death contains a splendid anthropological survey of attitudes towards death and their social implications. This provides a good overview for the following two survey articles on Eastern and Western thought:

Buddhist, Chinese, Hellenistic, and modern Western. The specific Judeo-Christian theological concepts are presented. These are rooted in biblical doctrine, but also present a development of both rabbinical and theological discussions. Of particular interest will be the brief article on the *Ars Morendi*, a discussion of a manual of dying from the middle ages. This presentation is particularly interesting in light of our contemporary interest in care of the dying. The section concludes with a very clear sociological analysis of death in the western world. Of particular interest here are the contrast and tension between the traditional Christian attitude towards death and the Kantian orientation. This discussion is very useful in developing a framework for evaluating different perspectives on death.

The article on euthanasia and sustaining life presents much traditional material in a clear and informative fashion so that the reader will know the main lines of several debates and the implications of these positions. The first article on historical perspectives is particularly helpful because it discusses euthanasia from the perspective of various dominant cultural values, e.g., the relation between euthanasia and mercantilism in the 16th century. The article on ethical dimensions focuses on the standard categories of omission and commission; ordinary and extraordinary means; stopping and not starting a procedure; and direct and indirect. These presentations are clear, accurate and up to date. The concluding essay is on the policy dimensions of euthanasia and evaluates several modes of decision-making: professional, which looks to physicians or hospital committees; personal, which includes living wills or designation of decision-makers; and legislative, which can propose or prohibit active killing, clarify decision-making authority, or clarify the right to refuse treatment. Each of these possibilities is discussed thoroughly and its implications evaluated.

The final section looks to attitudinal and definitional dimensions of death. The article on attitudinal dimensions is a well-conceived psychological survey of much material which is integrated into a perceptive article. Included are both professional and personal dimensions. The definitional dimensions are three: clinical, legal, and philosophical and theological. The author of the article on the clinical definition of death is to be especially commended for the clarity of the article, the breadth of data included, and the consistency and use of terminology. Especially helpful is the insistence on the distinction between the definition of death and the criteria to determine death. The article on legal dimensions of defining death includes the relationship between law and culture and the implications of defining death. The author also evaluates the judicial and legislative approaches to defining death and concludes by examining examples of each. The concluding essay is a tightly reasoned article which focuses on the relationship between the brain and consciousness, and the brain and the person from theological and philosophical viewpoints. This article supplements very well the previous two articles, and serves as an extremely fitting conclusion to the entire entry.

These articles on death are extremely well written, accurately presented and expressive of a wide range of attitudes and orientation in terms of the problems and dilemmas associated with dying. The entry in its entirety is an excellent survey of the literature and provides a fine background for an introduction to both general areas of interest as well as specific problems.

There are three entries on informed consent: human research, mental health, and the therapeutic relationship. The thematic issues described are the social, ethical, and legal perspectives, as well as a scientific and clinical orientation to these problems. The entry is 27 pages long.

The first article on human research focuses on the social dimensions of obtaining informed consent. Of special interest is the article on the quality of informed consent which focuses on professional control of information, client expectations, and public communication. The second article, on the ethical and legal issues in obtaining consent, presents a representative and well-organized summary of argu-

ments justifying the obtaining of informed consent and an excellent survey of several federal regulations related to the defining and obtaining of consent. Discussion of appropriate legal cases and professional codes are also included.

The second entry, informed consent in mental health, presents a succinct analysis of several basic issues: a comparison of the role of informed consent in mental and physical health, justification for nonconsensual health care of the mentally ill in general and of those in the criminal justice system. Thematic issues that are well developed are civil commitment, modes of treatment that could be coercive, and the relationship between curing, punishing, and rehabilitating in the criminal justice system.

The third article deals with the role of informed consent in the therapeutic relationship and looks at the clinical, legal, and ethical aspects. The article on the clinical dimension focuses correctly on the dialogic nature of obtaining consent and the necessity of a trusting relationship between physician and patient. Within this framework, the author indicates many of the problems faced by a physician who seeks to inform his or her patient: adequate description of the problem or procedure, the computing of probabilities, the emotional state of the patient, especially when he or she is seriously ill. An appreciation of these problems is combined with a sensitivity to the rights of the patient to present a well-rounded description of the clinical dimension of obtaining consent.

The article on the legal and ethical dimensions of informed consent analyzes the topic from within the medical and legal framework and then discusses these issues with respect to patients, physicians, and the concept of self-determination. The point of the article is that the concept of informed consent is a construction of law and not a medical presupposition and that when judges were confronted with the problem, they had no medical precedent to which to turn. The legal doctrine states that there is a positive duty on the part of the physician to inform patients of significant risks, possible alternatives, and a referred proposal. The author shows how the battery or neglect doctrine influenced the structure of the doctrine of informed consent. The author argues that, on the basis of cases analyzed, judges have been unwilling to take a strong stand for patient's rights and self-determination. It is then argued that a physician's reluctance to inform patients has more to do with his or her fears about uncertainty of the diagnosis of the treatment employed than patient incompetence to understand the diagnosis. The position is more fully developed through a fairly sharp critique of the practice and values of physicians.

The articles in this section are fully developed and present excellent summaries of current literature. A variety of positions supporting the obligation to obtain informed consent in different settings is thoroughly presented. The article on the legal and ethical dimensions of informed consent in the therapeutic relationship is the only article I have read that clearly argues a position, although it does this in reference to alternative positions.

The entry on population ethics, 101 pages long, has three major subdivisions: elements of the field, which includes definitional dimensions, demographic perspectives, historical material, ethical perspectives and normative aspects of population policy; the religious traditions of Judaism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, and Hinduism; and population policy proposals which examine international issues, differential growth rates and population policies, government incentives, social change proposals, compulsory programs, population distribution, genetic implications of population control and population education.

The entry on elements of the field is quite sensitive to the multifaceted dimensions of the problem of definition. Along with traditional but clearly stated demographic and historical material, there is a recognition that there are different definitions of population ethics and that the population problem is really a set of

population problems. This clarification provides a broad framework within which the ethical and normative issues are defined and discussed in relation to social problems.

The second entry, on religious traditions, is interesting because we are given a sensitive presentation of the basic values and beliefs on which the religions discussed based their views on contraception and because we see clearly that religions typically discussed contraception, not population ethics. One of the important data in this entry is the tension between individual decision-making and social policy with respect to religious traditions and contraception.

The third entry on population proposals focuses on many of the different questions that emerge from a clash of personal and religious values, cultural values, general policies, and international planning. In discussions of these and other problems, the authors of various articles clearly point to the different dilemmas inherent in such discussions. Special attention is paid to problems such as racism, coercion, the location of contraceptive testing, and differences in cultural values. Also the ethical issues involved in the use of incentives, compulsory population control programs, and educational strategies are well presented.

This major entry is arranged in such a way that while the basic issues are clearly set out, there is also an inherent interrelation between the various articles. Key issues are presented from different points of view, and this allows a variety of different dimensions of the problem to be understood more clearly. The authors are also sensitive to the very difficult problem of difference in cultural values and the relations between the developed nations and third world countries.

The *Encyclopedia of Bioethics* is an extremely significant contribution to a growing field. It has summarized and organized the field of bioethics into a format that permits an effective communication of knowledge, a comprehensive understanding of all major and minor topics in the field, and excellent resources for future study. The *Encyclopedia of Bioethics* is a definite "must" for all general libraries, colleges, medical centers, and hospitals. The encyclopedia will also be a valuable instrument for teaching and research in the field. The format, bibliographies, and organization of the knowledge in the encyclopedia will be of particular use in preparing lectures and organizing one's own research. The *Encyclopedia of Bioethics* will clearly be the starting point of much future work in the field.

Special care has been taken to focus on broad perspectives and thematic issues. This enhances the long range value of the encyclopedia; entries will not become irrelevant because they are too narrowly defined or based on data that can quickly change. Yet, developments will occur, new orientations will be made, new perspectives will open up, and knowledge will be reorganized. To meet these specific needs, there will be an annual supplement to the encyclopedia which will address these perspectives.

If all the articles maintain the high quality of those I have read and reviewed, the value of the *Encyclopedia of Bioethics* will be immeasurable. Warren Reich, the editor-in-chief, is to be highly commended for conceiving this project, developing the funding to support it, assembling a most competent staff, and utilizing the talents of many scholars to bring his vision to such magnificent fulfillment. Even though the price will require a significant capital outlay, this is one resource that should certainly be purchased by everyone involved in teaching and research in bioethics.

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