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[Book Review of] *The Psychosurgery Debate: Scientific, Legal, and Ethical Perspectives*, edited by Elliot S. Valenstein

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The Psychosurgery Debate: Scientific, Legal, and Ethical Perspectives

Elliot S. Valenstein, Ph.D., Editor

W. H. Freeman & Co., San Francisco, 1980, xiv + 594 pp.

In the preface to this volume, Dr. Valenstein set for himself an impressive task:

Because it seemed to me that there was an inadequate amount of source material available for courses in biomedical ethics, I decided to take one intensely disputed controversy, the psychosurgery debate, and to explore in depth the scientific, legal, ethical, and social issues raised by this dispute.

For the most part this task has been accomplished with admirable clarity, balance, and good sense. As such, it serves as a remarkable benchmark in a burgeoning biomedical literature. The contributors address their separate areas with well-organized and referenced precision from a historical perspective to a careful analysis of the present literature to an entry into the debate over what is a psychiatric disorder. Legal issues are dealt with in a much more lucid manner than is usually the case and terminology clarified in a fashion that makes one see the polemic in which certain words are often used: for example, the editor suggests that "the label 'experimental' be reserved for studies involving the systematic collection of research data, irrespective of the general acceptance of the therapeutic procedures employed." Refreshingly, the doctrine of informed consent is addressed by a professor of law who holds a co-equal appointment in the department of psychiatry at his university. It is evident that he knows what the real world is all about.

If the volume has any failings, sadly it is in the part which deals with ethical issues. Here logic and well-referenced conclusions give way to opinion and evident bias. One would have wished that the authors of the chapters in this part had read the rest of the book before stating their case.

Anyone with a serious interest in the psychosurgery debate cannot claim such a posture legitimately without owning this book. Psychiatrists, neurosurgeons and neurologists would do well to be familiar with it. Scholars seriously interested in any bioethical question can learn much from the model presented by this volume.

— Michael P. McQuillen, M.D.
Medical College of Wisconsin

New Technologies of Birth and Death— Medical, Legal, and Moral Dimensions

Pope John Center, St. Louis, 1980, xv + 196 pp., \$6.95, paperback.

This book contains the papers given at a workshop held in Dallas, Tex. from January 28-31, 1980. An extrinsic factor of great importance is that a majority of the bishops of the United States and Canada attended this workshop. There is