

Reviews

Population, Evolution, and Birth Control: A Collage of Controversial Ideas.
Assembled by GARRETT HARDIN. 2d ed. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman
Co., 1969. 386 pages. \$6.00.

Garrett Hardin is professor of biology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The early part of his professional career was in microbiological research, and for the past twenty years he has taught evolution and human ecology. He is an unusually articulate and able writer, possessed of great scholarship, with imagination to see important interrelationships of phenomena. He is the author of three other books in addition to this one and a number of scientific papers.

In the book under review he has selected 123 writings, ranging from Old Testament passages to current news reports, together with twenty-four of his own essays, to give a remarkable picture of population, evolution, and birth control.

His book is divided into the three sections contained in its title. Under Section I, "Population," there are fifty-seven essays, including writings of Thomas Robert Malthus, Thomas More, Martin Luther, Benjamin Franklin, Marston Bates, Paul Sears, Sir John Boyd-Orr, Harrison Brown, Kenneth Boulding, Joseph Spengler, and Norbert Wiener, and excerpts from the Bible. These are samples, some of them very short, dealing with the topic of population.

Under Section II, "Evolution," there are twenty-two essays, including writings from Aristotle, Lucretius, Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, Matthew Arnold, and Francis Galton.

Under Section III, "Birth Control," there are forty-four essays, including quotations and sections from the Bible and writings of William Langer, Kingsley Davis, Margaret Sanger, and many others. This section includes an essay by Hardin on the resistance to birth control within the medical profession, and the historian William Langer discusses "Disguised Infanticide." Various authors consider birth control and religious dogma, and birth control and Catholic doctrine. David Greenberg reviews Catholic opinion of Rock's book on the "pill," and Frederick Flynn discusses natural law. This section also contains a chapter on Vatican papers on "anguish after John."

Hardin's essay in this section on the "Ghost of Authority" is especially interesting. He discusses authority from the point of view of theological dogma and quotes various Catholic authors. He writes:

What we may call the classical attitude toward authority is displayed in the following quotation from Patrick J. Ward. "The Catholic Church teaches that the artificial prevention of conception by mechanical, chemical or other means is intrinsically evil. Since this is the universal moral law, it applies with equal force to Catholic and non-Catholic." Notice that this statement not only asserts a particular doctrine about contraception but also asserts the authority of the Catholic Church to settle questions of right and wrong. Implicit, but just as real, is the assertion that authority

exists—that there are documents, men or institutions whose pronouncements determine or define the truth. Is this true? Does authority exist?

It should be clear that the word "authority" has quite a different meaning from its use in scientific literature. When we say, "Smith, 1961, found that . . ." we are not establishing the subsequent statement as true but merely assigning Smith the responsibility for correctly reporting the evidence. In principle, science is built on indefinitely repeatable observations; but in practice, as a matter of economy, we do not establish from the ground up every observation on which a particular conclusion is based. He who doubts a particular fact can repeat the work himself. "If it isn't true, don't blame me, blame Smith," this is the meaning of authority in science.

The authority theologians confront us with is quite a different thing. This authority validates, proves, establishes or defines truth. It is somehow prior to, or superior to, observation and reason; and it is certainly not to be questioned. Every Western religion—if one excepts borderline institutions like the Unitarian Church—assumes the validity of authority. The greatest and most powerful church of all asserts its authority most explicitly, particularly since the Vatican decree of 1870 which established as apparently inescapable orthodoxy a belief in the infallibility of the Pope. Because of this belief, consequences of great moment were set in train by the encyclical *Casti connubii*, which Pope Pius XI published on the last day of 1930. In it he said: "Any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offence against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin."

With this introduction, Hardin discusses concepts of authority not only in the Catholic church but from the point of view of other religions, including the rejection of authority as well as its uses. His conclusions are that "authority does not exist—not in the sense that is meant by those who would have us govern our lives by Authority with a capital A." His arguments are well reasoned and should be read. He asks: Since authority is a ghost, why is not this truth more widely advertised?

He writes:

Whether or not I personally accept authority, I may want others to do so for reasons of personal aggrandizement. Each of us, to a greater or lesser extent, wants to control others. I want to control you. How can I do so? One of the first things each of us learns is the feebleness of naked power. If I tell you to do something, you instinctively ask "Why?" If I then say, "Because I say so," I make no progress in furthering my will to power. But if I can first insinuate into your mind the idea that there exists a being of spirit who is always right—say the Zoroastrian god Mazda, to take a non-provocative example—and if I then say you should do thus and so because Mazda says so, I may then succeed in controlling you. If I am successful, it is because I have succeeded in putting Mazda in the psychological locus formerly occupied by your parents (hence the term "father figure") without your catching on to the fact that Mazda is really me. In general, the more distant in time and space, the less questionable authority is, hence the more authoritative. As an ambitious, aggressive individual, it is to my interest to maintain in you the illusion that authority exists.

Hardin points out that institutions as well as individuals have an equally strong interest in maintaining the fiction of authority, and the Church of Rome is an outstanding example of a successful institution maintained in this way.

To most of us liberals, Hardin's arguments are convincing. However, one cannot help but be concerned with the breakdown of authority throughout

ZYGON

the world at the present time. Student rebellions against reason itself as well as against university professors and administrators seem to be spreading worldwide. As an example of the rebellion against science and reason, one might mention that the country today has ten thousand astrologers compared with one thousand astronomers. It is reported that at M.I.T., of all places, astrology is flourishing among the students. Rebellion against all parental control is another form of the collapse of authority. Anarchy is the endpoint of withdrawal of all authority. I have taken strong positions over the years, opposed to what I have regarded as unreasonable authority, as represented by the dogmas of state or church. Authoritative pronouncements and suppressive acts of communism or fascism or of superpatriots and militarists are anathema to most of us, but where is agreement as to when authority is evil and when it is constructive and indeed necessary for social existence under law? One can throw the baby out with the bath. This question appears to be a matter of deep significance in relation to the increasing chaos of social relations, not only in this country but in countries everywhere.

Hardin's book is highly recommended for its critical and important insights as expressed by the collage of writings on three of the crucial topics of our time.

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Updating Life and Death: Essays in Ethics and Medicine. Edited by DONALD R. CUTLER. Boston: Beacon Press, 1968. 286 pages. \$2.95.

Donald R. Cutler, in his brilliant introduction, describes the purpose and goal of this book, namely, to introduce the reader to a number of levels of inquiry germane to the whole field of ethics in medicine. It is a fascinating and interesting book written by experts in the areas of medicine, ethics, and theology. Anybody—layman as well as professional—should read Joseph Fletcher's splendidly written chapter, "Our Shameful Waste of Human Tissue: An Ethical Problem for the Living and the Dead." Fletcher describes how to accept and use our new controls over life and death in a more responsible way, and gives an understandable review of the solemn and often perplexing burden of making vital decisions. He makes explicit that the ill person has the right not only to choose life and the chance to take the risk but also to choose not to go on living or to be brought back by resuscitation or transplants. Referring to our refusal or failure to be a donor, he says clearly that we might choose death for ourselves more rightly than we choose it for others. He sheds light on the discrepancy between medical reality and legal concepts when he describes the conflicts and problems that we are facing nowadays with our modern technology. The tragedy he points out so clearly is that we have made more progress in mechanical hemodialysis as a holding maneuver for patients and are sadly limping behind in getting people to help people.

Paul Ramsey describes the widespread confusion in definitions and gives excellent examples of the turmoil and definitions referring to heart transplants. With a sense of humor, he also describes the meaning of the heart as the site of love and habitat of the soul, celebrated in poetry and psalms, which now has been replaced by a simple pump. He describes why it was the heart

transplant that provoked our anxiety and why our understanding of life and death had to be questioned. Apparently, not only the symbolical meaning of the heart is important but also the fact that it ticks just as we feel our lungs when we breathe. It is an important factor that we have more consciousness about heart and lungs than we have, for example, about liver and kidneys, of which we are not consciously aware, in spite of their importance for our well-being. Ramsey then describes the new definition of the meaning of death and criteria for confirming death in ways similar to the subsequent Harvard report by Henry Beecher—an important contribution to our new understanding of a definition of irreversible coma.

Pappworth, in his "Ethical Issues in Experimental Medicine," describes the problems of consent and raises the question, "What kind of people volunteer for experiments?" and "Are we using their mental peculiarity to exploit them for our own needs?" He also uses the not-often-discussed problem of the grateful, trusting, poorly educated patient whose trust we depend on when we ask for consent in experiments which are often beyond his comprehension. The point Pappworth makes so clearly is that the patient and his well-being should always come before the needs of our society or science. He recommends that the churches, the law, and the parliament must express their opinions collectively, and must state how much further they will allow the medical profession to risk human lives in order to achieve possible advances in knowledge. His description of financial aspects of transplants is well worth reading; it is one area that we hardly ever discuss and that makes us wonder whether we should not spend our efforts, time, energy, and money on procedures to help a much greater number of suffering individuals rather than on a few transplants, clearly helping few people for only a short time.

Potter's abortion debate is a lengthy but well-written analysis on the silence of the Protestant churches on the growing acceptance of today's much more liberal views on abortion. Giving a wide spectrum of views and reasons, he says this is such a high-stake issue that it implies rejection of an old-world view which has sustained a way of life; it is also often seen as a symbolic threat to the ideal moral order espoused by Christians for 2,000 years. His chapter on the right to life and assessing values of life is well presented; one is left with the impression that we are too often dealing with the symptom rather than understanding and coping with the underlying cause and problem. He states in his summarizing remarks: "When a fetus is aborted no one asks for whom the bell tolls. No bell is tolled. But do not feel indifferent and secure. The fetus symbolizes you and me and our tenuous hold upon a future here at the mercy of our fellowmen." This statement perhaps best summarizes the whole value of this book. It makes us think, not so much about technical, legal, or medical decisions, as about the question of human values and the peculiar choices we occasionally make without understanding the underlying reasons for them.

Callahan contributes an important chapter on sanctity of life in the form of an ethical theory. The commentaries by Julian Pleasants, James Gustafson, and Beecher are stimulating and thought-provoking.

The highlight of the book is perhaps Herbert W. Richardson's "What Is the Value of Life?" It is a credo to human values and human freedom to be attained perhaps when we learn to accept each other as human beings trying to understand instead of judging each other.

ZYGON

I find this book a true contribution to the understanding of man and recommend it highly not only to members of the helping professions but to all thinking men desperately trying to find some solutions in the confusion our society is faced with at the present time.

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Who Shall Live? Medicine, Technology, Ethics. Edited by KENNETH VAUX. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970. 199 pages. \$6.50.

Faced for the first time in human history with almost routine ability to prolong life indefinitely after a personality ceases to communicate as such with others, or with the imminent possibility of manipulating the genetic structures, we find ourselves with an ethical system inadequate to deal with this new problem. So we experience technology that creates ethical problems but is inherently incapable of dealing with them. We then turn again to philosophers and theologians after their being ignored by scientists for one hundred years. Even an anthropologist is consulted, less because she is an anthropologist than because she is an anthropologist concerned with ethical issues which are the very fabric of any social system she has studied. The anthropologist is Margaret Mead, and she sets forth the problem in the opening essay. The last essay, fittingly enough, is by a theologian, Helmut Thielicke, professor of systematic theology, University of Hamburg, Germany. Between them are Emanuel Mesthene, Harvard University, a leading student of technology and society; Robert F. Drinan, S.J., dean of Boston College Law School, speaking as a Catholic; Paul Ramsey, professor of religion at Princeton University and, interestingly, also a professor of genetic ethics at Georgetown University School of Medicine; and Joseph Fletcher, professor of social ethics at the Episcopal Theological School, presumably speaking as a Protestant.

The range of pertinent interests is impressive. The foreword is written by no less than the master surgical technician, Dr. Michael E. De Bakey, who is a walking symbol of the problem under discussion.

These essays are papers that were delivered at the Conference on Ethics in Medicine and Technology, Rice University, Houston, Texas, 1968, attended by 250 delegates from all over the country and a cross section of health professionals and other members of the concerned community. The conference was funded by various oil companies.

A review and evaluation of essays which range so widely and represent such various philosophical styles can easily be subjective, and I assume my own predilections shine through my presumed attempt at objectivity and balance. In my own opinion, then, Mead at the beginning and Thielicke at the end are clearly the best statements of the problem—Mead is empirical and to me familiar; Thielicke is shattering in his ability to go to the heart of the ethical problem, ignoring empiricism in the traditional scientific sense, a tradition in which I am steeped. Mead makes two empirical observations which bear on the problem: (1) "As nearly as we can tell human beings . . . have had the innate capacity to tell good from evil." Some of us may boggle at the term "innate capacity," but she clarifies it subsequently by saying: "the belief that some things are good and some evil is found in every human so-

ciety"; (2) "We know of no human society today that does not say it is wrong to kill within some circle; nor do we know of any human society that does not protest in some way the integrity of each individual." If this is true, and she should know, she disposes of relativity and narrows it to "relative" relativity; that is, the range of custom is finite regarding killing and nurturing. Another point she makes is that the physician, the traditional custodian of life preservation, should not be forced *de facto* by society to assume this responsibility himself. This will erode centuries of trust built up for the physician's role in society.

The observations made by Thieliicke are equally empirical in that they flow directly from human experience and, therefore, cannot be called dogmatic in the sense of those of the Catholic representative who says simply that a fetus should not be aborted for the convenience of the mother or anyone else; the fetus has a right to live. In the next breath the Catholic says the mother has a right to life, too, and if the fetus threatens her life, it may be aborted. Such decisions, however, must rest on fallible human and medical technical judgments. Thieliicke, I feel, lays bare the problem and issues and goes beyond the technological and judgmental problems. He starts out by asking: "Is there something about man that dare not be changed (by medical intervention)—something in his very nature that dare not be violated—if he is to remain human?" He tries to answer his question: "What is man? Thus a tension arises between that which is *not* under our control, the fundamental meaning and purpose of human existence, and that which is under our control, namely, the marvelous ministrations of sophisticated modern medicine—the problem being that, by preserving a man only in part, medicine may actually be depriving him of, and thereby violating, the very meaning and purpose of his life. When this tension mounts to high levels of intensity, it begins to blur the line of demarcation between healing and blasphemy." For reasons I find difficult to formulate for myself, I put heart transplants in this category. Thieliicke is unable to envision a utopian state in which man has created a superculture of his own making, because by his native endowment man lacks the mental or biological capacity to deal with and control things he has made himself. So now this brings forth another question: "To what extent, if at all, may man bow before those superstructures of his own making which have now grown to such proportions as to tower above him?" Up to a point man has choices that do not bring painful ambiguities, but eventually he is faced with a tension the release of which is not a matter of choice but, as might be said today, is nonnegotiable. Thieliicke again: "It is a matter of being, not action. I am here confronted by a fundamental insoluble conflict—insoluble because it is rooted in my very nature. Because I cannot escape from myself, I cannot escape this conflict either. It is this nonobjectifiable existential guilt which finds expression in Greek tragedy, as well as in the Christian doctrine of original sin." Can a physician make life an absolute? Is man to be understood in analogy to the machine, whose parts are exchangeable? Thieliicke did not ask the following question, but what if brains became interchangeable? Thieliicke would say that as long as the identity of the person is respected, transplants are legitimate healing devices. It seems that he differentiates between healing and mere prolongation of life. We have to differentiate between the unconditional and the conditional.

ZYGON

That which is unconditional can never be spoken as more or less; it is non-measurable. We are so preoccupied with the question of what man can do, we forget what he "is," confusing *can* with *may*. Undoubtedly, medicine will push us even deeper into the foregoing thorny but significant questions. It may be the cutting edge of finding out what man is. The creation of a new ethical system, or the modifications of an existing one, would seem to require this effort.

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Sciences of Man and Social Ethics: Variations on the Theme of Human Dignity. Edited by MARVIN CHARLES KATZ. Boston: Branden Press, 1969. 250 pages. \$7.50.

I admit to a bias in favor of the central thesis of this book: that ethics and morality need and can be studied objectively by utilizing the scientific and systematic findings and methods of related studies of human behavior.

Besides two articles by Marvin C. Katz, who edited this volume, there are nine essays by as many writers, including such well-known and contrasting luminaries as Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and B. F. Skinner, plus others with names less familiar but with fertile imaginations. Although diverse in background, philosophy, and style, they have a common desire to investigate the higher and more significant aspects of man. Furthermore, the writers generally share a similar belief in the complexity, potentialities, and infinite worth of man as described by the "Third Force" or "humanistic" psychologists. Skinner is included here according to the broader definition of "humanist" in spite of his behavioral orientation.

The selection which probably best epitomizes the synthesis emphasized by the book is "Love Feelings in Courtship Couples: An Analysis," an article by Ronald P. Hattis based on fairly rigorous research methods. Although somewhat limited in scope and involving rather skewed data, the study is well referenced and has promising implications for future research into the so-called intangibles of human behavior.

Much of Hattis's investigation of love feelings was influenced by Maslow's ideas of self-actualization and related "meta-" concepts, which permeate this collection of writings. Maslow, in his contribution, explains the dynamics of synergy—the working together of the various parts of an organism in concert for the simultaneous good of the whole *and* the parts. It can apply to both individuals and societies. Synergic functioning optimizes the application of the Universal Minimax Law, a generic term used by Katz to describe the idea of "the most effect from the least effort" found in different fields but with different labels. Other helpful or interesting general concepts and principles are presented to the reader. However, eternal vigilance is necessary regarding generalizations, and, in one example, recent research has diluted the applicability of the principle. Thus, the "Law of Homotypy" or "like attracts like" has a basic validity, but has less truth for the choice of partners for self-actualizing individuals than normal couples. As Maslow states in *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954, p. 259): "In the more external and superficial characteristics, e.g., income, class status, education, re-

ligion, national background, appearance, the extent of homogamy [marriage among likes] seems to be significantly less than in average people." Self-actualizing individuals *do* find traits such as honesty and depth of feeling important; in other words, they choose other self-actualized persons as friends and mates. Thus, the theorist of human behavior needs to clarify the appropriate application of his generalizations to avoid needless conflict.

Katz's approach is obviously similar to that of Robert S. Hartman, another contributor to this volume. Both write with the systematic style of the mathematical philosophers such as Leibnitz and Spinoza. It is doubtful if many readers will be convinced by Hartman's axiological "proofs" and possibly will not accept them as strictly logical proofs, but others may also find intriguing Hartman's relating of man's infinite qualities to the different orders of infinity.

The prime value in this collection is its thrust to open up new vistas for human behavior and its enlightening content rather than the rigor of the arguments presented, even though several of the articles are couched in logical terms. Dealing in the realm of the "ought" is always tricky, but we are at a point now where we must go beyond mere description of behavior. *Sciences of Man and Social Ethics* has taken the plunge without hesitation. It is only regretful that the editor did not include one of the studies of the stages of moral development by Kohlberg or other researchers and that there is no provocative article on education. However, as a whole this exploratory publication has much to recommend it. If you believe that man is the proper study of man and also feel that the most meaningful aspects, especially those of ethics and values, should be studied systematically, this book should be on your library shelf.

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