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MATTERS  
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## INTRODUCING THIS ISSUE....

### «MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH»

J. ARTHUR BOORMAN

Survival! For every life in every age, survival has been a major pre-occupation. Whether the living organism was searching for nourishment, warding off the attacks of predators, or struggling against sickness and disease, there could be no respite from the unrelenting effort to survive. According to Darwinian theory, «survival of the fittest» is the key to evolution, which might be taken as a truism if we did not wonder about the definition of «the fittest». More recently the behavioural psychologist B.F. Skinner has argued that human survival is «beyond freedom and dignity», a view that elicits agreement insofar as survival is the precondition of every other value. In any case, even in this age of technological marvels of productivity and efficiency, the overwhelming majority of people on earth have no choice but to engage, as did their forebears, in the unremitting struggle to survive.

Modern science and technology have both brightened and darkened the prospect of survival, not only of human life but of other forms as well. Unthinkable as it is, we know that weapons now stockpiled by the superpowers have the capacity to wipe out life on earth to the point of total annihilation. In other ways, too, technology has made life more precarious and in some cases has seriously diminished the possibility of survival. In earlier times, natural phenomena totally destroyed some species of life and endangered others; today human inventiveness has produced the same ominous results. Both human and other forms of life are confronted with new threats, with the pollution and poisoning of air, water and food due to technological innovation. Moreover, technology has enabled industry to turn out more and more products at an ever accelerating rate, depleting natural resources, especially fuel, food and fresh water, to an extent that may further jeopardize human survival.

Despite such negative considerations, the overall impact of science and technology had undoubtedly been to improve the human condition and to reduce the preoccupation of people with sheer survival. The speeding automobile may indeed maim or kill, but it may also, even more often, save a life through the swift provision of medical care. Electrical energy that is produced by the burning of coal may be responsible for the newly recognized hazards of acid rain; but that energy may also be helping many people survive against freezing cold and extreme heat or through the safe preservation of food. It may also multiply by many times the work of human hands in the provision of necessary goods and services. Such a list could be extended almost indefinitely.

It goes without saying then, that for good or ill, technology has drastically modified the human situation. It has affected the possibilities of our survival, sometimes in ways that are both unforeseen and unwelcome. Of particular concern here is the extent to which survival is, or should be, determinative as we face the new issues raised by modern science in the field of medicine. This issue



of ARC is devoted to *Matters of Life and Death*, that is, by definition, to matters of survival. In no area of life has science altered the prospect of human survival more profoundly than in medicine. One might mention artificial insemination, *in vitro* fertilization, prenatal diagnosis, eugenics or euthanasia, all of which concern vital ethical issues, issues that have to do with survival. But it should be noted that survival is not always an *objective*; now it is often a *question*, that is quite literally a matter of life or death: Who shall live? Who shall die?

It may be observed that human intervention in matters of life and death is by no means new, neither is it likely to be discontinued in the future. History records the slaughter of new-born infants, unwanted weaklings or the aged among various peoples for various reasons. The destruction of the undesirable foetus, through abortion brought about in ways crude or refined, has been practised since early times. And backroom abortionists would almost certainly flourish again if legal procedures were forbidden. What *is* new is that human lives which in the past would have come to an early end due to defect or disease, aging or accident are, today, being saved and sustained through the marvels of modern medical science and skill. On the one hand, the question is whether life, however limited its potential, may be terminated before any fulfilment, however slight, is possible. On the other hand, the question may be whether, through medical intervention, a life should be sustained that would otherwise succumb to an early death.

This issue, as with many related problems, has no simple answer. Doctors who specialize in the treatment of infants afflicted with *spina bifida*, for example, disagree strongly as to whether any selection should be exercised or whether every such infant should be treated. (i) Both sides would admit that in the most severe cases, the prospect is inevitably grim--a short, tenuous existence, mental retardation, lack of mobility and great physical suffering, as well as emotional anguish for the parents. At a symposium sponsored by the Montreal Centre for Bioethics on this subject, Madame Chantal Perreault, a professional social worker at the Montreal Children's Hospital, made the following remarks:

Combien de fois n'ai-je pas entendu: «Madame, notre enfant a maintenant 2 ou 3 ans, il est aveugle, il est quadraplégique, il est profondément retardé; nous lui sommes très attachés, mais comment se fait-il, que Dieu permette à cet enfant de vivre?» Il est extrêmement difficile de répondre: «Vous savez, Madame...Dieu aurait voulu reprendre votre enfant mais la médecine est aujourd'hui plus forte que Dieu et l'en a empêché.» (ii)

Madame Perreault reminds us here of a common criticism that the doctor is «playing God.» Stated thus badly, that is an unfair accusation. In a sense, the entire vocation of the physician is playing God, that is, interfering when health or survival are threatened, supplementing the healing powers of nature. When Edward Jenner first vaccinated a child for smallpox he was furiously criticized and probably accused of playing God, although the disease was a



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terrible scourge. Today, thanks to the extraordinary cooperation of medical bodies throughout the world, smallpox has been almost if not totally eliminated--a most dramatic example of playing God.

At the same time, we need to recognize that Madame Perreault was making a valid, somewhat different point. «Playing God» is generally associated with the termination of life, as in abortion or euthanasia. But the physician's Hippocratic oath has always been interpreted in the past as an obligation to do everything possible to save, sustain or prolong life. Now, with the advent of such medical miracles as respirators, transplants, and potent new drugs, the question is, To what extremes shall treatment be carried? It used to be said that pneumonia was the old and dying person's best friend because it brought death quickly. Through antibiotics that friend has been lost. Perhaps the question of degree of effort has to be left open, dependent upon specific circumstances. But the constraint applied to the termination of life needs also to be exercised in the prolonging of life. The notion of total control over questions of survival is as perverse as it is dangerous.

Questions of intervention and control arise at the very inception of life. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is not yet a reality, and babies do not quite come from test tubes. But we are closer to that brave new event than some of us care to think. *In vitro* fertilization, now having been successfully achieved, seems likely to become accepted treatment for certain conditions of sterility. When a woman's fallopian tubes are blocked, or for some other reason her husband's sperm cannot reach her ova in normal intercourse, an ovum may be removed and fertilized *in vitro* (in a glass). There can be no doubt that an impressive degree of medical knowledge and skill is required to ensure the success of this procedure. Moreover, it gives hope of solving one of the forms of childlessness. It could also mean the survival of a blood lineage that would otherwise be lost forever. At the same time, there may be negative implications in this procedure that cannot be ignored or cavalierly dismissed. What if the foetus should become a hopelessly defective creature, or a potential «Frankenstein monster»? Should the researcher merely destroy it and start over again? Could such action be squared with «reverence for life»?

It has been reported recently that a young woman, needing the money, has advertised her willingness to act as a surrogate mother for a fertilized ovum. Discounting the possible effects that her own habits--smoking, drinking, drug use, food choice--might have on the foetus, one is bound to ask about the human factor in such a process. Does it not, as with *in vitro* fertilization and AID (artificial insemination by donor) represent one more very obvious form of depersonalization, a further dehumanization of our already alienated human relations? There are now many ways in which medical science intervenes in the process of reproduction. In most instances, no doubt, the motives for doing so are benevolent. For those individuals who are directly involved, medical intervention may be presumed to be based on the desire and expectation of good immediate results. Whether the long-term, ultimate consequences will be equally benign may have little or no significance in the decision-making process.



Conversely, there are scientists who *are* preoccupied with the future of the human race. Fearing the deterioration of the human stock as more and more defective or diseased men and women are kept alive to perpetuate their kind, they urge more rather than less intervention, particularly through generic engineering. If the stock of plants and animals can be improved, why not that of human beings as well? It is now commonplace, for example, for livestock breeders to rely on artificial insemination to produce bigger and better animals. To some extent the process is already underway within the human species. It would be reasonable to guess that those who are selected as human donors in artificial insemination will be as strong, healthy and intelligent as the process permits. We still have to reckon with the riddle posed by Darwin's theory, What is meant by «the fittest»? If selectivity is desirable, what are the criteria for selection? Are we already a step along the way to providing an answer to those questions when the gynaecologist engages in pre-natal diagnosis? He may, through amniocentesis, detect Down's syndrome or some other serious defect in the foetus of an expectant mother. A decision to abort may be the outcome of concern for the mother or both parents. It is also a form of negative eugenics, having consequences that extend into the future. Who is to say now that eugenics is, to use Gordon Rattray Taylor's term, a biological time bomb? Some biologists such as Barry Commoner claim that *every* human intervention in the processes of nature is bound to produce some adverse results.

If we cannot agree with James Russell Lowell that «time makes ancient good uncouth», we are compelled to admit that the new medicine poses ethical problems upon which the past sheds little light. It has been said, «To save life is good» and also, «To give pleasure is good.» The dilemma of many a medical decision is that one of these values has to be sacrificed. Has the Christian ethic any particular contribution to make in the face of such hard choices? Certainly it offers no sure and simple answers. In fact, the very difficulty that so inevitably seems to accompany some of the complex questions of survival today should help to remind us that humility, including intellectual modesty, is a Christian virtue. William Sloane Coffin, Jr., called this to our attention in his recent Birks' lectures, his reminder being repeated in a note that appeared in *Christianity and Crisis* concerning abortion under the title, «Clarity Can Be Confusing». (iii) Christians with the strongest convictions (whether «pro-life» or «pro-choice») may be most in need of remembering that Christian ethics do not provide absolute rules in a new dogmatic legalism. Claims to certainty all too often reflect an unwarranted arrogance. Two very helpful but quite undogmatic essays on abortion, that most controversial of all issues in medical ethics today, are included in this ARC.

Are Christians left completely in the dark when faced with these new bioethical problems? By no means. Richard A. McCormick, S.J., of the Kennedy Center for Bioethics, reminding us that we should and can find guidelines in our faith, suggests that a guideline is «not a slide rule that makes the decision....But it is far more than the concrete decision of the parents and physician, however seriously and conscientiously this is made. It is more like a light in a room, a light that allows the individual objects to be seen in the fullness of their context.» (iv) Or, to use a favourite expression of Nels Ferré, we Christians



would be «shorn Samsons» indeed if our faith gave us no help at all in making hard ethical decisions.

A possible guideline that initially seems unassailable is that *all human life is precious*, a conviction that Christians share with non-theistic humanists. Such an axiom would rule out deliberate moves to improve the human race as one might develop a stable of prize thorough bred. Yet such a guideline offers little enough help when we have to consider the need for genetic intervention if certain kinds of human disease or suffering are to be avoided. Dr. Norman Whitney has provided us with a valuable introduction to this complex subject in his article, «Control of the Genes.»

Here we need to notice that the guideline «all life is precious» poses two problems: it might suggest that life is an absolute good, that «a live dog is better than a dead lion»; or, it could be interpreted as affirming that *any* selectivity would imply that one life was more precious than another, and therefore, immoral. This, then, is the very heart of the issue: sheer existence or survival is *not* the sole or even the major criterion where bioethics are concerned. It is, as Joseph Fletcher called it, a «vitalistic fallacy.»

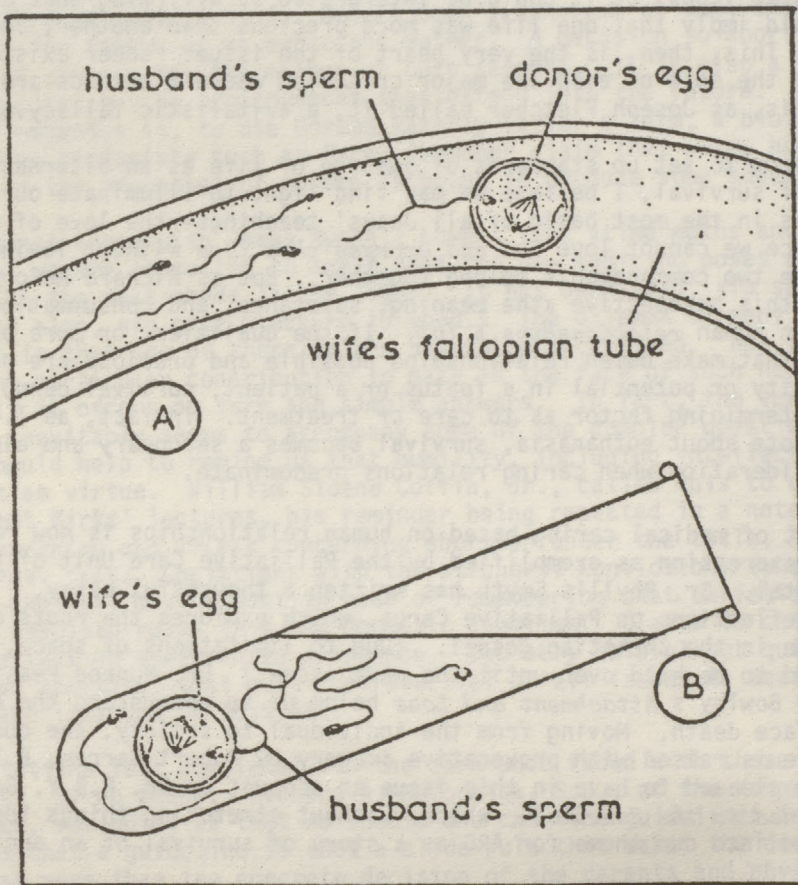
Rather than trying to set up standards of *quality* of life as an alternative to the criterion of survival, I believe we may find light to illuminate our biomedical problems in the most basic of all Jesus' teachings--the love of God and neighbour. Since we cannot love God *and express that love* without loving our neighbour, these two commandments belong together. But as Richard McCormick points out, in this perspective «the meaning, substance, and consummation of life is found in human *relationships*.» (v) If the qualities, or more precisely the conditions that make human relationships possible and precious are not present as reality or potential in a foetus or a patient, survival cannot be taken as the determining factor as to care or treatment. In fact, as I tried to suggest in my note about euthanasia, survival becomes a secondary and almost incidental consideration when caring relations predominate.

The development of medical caring based on human relationships is now receiving institutional expression as exemplified by the Palliative Care Unit of the Royal Victoria Hospital. Dr. Phyllis Smyth has written a thoughtful essay, «Theological Reflections on Palliative Care» which explores the roots of palliative care in the Christian gospel. (Due to limitations of space, this article has had to be held over until the next issue.) Dr. Monroe Peaston, reviewing John Bowlby's *Attachment and Loss* helps us to understand the emotions of those who face death. Moving from the individual to society, the question of a dying culture is raised with provocative imagery by Robert Warren, B.Th. III. Finally we are pleased to have in this issue an account by Dr. R.B.Y. Scott about *Whatever Happened to the Scrolls?*, which, without stretching things too much, might be fitted into our theme for ARC as a story of survival of an ancient culture.



## Footnotes:

- i. *Medical Wisdom and Ethics in the Treatment of Severely Defective Newborn and Young Children*, Edited by David J. Roy, Eden Press, 1978, pp. 9-38.
- ii. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- iii. *Christianity and Crisis*, Vol. 41, No. 15, Oct. 19, 1981.
- iv. Richard A. McCormick, SJ, «To Save or Let Die: the Dilemma of Modern Medicine» in *JAMA*, July 8, 1974; Vol. 229, No. 2, p. 17.
- v. *Ibid.*, p. 175, author's italics.





# CONTROL OF THE GENES: WHO'S IN CHARGE?

NORMAN J. WHITNEY

## *Introduction*

Genetic exchange has taken place from time immemorial and it forms the basis of developmental biology at all levels of life. Nature's way of providing for change has been either by mutation or sexuality. Sexually, genetic material of one organism interacts with that of another organism. This way recombinations of genetic material can occur by crossing-over in which chromosomes may exchange DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) the carrier of genes: «...genes which hold the key to life on earth». (i) These natural mechanisms of genetic exchange have been the basis of life as it has been known.

Today techniques are available whereby genetic exchange can be facilitated by scientific and technological interventions. This raises questions about experimentation which either directly or indirectly controls or influences life. As intimated by Curtis, today's sophisticated experiments on genetic exchange will have very significant effects on «...biological science and ultimately society in the years to come.» (ii) For example, is it right or wrong to manipulate genetic material in bacteria when, at the present time at least, it is unlikely that prediction can be made as to what the outcome will be?

Currently, bioethics is concerned with gene control in biology, particularly in medicine, but also in agriculture to a certain extent. What follows is a review of some procedures which lend themselves to gene control and the ethical issues which they raise. In addition, a suggestion is made that science is rapidly developing means of controlling the genetic material. Finally, a plea is made for meaningful dialogue between theologians and scientists on the wisdom of such control as well as on the nature of man who finds himself not only the investigator but also the object of the investigation.

## *Genetic Manipulation by Direct Intervention*

Today almost any reputable microbiological laboratory has the capability of manipulating genetic material. Sophisticated enzyme systems are able to break apart strands of DNA and reunite them in different arrangements. Viruses are able to «connect» to small fragments of DNA and transmit them to other pieces of DNA. Scientists, using these «techniques», are able to facilitate genetic combinations that probably never existed before.

Within the recent past, i.e. 10 to 15 years, research has involved several types of bacteria, but more specifically *Escherichia coli*, a bacterial organism which commonly inhabits the human digestive system as part of its natural microflora. Perhaps more so than any other this organism has ushered in the age of genetic engineering which, simplified, means manipulating genetic material to meet certain specified designs.



Genes controlling the manufacture of insulin, ovalbumin, and several growth hormones have been «engineered» into bacterial cells with the resultant production of these compounds in bacterial culture. This is a positive use of genetic engineering as the result is, in the one instance at least, a much needed compound for use in diabetes. Here the procedure is no doubt ethically defensible. There are other potentially positive applications: information gathering about cellular functioning in normal and abnormal life processes; improvement in drug yields from micro-organisms; and improvement in food yields from agricultural crops and animals. Such applications will have profound effects on life and living and, undoubtedly, will lead to solutions of problems that are completely unforeseen at present.

However, even though the manipulation of genetic material may have its positives there are nevertheless inherent dangers. For instance, *E. coli* is a ubiquitous bacterium in the intestinal tracts of many organisms including man, in water systems of all types and on land. Recombinant DNA experiments on this organism in the early 1970's opened doors to possible genetic recombinations with characteristics detrimental to biological systems in general and to the human population in particular:

The problem lay in the choice of experimental organisms: If SV40 (the animal tumor virus used in the experiments) is capable of inserting genes into the chromosomes of animal cells, could not SV40 be inserted into *E. coli* by the bacterial viruses to which they were linked? And since *E. coli* is a common inhabitant of the human intestine, this could be a means of spreading SV40, which is suspected of being able to infect humans, throughout the population. (iii)

Also, the danger is inherent in the ability of plasmids to resist antibiotics. Thus, transferring plasmid DNA into *E. coli* could impart resistance in that bacterium. This bacterium could in turn transmit these plasmids to other types of bacteria (among them possible disease-producing types) in the human intestine thus imparting resistance in the organisms to antibiotics.

This prompted a reaction within the science community, especially those engaged in this type of research. In 1975 an international meeting was convened to review the various aspects of recombinant DNA research with an eye to limiting risks involved. Two agreements were reached. One was a temporary moratorium on any further research on recombinant DNA. The other was a set of guidelines for safe procedures. Subsequently, the guidelines were adopted and administered by the National Institutes of Health in the United States. In Great Britain similar, although not the same, guidelines were adopted and administered by the Genetic Manipulatory Advisory Group.

These events mark a significant occurrence in science. They indicate consciousness raising among scientists. They were aware that genetic manipulation may be basically different from other kinds of experimentation. It deals with the basis of life and, at the present time at least, it is extremely difficult if not



impossible to predict the outcome. When genetic material is rearranged it may result in redirection of the life involved. In addition, should the rearrangement become enlodged in the genome so that through reproduction it became inherited it could conceivably represent a determinative element in evolution controlled by mortal man, in this case the scientists.

These implications raise questions about the ethics of such procedures. For instance, should biological evolution be controlled at all, let alone by a particular segment of the population?

With respect to the guidelines mentioned above there is a significant lobby now for their relaxation with a view to their abolishment. This may represent vested interests of industry, as in the echelons of competition a free hand is better than a bound hand. In addition, legislation in the U.S. on the patenting of organisms has opened lucrative doors for ambitious scientists. They stand to benefit more and faster by applying standard laboratory techniques to their research rather than the more elaborate designs required under the guidelines.

Experimental material, i.e. *E. coli*, at present being used in DNA recombinations is so coded as to be rendered harmless the moment it is exposed to an environment other than the one specifically designed for its support. But there is no reason to believe that in the myriads of experiments underway at any given time other less protected organisms will not be constructed whose escape could prove disastrous. Neither can the good sense of science to be cautious and thereby prevent any such happenings be relied upon.

The disastrous corn failure in the U.S. in 1970-71 would indicate that science might not always be cautious. The failure followed wholesale incorporation into hybrid corn of the Texas (T-gene) for male sterility. The manipulation was a plant breeder's triumph in that the gene substituted for a highly labour-intensive technique of making the hybrids by hand. This resulted in a profitable venture for the hybrid corn seed industry. However, the gene carried with it a factor for susceptibility to southern corn leaf blight. This circumstance, as well as the course of the disease epidemic which followed, have been well documented. (iv) Suffice it to say that screening for certain desirable characteristics in the hybrids, resulted in 1970 in a high degree of cytoplasmic uniformity over more than 60 million acres of corn fields in the U.S. This resulted in losses due to southern corn leaf blight approaching one billion dollars (250,000,000 bushels of corn!). Although scientists had previous knowledge about this «double» character of the T-gene--in fact they knew that the gene also carried a susceptibility factor for yellow leaf blight, another highly-contagious corn disease--in their zeal for genetic manipulation they somehow ignored this. It may be concluded that here was a case in which genetic manipulation as a means to an end paved the way for a disastrous effect on our food supply.



Many laboratories in universities as well as industry are becoming involved in recombinant DNA research. What will be the ultimate effect on, say, higher organisms that may become receptors of genetic material from lower organisms? So little is known about barriers between species that prediction is next to impossible. Will all the scientists involved be as conscientious as those who, in 1975, imposed the moratorium? Will legislation be necessary banning certain types of experimentation and regulating others?

So far the concern has been with direct intervention in genetic material that already exists, direct intervention in the sense of facilitating genetic (DNA) recombination at the molecular level. What about the synthesis of a gene *in vitro* and the actual designing of genes to meet predetermined specifications?

A major breakthrough was achieved by the pioneering work of H.G. Khorana's group in the U.S. in the actual synthesis of RNA (ribonucleic acid) genes in 1976. Since then other genes have been synthesized as well. Not only has the genetic code been broken, providing an understanding of how it operates, but this synthesis now opens the door to man's actually designing the code and encoding genes by chemical manipulation. This means that molecular biologists/biochemists could conceivably design any character at will and incorporate it into the genome. Such actions would give scientists a prominent role in the evolutionary process since they would be designing that which makes a living organism what it actually is.

This becomes a theological issue of no small magnitude. Ongoing creation, generally accepted as part of the nature of things, instead of being, in most instances at least, God's prerogative, now falls within the prerogative of man, particularly scientists. In addition, given that scientists are humanists adopting the position in life, «I think therefore I am», with achievement as the basis of personal being and self-fulfilment, it can be surmised that there looms on the horizon a mind-boggling power struggle between man and God over who is in charge of the genes. Such vastness of man's control over life is staggering to the imagination!

#### *Gene Control by Means Other Than Direct Manipulation*

Agriculture research has provided yet another opportunity for control of genes. The scientific breeding of hybrid corn, already mentioned, is a case in point. A biological principle involved here is that the selection of certain specific genes and the discarding of others may have an effect on the gene pool by narrowing it somewhat. Thus the species is less able to compete due to lack of variability. As yet there is no concrete evidence that the gene pool has been affected in corn. However, as mentioned earlier, a desirable gene might carry with it, through linkage, an undesirable gene, which was the case in the selection of the T-gene for male sterility.

Another instance may be found in animal husbandry. Super-ovulation can be induced in cattle. The eggs can be fertilized by artificial insemination with selectively-chosen sperm. The foetuses may be extracted from the best females



and implanted into ordinary grade females (surrogates) for complete gestation. These procedures ensure the most economic use of differing genetic levels in a herd. In addition, the freezing of fetuses ensures wide distribution of high quality animals from specialized breeding laboratories to any given place in the world.

The above procedure is no doubt desirable for efficient production of quality animal protein, meat and milk, to help feed the world's population. However, it opens doors for profiteering, and there are implications for human breeding.

It is axiomatic in human medicine and experimentation that where possible any new innovation that has possibilities for humans should first be tested on animals. Animal foetal tissue is extremely sensitive to drugs and radiation exposure. Thus it provides excellent experimental material. There are guidelines for experimentation with animals, and governments monitor these in line with acceptable ethical principles. However, there remain the more questionable attributes of motivation and intention of the researchers. Moral implications arise if the research is motivated by an *a priori* desire to experiment with human fetuses.

Embryo freezing provides a way of storing embryos for long periods, thousands of years probably. This may provide useful research material in years to come as a hedge against genetic drift which invariably alters genetic composition. In the frozen state the genetic makeup of the foetus would not have changed over the long period of freezing. In all likelihood, however, the environment would have changed. Under these circumstances, upon thawing and revival, the foetus would be at a disadvantage. This raises a question of ethics regarding the placing by scientists of a foetus in a situation which might not, probably would not, be tenable for its future survival.

Some scientists make up hybrids of yeasts for high protein (food) production and of other fungi for antibiotics and other useful chemicals. Many are patenting their hybrids and either selling them to industrial corporations or forming their own companies for production. This raises the question of appropriate use of public funds which support the research. It also raises the issues of the profit motive and self-enhancement in a profession which supposedly gives up personal interests in favour of a «disinterested pursuit of knowledge and truth» which characterizes the scientific approach to experimentation. (v)

#### *Gene Control in the Human Community*

Until recent years the passing of genes from person to person, generation to generation, was accomplished exclusively by sexual means, an egg being fertilized within the body of the female by the deposition of a sperm by the male. In this natural system the only control the individuals had over the mixing of genetic material was by their choice of partners. The only way for rearrangement of genes was by crossing-over within dividing nuclei of the sex cells and/or spontaneous mutations.



Now in humans, as in animals, artificial insemination can be substituted for natural insemination. This affects the range of choices since sperm from one male can now be disseminated widely without the male's presence. This has resulted from the inauguration of sperm banks and the use of sperm not only from the husband within a marriage (AIH) but also from another person apart from the marriage (AID).

There are advantages to this «artificial» system, particularly in marriages where the male may be low on sperm or, for any of several other reasons, might not be able successfully to impregnate the female in a natural sexual situation. Then, too, if a husband's sperm cannot be used at all, sperm from another male (a donor - AID) may be substituted. Such control, however, over selection and transmission of genetical material in human reproduction raises bioethical issues in terms of invasion of privacy, anonymity of donor, and possible selectivity based on momentary whims and biases.

This control becomes compounded when fertilization takes place apart from the body of the female. This is known as extra-corporeal fertilization. It involves the removal of an egg from the female, its fertilization in a test-tube or other suitable device, and reimplantation into the uterus. It is a useful clinical technique in cases where functional egg movement does not occur in the female. This process, however, places the egg, and thus the genes it carries, in control of the person handling it. In addition, the fertilized egg must develop, by several divisions, to the blastocyst stage prior to reimplantation. This blastocyst, with its «double» dose of genes (from the sperm and egg), is also under the control of the hand that made it.

Here the door is open for gene therapy by recombinant DNA procedures. This, combined with gene synthesis, even though not applicable to human reproduction under present technology, raises staggering issues in bioethics. The reason is that the kind of therapy and what designs are desirable would be under control of clinicians and experimental biologists.

Finally, a measure of control of what influences could be brought to bear on the developing foetus could be exercised by a clinician reimplanting the blastocyst into the uterus of a surrogate mother whose DNA would not influence the foetus but whose cytoplasm might. Cytoplasmic inheritance means that the surrogate mother could have a definite influence on the resulting offspring.

Another opportunity to control genetic material in humans arises from prenatal diagnosis. This is a medical intervention in a pregnancy which may be at risk primarily for a genetic disorder. It encompasses several procedures: amniocentesis, which is the analysis of amniotic fluid for irregularities in chromosomes and chemical constituents of the foetus; alpha-foetoprotein analysis, for diagnosis of neural tract disorders; foetoscopy, for direct examination of the foetus; and ultra-sonography (ultra-sound). The latter two methods give information about the form and structure of the foetus.



These procedures are all aimed at providing early information primarily about the genetic health of the foetus. The information is used in genetic counselling of parents and their decision making. Whereas some of the disorders can be corrected in the foetal stage most of them cannot be corrected. This opens the door to decisions on the fate of the foetus. In many cases it is a choice between bearing the foetus to birth or terminating the pregnancy by therapeutic abortion. In either case, decisions are made about the fate of the genetic line - the genome. To carry this to a logical conclusion in terms of heredity and the demise of the genes the procedure lays a foundation for gene selection and therefore gene control.

In prenatal diagnosis emphasis can be laid upon the ethics of choosing one gene over another, particularly when that gene might be considered either undesirable because it digresses from the norm in a detrimental way or desirable because it digresses from the norm in what might be considered a beneficial way in that it contributes to a trait extra-advantageous to the individual.

Besides issues raised by prenatal diagnosis genetic counselling also deals with issues of heredity prior to fertilization and foetal development. A genetically-defective trait can usually be traced within a family line, and prediction made as to the probability of its distribution among progeny. Such information is helpful in decision making for couples who may be contemplating raising a family.

An extension of this occurs when a particular group of people is known to possess an undesirable gene. Here the whole community becomes subject to scrutiny for those carrying the gene. Carriers are then informed about their condition so that they can make appropriate decisions about procreation. Several such programmes have been undertaken.

Such screening on a large scale has the effect of either erasing any particular gene from the population or propagating it more vigorously, depending upon the desirability of the gene. Here, although they do not make the final decisions, scientists (geneticists) have primary control of the genes. They possess the expertise to identify the genes, trace the pattern of inheritance, and predict their future distribution.

#### *Dialogue between Science and Theology*

What has been said here about control of the genes reflects Muller's forecast of human evolution being guided by ourselves:

If we are to preserve that self-determination which is an essential feature of human intelligence, success, and happiness, our individual actions in the realm of genetics must be steps based on our own personal judgements and inclinations.... If we hold fast to our ideal, then evolution will become, for the first time, a conscious process. Increasingly conscious, it can proceed at a pace far outdistancing that achieved by trial and error--and in even greater assurance, animation, and enthusiasm. That will be the highest form of freedom that man, or life, can have. (vi)



Certainly, the guiding of evolution could be looked upon as a high level of achievement and thus self-fulfilment for any scientist who adopts the position about life which requires doing and accomplishment as a basis of self-knowledge and personhood.

No doubt there is value in the positive aspects of research on recombinant DNA and clinical aspects of reproduction. Yet it is clear that scientists are developing methods which set the stage for control of the genes. This will have a profound influence on life in the future.

Given that control of the genes was desirable, the means of accomplishing this would require careful monitoring for acceptable ethical behaviour. The ideal would be for scientists and technologists to adopt ethical standards acceptable not only to themselves but also to the population which stands to be affected by any control of its genetic destiny. However, even if such standards could be determined, it remains to question the propriety of the destiny of the genetic component of life being controlled by any particular group of individuals.

Control of the genes means control of what life is. This is a matter for deliberation, if not by the whole community of mankind, by a community wider than that represented by science and technology. That scientists are concerned about this may be evidenced in the moratorium which the geneticists themselves imposed upon their research on recombinant DNA. This was an action indicating that these scientists were taking a second look at their procedures. This was prompted by the supposition that their research might backfire, that they themselves, along with the rest of the population, could become victims of unpredictable biological activity by microorganisms of their own design. These scientists have indicated a concern that signals a value judgement. In addition, experimentation on genetic material in the clinical setting has raised a question for science as to what and who it is that has become the object of investigation in genetic medicine. This, at least in part, is a theological question about man.

In the deliberations at the World Conference on Faith, Science and the Future at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1979 dialogue on this issue lacked profundity. Although attempted, it continued to break down when either side would deflect and begin talking to itself in its own language, on its own terms. Either theology is not hearing the question accurately or science is not articulating it clearly. It could be a combination of both.

Perhaps what would help facilitate dialogue is an identification and clarification of assumptions upon which the disciplines base their statements and arguments. This would help to clarify the question and to facilitate its being heard. What may be for science a complicating factor in this task is a shift in its basic stance in objectivity to one including a subjective element, particularly in genetic medicine where the object of investigation is man himself. This makes it difficult, probably impossible for the investigator to adopt a purely objective stance. This means that increasingly science may be faced with an identification of assumptions. This can only compound the difficulty of their



identification for the enhancement of the attempted dialogue with theology on the nature of man. Evidence for this shift may be found, as suggested earlier, in the moratorium on recombinant DNA, and also in the methods of learning in the social sciences. (vii)

It would only seem fair also for theology to clarify its assumptions so that science may have a clearer understanding of where theologians «come from» when making statements.

It would be in the best interests of mankind if science and theology would take steps to provide for better communications with each other. The topic of conversation, as suggested herein, is important for man's destiny. Indeed, control of the genes, particularly if they can be synthesized, is a powerful tool in directing evolution. Surely theological discourse is required if the recipes are to be fabricated by mortal man. Faced with a situation as magnanimous as the design of the species, particularly when that species is man, *homo sapiens*, science and theology ought to be conversing with each other in a meaningful way.

The situation is acute. There is little to be gained by arguing who is right and who is wrong. This only carries on the long-standing confrontation of two diabolically-opposed philosophical views of man: for science--I do therefore I am--with personhood and self-fulfilment based primarily in achievement; for theology--I am therefore I do--with personhood and self fulfilment founded in God's Grace.

Science, in asking the question about the nature of the object of investigation, is perhaps doing so because of an existential interest in the object. This approaches common ground with theology. Perhaps it is on this common ground where the dialogue will begin to bear fruit in terms of the wisdom of controlling the genes.

#### Footnotes:

- i. J. Crossland, «Hands on the Code,» *Environment* 18 (1976), 6-16.
- ii R. Curtis, «Genetic Manipulation of Micro-organisms: Potential Benefits and Hazards,» *Annual Review of Microbiology* 30 (1976), 507-33.
- iii. Crossland, *loc. cit.*
- iv. P.R. Day, «Genetic Variability in Crops,» *Annual Review of Phytopathology* 11 (1973), 293-312.
- v. D. Roy, «Biomedical Developments and the Public Responsibility of Philosophy,» in *Contemporary Issues in Biomedical Ethics*, edited John W. Davis *et al.* (The Humana Press, 1978).
- vi. H.J. Muller, «The Guidance of Human Evolution,» *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 3 (1959), 1-43.
- vii. M.N. Taylor, «Adult Learning in an Emergent Learning Group: Toward a Theory of Learning from the Learner's Perspective,» Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1979.



## A WAY OF THINKING ABOUT ABORTION AND EUTHANASIA

RICHARD R. COOPER

I wish in this article to examine the problems of abortion and euthanasia from the perspective of moral philosophy. Such an approach involves treating these subjects on a general and theoretical level. If the theory worked out here for thinking in general terms about abortion and euthanasia is valid, then it ought to be applicable to reflection on other ethical questions, such as sexual morality, environmental ethics, the ethics of war, and so forth. Thus the theory rests upon its generality. On the other hand basic definitions of what I mean in using the words «abortion» and «euthanasia» are in order. Briefly, restrict *abortion* to what should properly be called «non-therapeutic» abortions, i.e., abortions which are not strictly necessary for the *physical* health and well-being of the childbearing woman. I do this because it is these abortions which create the serious and controverted ethical problems. By *euthanasia* I mean solely what may be defined paradoxically as «voluntary, non-self-inflicted suicide.» I employ this cumbersome formula in order to emphasize what I think can be a profitable way of considering legalized or legalizable euthanasia in the light of the legality of suicide.

### 1. *Morality and Religion*

Insofar as I am dealing with abortion and euthanasia from the point of view of moral philosophy, I shall bracket the religious dimension of the problems. I am impelled to do this for the following reasons. First, I believe that when these problems are discussed from a religious point of view it is possible that solutions which are either too simple or pre-judged or both may result. And, secondly, it should be obvious to us whether we are religious or not that the great majority of people affected by situations involving abortion or euthanasia have only tenuous religious concerns or none at all. Moreover, though it may be a hard pill for religious people to swallow, we had best simply admit that we in the industrialized West, at least, live in a world in which religion is no longer a major concern.

These are basically negative reasons for bracketing what religion has to say about abortion and euthanasia. My positive reasons for bracketing the religious dimension have to do with what I consider to be the fundamental tasks of moral philosophy in the contemporary world. These tasks I would characterize as, first, the exploratory function of moral philosophy and, second, the critical function of moral philosophy. Both of these functions could in some ways be inhibited by religious concerns. In order to make my subsequent position clear I must explain briefly what I mean by these two functions. The world in which we live at present is a world characterized by pluralism and relativity of values, not only in the realm of morality, but in almost every area of life. One can at best, therefore, speak only of «moral philosophy» in the generic sense. There are many moral philosophies. Given this situation, people who think seriously and coherently about morals and values are constantly placed in a position of having to weigh rival claims and to choose between competing points of view. This is not



only a difficult position to be in, it is a highly uncomfortable one. But the cost of surrendering it would involve either slipping into dogmatism on the one hand or sliding into a come-what-may sort of apathy on the other. That such a surrender too often takes place may, I fear, be the chief symptom of the moral sickness of our times. As an antidote to this sickness I would recommend the exploratory function of ethical thinking. Put simply, this function is our openness to surveying and thinking out the various competing ethical views we find in the world around us. I am not so naïve as to think that this can be done with so-called «scientific objectivity». Obviously not. What we have to do, rather, is to learn to live with ethical pluralism and yet at the same time to work out principles of coherence in our ethical thought. In other words, we have to be willing to explore, to change, to compromise, and *finally* to reach a position where we can articulate our principles of action and value. This task is so difficult that it must in some way be contained within boundaries. It is here that I bring in the second function that I consider to be necessary for a contemporary moral philosophy, namely, the critical function. The critical function operates simultaneously with the exploratory function in order to keep the latter within bounds. Its basic object is our ability to know where we are at any given point in our exploration, and its basic operative principle is what is generally called the «action-guiding» capacity of such knowledge. I would thus tend to regard the critical function of a moral philosophy as a direct implicate of our awareness of belonging to an ethical tradition, as well as a developed capacity for judging that tradition. In this sense, ethics is a historical discipline, but it is also a communal discipline. The difficulty comes when we survey the multiplicity of our traditions and our communities.

Much confusion in contemporary ethical thinking has resulted from the dichotomization of morality into individual morality and social morality. While these areas can be distinguished for certain purposes, it seems to me that in general this dichotomy is a false one, or let us rather say less true today than it was in the nineteenth century, and less true then than in the eighteenth century. Our contemporary awareness of the individual is one of a subject riddled by the influences of the world in which he or she lives. The field of ethics is no longer autonomous, but is linked integrally to sociology, psychology, economics, and, as Aristotle realized long ago, politics. This at least, it would appear, is what one notices about the lie of the land when one begins one's ethical exploration. By bringing to bear the critical function of ethical thought, I now wish to suggest that the historical reason for this complex situation is the splintering of a simpler single world-view into more complex multiple world-views. It is a cliché of history that this has taken place in the last five hundred years or so, though various distinctions between the one world-view and multiple world-views can be drawn depending upon the point at which one cuts into the history of that period. Nonetheless, it is obvious that our world is not and can never again be the world of Catholic Europe in the thirteenth century. And that, I should say, is a good thing--because we are forced insofar as we are exploratory, critical beings to salvage what we can of our heritage. Many of us, of course, would like to salvage something of our Christian heritage, but we should always keep before us the possibility that in the end even that may have to go. And if it does indeed have to go, what kind of world will we find ourselves living in? It is with the latter, admittedly theoretical possibility that I am concerned in this essay.



How can we, not in a post-Christian, but in a non-Christian world, preserve certain values that have been intimately associated with the Christian religion in our Western tradition? I am not here concerned with equivalent values that could be imported from another tradition. (For example, Jainism could teach Christianity some important things about the «sanctity of life».) Rather, I am concentrating on what we can do as heirs of a tradition which if not exactly dead, is showing all the signs of being moribund. I do not wish to get into a discussion of historical determinism, which in any case even if it could be proved would likely be too simplistic an explanation, but to assert both the inevitability and the value of our belonging to a tradition, of having a home, even if largely an imaginary one, in the past.

It has recently been argued by Basil Mitchell that a living Christian faith alone can ensure the preservation of our traditional values. (i) It is this position to which I wish to take exception by using two of the examples which Mitchell himself has used, the issues of abortion and euthanasia. The procedure which I am adopting is somewhat radical and is not likely to meet with agreement from a good many moral philosophers or a good many religious thinkers. I wish to construct a general model for thinking about moral issues such as abortion and euthanasia and to test the practicability of this model. It is my hope that such a model may clear up at least a little of the confusion surrounding these issues.

## 2. A Theoretical Model

My model involves two stages of thinking. I suggest that to begin with we should rigorously think of *morals as conventional (as opposed to «natural») rules based upon the paradigm of positive law*. The relationship between morality and the law is immensely complex and subject to a number of divergent interpretations. (ii) The view of this relationship I am advocating is one which distinguishes between the spheres of morality and law, reserving to each its own theoretical integrity, yet recognizing that the two are in constant interaction and mutually influence each other. In saying that we should think of morals as conventional rules based upon the paradigm of the positive law, I am rather boldly rewriting Kant's first formulation of the categorical imperative as «Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a *positive law of the realm.*» (iii) As unpalatable as it may be to some philosophers, I think this approach reflects both how we learn morality and how we tend to think about it in our more naïve, or profound, moments. I believe that this particular stage of the model has the advantage that it gets immediately to the level of most people who are practically concerned with questions like those of abortion and euthanasia. The unmarried girl desiring an abortion and the doctor willing to perform it are both operating within the boundaries of certain procedures established by positive law. I wish to go farther, however, and say that I think that their «moral» reflections on the case, if they have any, will be primarily, though not wholly, determined by their attitude towards the law.



To ward off charges of cynicism and other emotional bugbears that may crop up at this stage, let me say that the foregoing analysis of the situation is based upon the observation that so much talk both *pro* and *con* about abortion (and euthanasia, for that matter) centres on the question of rights. «Don't I have a right over my own body?» «Doesn't the unborn child have a right to life?»

What I am chiefly interested in is the use that is being made of the word «right». Now, it seems to me that a confusion exists here between claim rights and natural rights. (iv) Roughly, claim rights are those specific rights, such as protection of one's person from assault or molestation, that can be directly enforced by appeal to the sanctions of positive law, while natural rights would be those «inalienable rights», such as «life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness» enshrined in the American Constitution. The problem is caused on the one hand by the ambiguity of the word «rights» in its technical legal sense and on the other by the present dubious status of the theory of natural rights. The latter is based upon the natural law theory of ancient Stoicism as it has been passed down to us by medieval Christianity and Renaissance Humanism. Even in the post-Hobbesian eighteenth century the fact that such rights had to be embodied in documents bearing the weight of positive law shows that the world-view on which the theory of natural law was based had begun to crumble. Yet this theory is obviously one which we seem loath to be rid of. The reason is not hard to find. If natural rights were reduced to something like the status of claim rights, such a reduction would in theory seem to leave the door open to the possibility that at some time in the future all so-called inalienable rights could if not be revoked, at least be significantly modified. But it is precisely this, I am arguing, that is already well under way. Insofar as natural rights still exist they are a convenient fiction by which we live. My positive suggestion is that if we use the model of morality-as-law clearheadedly we will be able to salvage all that was of value in the theory of natural law without, and this is the important point, its sanctions of absoluteness. The latter proviso would count against the possibility of the legislation of an absolutist system of morality such as that advocated by the *soi disant* Moral Majority. On the other hand, much thought needs to go into the question of the status of recourse to abortion and euthanasia as claim rights. I am not competent to settle this problem, though I can point out the difficulty of using the term claim rights for something that appears to fall more naturally into the category of liberties. If this is so, then the whole area of the relationship between liberties and rights has to be investigated and brought to bear upon the claims that can legitimately be made for abortion and euthanasia. Such an investigation is beyond the scope of this paper. I wish solely to suggest here that much greater care should be taken in using the word «rights».

When all this has been said, however, it is important to note that the law is a fundamentally communal institution, though, obviously, certain of its applications bear directly upon individuals. The conflict between individual and communal rights, however they may be defined, and the confusion which arises from this conflict have befuddled most attempts to think clearly about the questions of abortion and euthanasia. This confusion is likely to continue until sufficient legal precedents have been established to provide a background for assessing and dealing intensively with the issues.



My question now is: How, from the point of view of morality, do we set up a mirror in which the deliberations of the law can be reflected? Here I introduce the second stage in my theoretical model. I suggest that after we have begun to think of morality as a system of conventional rules based on the paradigm of positive law, we should move to a second stage of reflection at which we examine *how* we make decisions when confronted with moral dilemmas. In general, I believe we resolve moral dilemmas by appealing to certain overriding principles which may be more or less well formulated. This is no novel view. Overriding principles should not, however, be thought of as moral absolutes, but rather as the supreme values of a cultural tradition viewed as guides to decision and action. Often a philosophical argument will attempt to justify a set of overriding principles without investigating the provenance of those principles. It is to this latter investigation that I wish to shift the emphasis--to what might be called the aetiology of overriding principles. It is at this point that I appeal to the historical-critical function of moral philosophy.

Using the examples of abortion and euthanasia, we can say that one of the strongest arguments against these sorts of interference with the natural course of human life is the valuation that has been placed in our Western Christian tradition on what is often called the «sanctity of human life». The use of the word «sanctity» betrays the religious roots of this concept, though the concept itself probably has been severed from those roots. This, however, is not a particularly useful observation since «sanctity» can just as well be replaced by «value» or «preciousness». That life is qualified as «human» is rather more significant, for there has been a deplorable lack of concern in our tradition with other forms of life, a lack which some ethicists are now attempting to rectify. We can thus see that when looked at from the historical-critical point of view two terms in this formula seem arbitrary, if not ambiguous. But if we modify the concept, we can still say that in the Western Christian tradition a special value has been placed upon human life: and, significantly, we can go on to develop the concept by saying that insofar as we are the historical heirs of our tradition we can hold consistently to the maxim that there is a special value which we can be attributed to *all* life. The modification of the concept implies a modification of tradition, and that is all to the good, since a dead underlying tradition is no tradition at all. Ahistorical traditionalists might maintain, for example, that if the basis in Christian belief from which the concept emerged were lost or eradicated, the concept itself would lose its special overriding status. This I believe to be both erroneous and symptomatic of a hypostatization of tradition indicative of the fact that the dynamic, historical character of a tradition has either in essence already been lost or that the basis of the tradition has radically shifted. Indeed, it can be argued that a radical shift from a theocentric justification of moral beliefs to an anthropocentric justification has taken place and is continuing to take place in the Western Christian tradition. Moreover, it can be argued that this shift has not altered, though it has modified the central moral values of that tradition. Further, I believe that this modification of moral values is not for the worse, but for the better. In fact, the special value attributed to human life has really become practically significant only during the past two hundred years



or so. To illustrate this I need only refer to the phenomenon of capital punishment. The interesting point, however, is that it is with the weakening of the influence of Christianity, and with it the whole supernatural machinery of an after-life of rewards and punishment, that an increased *practical* valuation has been placed on human life--and, one hopes, also on other forms of life.

Because of my main theme, I have given only one example of an overriding principle. There are, however, many such principles. They form the treasury of our ethical traditions. Other examples are the ideas of justice and equity in relation to law, of charity in our relations with others, the whole array of what might be called «aesthetic virtues» in relation to our artificial and natural environments, of truth as the aim of our intellectual pursuits, and so forth. I would argue that the richness of this heritage, to which we contribute as well as upon which we draw, should be seen as fleshing out the abstract form of the categorical imperative: universalizability in another sense. Where overriding principles come into conflict, an attempt should be made to evaluate the whole system of such principles from the historical-critical point of view. In the present instance, the question to ask is: Does the principle of justice outweigh the principle of the special value of life? Three answers to this question are possible: yes, no and in some circumstances. The choice of answer allows us to picture for ourselves the configuration of our system of overriding principles.

### 3. *An Application*

I have now reached the point where I can directly apply my two-stage theoretical model to abortion and euthanasia considered under their general aspect. If we think of morality as a system of conventional rules based on the paradigm of positive law, and if we further postulate that dilemmas arising within such a system can be resolved by appeal to certain overriding principles that could in practice have the force of positive laws, we get the following picture. In a just society certain rights would be guaranteed in law for every member of that society, e.g., the right to life. Where a conflict over rights might arise, as in the case of abortion and euthanasia, or for that matter capital punishment and suicide, one of two things may happen. Either (1) it might be maintained that one party, being in some way not a legitimated member of that society, or having relinquished his legitimate status, has no legal claim upon the society and therefore the question of rights conferred by legitimacy does not arise. This principle could work in the cases of abortion, capital punishment, and possibly suicide, but, one hopes, not in the case of euthanasia. Or (2) it might be maintained that given a general inalienable right to life as an overriding principle bearing the force of positive law, it is in every case this principle that is to be appealed to; therefore, in theory, there can be no priority claims on this right. Every possessor of life insofar as it is capable of being conceived as a legal entity holds this right as it were tautologically and hence inalienably. Of course, it is the latter eventuality that is at present under question, and it is also the reason for the rather misdirected debate over the definition of life. It is not really the definition of life



that is central to the issues of abortion and euthanasia, but rather, as I have endeavoured to show, the legal status of the concept of rights and the sort of definition to which that concept is susceptible.

This leads us to note one of the most interesting aspects of the debate about abortion and euthanasia. When one hears statements such as «I have a right over my own body; therefore I have a right not to have an unwanted child» or «The foetus has a right to life», one realizes that these are emotional expressions standing for whole complexes of attitudes and ways of life. What is not so apparent and must become apparent is that these attitudes and ways of life are at best only tangentially assured by the existing form of society as a legal institution, so that at present *both* statements involve a lack of clarity in the use of the word «right». Both are also, I think, expressions of an individualistic way of thinking which our traditional institutions have fostered, but which they have only partially guaranteed. It is this individualistic way of thinking that is chiefly supported by alternative (1) above. But then a paradox results: the general rights of some individuals are seen to exclude the general rights of some other individuals, who may or may not have violated the code of general rights. Succinctly put, this is the paradox of retributive justice, but extended beyond the realm of criminal law. As such, it points to one of the problem areas in our modern Western societies. It also reveals the common basis of assumptions that both some of those who support abortion and euthanasia and some of those who belong to the pro-life movement share.

A much more serious contradiction, not paradox, underlies the attitude of a great many people who favour unrestricted abortion, and also those who would favour legalized euthanasia. It is difficult to talk in generalities, but I think that both these parties and their sympathizers would include a great many persons who would maintain the theoretical principle that life possesses a special value. They are then immediately forced to make certain qualifications: It is not life in general that is meant, but life defined in a specific way. All the talk about «quality of life» enters. But what is quality of life without the presupposition of life? How, even, can life be defined? Life cannot be defined; life is to be lived. So might the argument run. My suggestion is that some of the ethical confusion that arises here could be mitigated by recursion to the paradigm of the positive law and serious thinking about the definition of rights obtainable within existing legal systems. I do not think that either unrestricted, non-therapeutic abortions or legalized euthanasia, even in the most limited sense of voluntary, non-self-inflicted suicide, can be *logically* defended so long as one maintains that life as a given, undefined existential phenomenon is upheld as possessing special value. Nor, on the other hand, do I think that the rhetoric of the pro-lifers about «rights» can be maintained given the actuality of our present legal codes.

At this point we can look back and survey just what the application of my theoretical model can tell us about the present discussion of abortion and euthanasia. It is to be noted first of all that the practical application of the model discloses that the discussion of these issues tends to be at bottom paradoxical and



contradictory. The reason for this, I suggest, is the present underlying gap between our thinking about law and our thinking about morality. It is the treatment of these two realms as not only distinct, but often antagonistic that results in paradox and contradiction. By bringing them into a closer relationship with each other, while still maintaining their essential separateness, the extremity of the tension can be emphasized but at the same time mitigated. Mitigation can be achieved, first, by accepting the present actuality of law as a living, changing, and developing tradition of action, one that can be both maintained *and* adjusted to new situations. And, secondly, mitigation can be achieved by bringing to bear upon the present state of the law the critique arising from the concept of overriding principles in morality. The latter critique operates as the agency of adjustment, criticizing on the one hand the ambiguities and inadequacies of the present laws and on the other acknowledging that absolute principles of morality are unlikely to be realizable when applied in concrete instances. In the interaction between fact and principle a more balanced, if not completely consistent view of the issues can emerge. Such a view can then lead on to responsible individual and communal decisions.

#### 4. *Conclusion*

I have tried to do a great deal in this article, probably too much. Primarily, I have tried to present a theoretical model that may help us to think more clearly in general about the difficult and perplexing issues of abortion and euthanasia. This model is inspired by a view of ethics that finds its roots in the Kantian tradition of moral philosophy and tries to retain the central insights of that tradition in a world in which we are no longer either willing or able to accept its transcendental framework or its particular view of autonomy (a view which in many ways is a direct ancestor of the sort of individualism criticized above). In taking probably more literally than Kant intended his metaphor of law and restricting it to the positive law as a paradigm for the moral law, I have left myself open to the charge of heteronomy. I defend myself against this charge by substituting the framework of historical tradition for the transcendental framework and the autonomy of our legal traditions as formal repositories of practical morality for the autonomy of the self-legislative will.

Secondarily, I have attempted to argue against the sort of world-view that would sacrifice, even though partially, our hard-won principle of the special value of life for the sake of individual «self-fulfilment» or social convenience. I might add here that I think the clinching specific argument against certain types of abortion and euthanasia is what might be called the argument from abuse. Abortion and euthanasia are on both the personal and the social levels easy and economic ways out of difficulties. And the easy way out is often, if not always, the way of abuse. Abortion is much easier and more economic than providing counselling services for expectant mothers or means for the social care of unwanted infants. Euthanasia is easier and more economic than expanding institutional facilities for the old and terminally ill or burdening children with the expense, both psychological and monetary, of caring for hopelessly senile parents. But if we have come to this, then why keep up the pretence of



talking about rights and the special value of life? Such rhetoric at this stage is every bit as hypocritical as that of the Moral Majority, and for the same reason--blindness to the wider implications of the issues involved.

On no account, however, would I be misunderstood as arguing for the repeal of existing abortion laws, but rather for the implementation of a more effective system of checks and controls against possible abuse and for greater emphasis on patient and imaginative counselling backed by the possibility of viable alternatives to abortion. The question of euthanasia is more difficult and greater care would have to be exercised against the possibility of abuse, with an even tighter system of checks and controls, yet in a limited number of cases of terminally ill patients capable of rationally choosing non-self-inflicted suicide, it seems to me to remain an open option. Otherwise, I think the real emphasis must be placed on allowing the terminally ill to die natural deaths in which as much suffering as possible has been alleviated. Similarly, the real solution to the problem of abortion would appear to lie in the more effective use of improved means of contraception and in an increased public awareness through education of the complexity of human sexuality and the responsibilities it involves.

Finally, I have tried to maintain my position without appeal to any religious arguments. I have given my reasons for this at the beginning of the paper. I can only repeat here that the religious arguments, while they may intrinsically possess great value, are likely to go unheard in today's world or, worse, be used to undermine the very values which religion has in part fostered historically. If philosophy is a way of thinking intelligently and morality is a way of living worthily, then our reflections on these and other issues are always in a process of conscious discovery, and that is probably part of what it means to have life, and to have it more abundantly.

#### Footnotes:

- i. Basil Mitchell, *Morality: Religious and Secular: The Dilemma of the Traditional Conscience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). In many ways my paper is a response to this book.
- ii. Dennis Lloyd, *The Idea of Law*, rev. rpt. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), chp. 3 «Law and Morals», pp. 46-69, contains a clear and helpful discussion.
- iii. Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), p. 39. For my italicized phrase the original reads: «. . . a universal law.»
- iv. J.L. Mackie, *Ethics, Inventing Right and Wrong* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 195ff., treats the «right to life» as a claim right.



# WOMEN AT THE GREAT DIVIDE: TOWARDS AN ETHIC OF HUMAN/FEMININE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LIFE AND DEATH

KATHERINE YOUNG

In the summer of 1981 Betty Friedan tolled the bells of despair for Feminism as represented by its basic platform, the Equal Rights Amendment. If the Amendment did not pass in the next year (and every sign pointed to this end), not just the Cause but *every woman*--old, middle-aged, young, on the political right or left--would feel the erosion of the advances of the past several decades, advances that had been absorbed into normal feminine consciousness. Notably, one of the main reasons proffered for the demise of Feminism, at least in its present form, was the death toll itself: Abortion.

Indeed the issue of abortion has polarized women, and by extension the society as a whole, into two contending camps: pro-abortion and pro-life. Many Feminists argue for the absolute right to decide the destiny of their own bodies and lives, a right to be legally sanctioned and economically supported, its corollary being the right to take life. The women who oppose this position argue that the *right to take life* «euphemistically» prevents acknowledgement of the real event: *the killing of another human being* who is absolutely defenceless against this act of aggression. The resulting anti-abortion stance insists that a human being has the *right to live*. Put religiously the corollary is «life is sacred», and put socially the corollary is that both woman *and man* are responsible for conception while society too has its responsibility for the «lives» of the next generation.

There is no greater divide than that between life and death. The question becomes: can women overcome the great divide posed by the issue of abortion? More specifically, can an ethic of human/feminine responsibility for life and death be evolved?

The overcoming of differences is an aspect of human interaction as old as *homo sapiens*. The older models of power and barter have given way to models of consensus, diplomacy, dialogue and the Marxist tactic of encouraging the antithesis to develop until the contradiction no longer can be sustained and something new and improved spontaneously emerges.

One wonders about the effectiveness of any of these methods for the topic at hand. *Consensus*, usually understood as the consensus of the majority, reflects not so much the emergence of a new synthesizing view as a democratization of power; in other words, it is the view of the majority that prevails. *Diplomacy*, which presumes that the representatives of the positions can act in the name of the group, is a sophisticated form of barter that does little to instigate a new creative vision and in the final analysis is dependent on acceptance of the proposal by the group and some mechanism to ensure the terms of the agreement. *Dialogue* in itself too naïvely assumes that the exchange of ideas will reconcile differences, when the odds are that it is just as likely to increase them.



*Marxist dialectic*, on the other hand, focuses on *action to create the polarization*, but rarely responsibility for resolution through new ways of thinking about the issue.

If a human/feminine responsibility for life and death is to emerge, a method must be evolved to overcome polarization. (i) But where does one begin this awesome task? The first step is to recognize the «phenomenal», i.e., striking, overwhelming nature of the issue and the gap of communication that exists between the adherents of differing views. The issue of abortion is at the divide between life and death. The enormity of the issue must be recognized as a starting point, for only then will the extremity and emotionalism of the views be given respectful acknowledgement as legitimately part of the phenomenon.

Next, one's own position should be articulated with honesty and clarity; this represents the initial, *existential truth*--intellectual and emotional--of the phenomenon.

At this point one must make an imaginative leap to the polar view which has been patiently researched and understood by dialogue. Through this participation in the opposite stance, one comes to the empathetic and holistic understanding of this too as an existential truth with ethical insights.

From the perspective of this new stance that has been phenomenologically appropriated, one then ethically critiques one's own initial position. Let us assume, for example, that one's position is abortion on demand. Now the challenge is to critique this position from the pro-life perspective. The following questions might well be asked. Does not a woman's desire to control her own life lead to self-centredness if not outright selfishness and extreme individualism? How can one talk about the woman's *right* when there are other individuals involved--the male progenitor and the human fetus--who also may be said to have *rights*, the right to *nurture* and the right to *live* respectively? By extension can the woman argue for total freedom when she is part of society and essential to the regeneration of the species? In any case, is not the opposition of men's control over women (and their bodies) in the past and women's control over themselves today a false opposition, for indeed the basic opposition is between no artificial control to prevent conception and birth control? In other words is not the true divide in this case between two stages of human history, not between women and men? Does it not follow that any Feminist position that formulates the issue of abortion with reference to the misogyny of the past uses fallacious reasoning? Moreover, can it not be argued that the easy availability of abortion has led women to turn to abortion not just for those *causes célèbres* but on the contrary for an effective method of birth control; witness the fact that 27% of the abortions performed at the Montreal General Hospital in this past year involved women who had previously resorted to abortion? And is it not too easy to conclude that abortion on demand is convenient and that the increasing popularity of abortion is related to the psychology of the consumer society and less and less to the exceptional circumstances of individual cases and the ethical questions involved? Finally, should one not wonder with concern over whether the easy availability of



abortion has not already caused a shift in the social-psychology regarding the value of life *qua* life so that indifference to abortion may increasingly prevail in the populace at large outside the battlefield of pro-abortion vs. pro-life?

Similarly, those whose existential-cum-ethical stance is pro-life must also imaginatively and sensitively critique their own position from the standpoint of the pro-abortionists with whom they have temporarily identified. The questions raised might be as follows.

When someone states that life is sacred and abortion is categorically the positive act of killing another human being, can it not be said that such an individual is ruthlessly dogmatic and without any humanism in what may be considered extraordinary situations? Moreover, are there not areas of extreme ambiguity (grey zones) even when one dogmatically adheres to the statement «human life is sacred»? For instance, when two human lives are involved (foetus and mother), does not the description of sacredness apply to both, and if one necessarily dies if the other is saved, then is there not still a choice involved (i.e., is not the corollary of the choice to save, the choice to allow death)? Furthermore, if one clings to the absolute inviolability of life, then must not one also accept the logical consequence of the ethical maxim «Thou shalt not kill», that is, that killing a human being is categorically denied *under any circumstances*, for example even the just war to prevent Nazism, self-defence, etc.?

Finally the question arises: *if both abortion and birth control are denied, then does this not amount to the denial of human freedom* in an arena of life that, thanks to modern medicine, has given us the potential to alleviate the woman's subjugation to her biology? Is it desirable or possible, given the modern human awareness and appreciation of freedom as a mediating if not a central value, to move from this new potential for women to have a say in their destinies back to biological determinism (or monastic asexuality)?

Having become involved in the radical questioning of one's own position in the manner illustrated above, one should begin to breakdown the barriers of intellectual and emotional rigidity. The outcome should be to realize that there are «grey zones» in each supposedly black or white position.

In this new mood of openness, the question naturally arises of whether a creative hermeneutic, capturing and integrating the strengths of each view, can begin to push out of the former polarity. A possible scenario as a starter for imaginative and flexible consideration is proposed in the remainder of this paper.

Central to the discussion at hand is the meaning of life and death. By observation we induce the law of nature: whoever is born is bound to die. At the same time the proposition can be made: the purpose of life is to live and not to die. The combination of these two statements leads to a pair of opposites: destiny versus purpose. The question becomes whether the inevitability of



death is the purpose of life in general as well as exceptional circumstances (ii). If it is argued that death is the purpose of life, then purposeful human activity should be related to this ultimate purpose. Obviously this would lead to ways to bring death to each individual as expediently and expeditiously as possible. (iii) But nothing contravenes general/normal human behaviour and purposeful activity more than this. Hence it can be concluded with the support of scientific observation of normal human behaviour that life as a cardinal if not the cardinal value can be universally agreed upon by reasonable persons.

Both those who are pro-abortionist and those who are pro-life agree that the purpose of life must be viewed in contradistinction to the inevitability of death; as such, both have as their premise a life-affirming stance. Put ethically, one *ought* to act to protect and nourish life (for the purpose of life is to live and not to die) even though one *can* kill. Whether one chooses the humanistic language «life is a cardinal if not the cardinal value» or one prefers the religious language «life is sacred», one concurs with the position proffered. Any human/feminine ethic must begin with this position which is not an *a priori* or a hypotheticalal construct, but rather a universal induced from observation of normal human behaviour. (iv)

Once it is admitted that human life has a cardinal if not supreme value, the issue becomes: when does human life begin--pre-conception, fertilization, implantation, quickening, (v) viability (vi) or birth? In lieu of an unequivocal point that may be said to constitute human life, where there is a qualitative change from life to human life, it is best to argue as does H. Patrick Glenn following the German Federal Constitutional Court: «... foetal life is necessary to, and shares major characteristics of, complete human life, one of the highest values, if not the highest value, of the legal order. Existence which satisfies such a biological definition of human life should, it is felt, therefore represent an interest worthy of some protection by the legal system.» (vii)

If any point is to be singled out as more significant than the others, that point is conception itself as the most immediate cause of the process of human foetal development leading to complete human life. (viii) Moreover, it can be argued that *human responsibility for the process* leading to complete human life takes place primarily with reference to conception. Because of methods of birth control now available, individuals can plan for having children, and thereby have some influence on the factors that will characterize their personal futures. Recognition that *well-being* is an important aspect of life and that the mother, child, and family are interdependent is central to this ethic of human responsibility for human life. Placing emphasis on human responsibility for the process leading to complete human life and the moment of conception as the most significant point of the process keeps the value of human foetal life and the desirability to protect it as central to legal and ethical thinking with reference to the *general* position. The corollary is that routine abortion as a post-conception contraceptive or a right is deemed unethical and should be illegal because it refuses to accept responsibility for



the *process* of life, engenders a callousness with regard to the preciousness of existence, leads to the normalization of abortion in the psychology of the individual and the society at large, and culminates in the acceptance of abortion as the general rule, not as the exception.

To this might be added the qualification: it is a *human* responsibility to prevent an undesired conception and to protect life once conceived, but it is primarily the *woman's responsibility* because the foetus has primary reference to her body and her psychology and the newborn child is generally nurtured by her. From this follows both the feminine responsibility for an appropriate ethics and the primary consideration of the law to acknowledge ultimately the woman's will with reference to her ability to cope with pregnancy, birth and infancy should a conflict of interests between the two progenitors be irreconcilable in a situation characterized as entailing legal scope for abortion.  
(ix)

Because recognition of the value of life itself and human responsibility for life are emphatically the ethical starting points, society must support medical research to develop the best possible contraceptives. Moreover, society as a whole has an ethical responsibility to inform its members of the biological process, legal jurisdiction, ethical implications, and medical possibilities (with their positive and negative consequences) of the process toward complete human life. Since conception *can* occur from the time of puberty, this education (the responsibility of schools, religious institutions, counselling services, public media and home) must be provided to anyone of the age of puberty. In general it involves sex education; in particular it involves questions of birth control and abortion on both the theoretical and practical levels. In short, human responsibility necessitates an informed will and society ultimately is accountable for providing this information and supportive services.

Once one acknowledges that there are «grey zones» involved in the universal application of the ethical maxim «Thou shalt not kill», and once one admits that there may be a conflict of interests between the foetus which is to be protected and the mother who is also entitled to life and health, then one must entertain the ethical possibility and legal desirability of termination of pregnancy. Canadian law defines this situation as follows: the foetus is worthy of legal protection, which may be withdrawn if conflicting interests with the woman should occur. Specifically Canadian law stipulates that the woman's interests may prevail when there is *danger to the life or health of a mother* when ascertained prior to abortion by a hospital committee. (x) (Health has been interpreted to refer to both physical and mental health where socio-economic factors may be viewed as relevant.) In other words, abortion is a *legal exception* to the general rule of the protection of the human foetus. Because a legal exception is to be restrictively interpreted, there is need to identify the situations in which the interests of the woman may override those of the human foetus. Criteria for such identification must be determined on objectively ascertainable grounds. Put another way, this situation of contextual ethics demands a phenomenological description and assessment of the particular



case in the light of ethical and legal criteria. Now if in this «grey zone» involving a conflict of interests between the foetus and the mother, the interests of the woman may prevail according to the established criteria, *not only is termination of pregnancy legally possible, it also should be viewed as ethical.*

Two qualifications should be added to Canadian law.

- 1) Abortion as a legal exception should be further restricted to exclude abortions after the viability of the foetus (unless the life of the mother is at stake) because of the complex legal and ethical questions involved in methods of abortion that may be conducive to the health of the woman but result in a *live* foetus outside the womb. In other words, this restriction would prevent the killing of a live foetus which has been born as the result of an abortion procedure and which is then indistinguishable from a premature infant. Since most decisions regarding abortion can be made before the seventh month of pregnancy, there is very little occasion to argue for the abortion of a viable foetus (and should an extreme situation arise, there is always the legal «escape clause» called «defense of necessity» that permits a doctor and a woman to make such a decision in an extreme case). (xi)
- 2) Convenience abortion (defined as more than one abortion in the absence of serious extenuating circumstances) would be illegal and unethical unless it is to save the life of the mother.

Appropriate nomenclature to signify this division in law and ethics is recommended as follows: *Termination of pregnancy* would refer to the procurement of miscarriage of a non-viable foetus. The term *abortion* would be restricted to 1) the killing of more than one human foetus in the absence of serious extenuating circumstances, and 2) the killing of a viable human foetus if the life of the mother is not at stake.

The category *termination of pregnancy* is to be legally and ethically recognized. Now the question becomes: with the legal and ethical recognition of the termination of pregnancy, how can we support the protection of human life as the general rule? In part the answer is already provided: by the emphasis on birth control and by avoiding the extremes of abortion (i.e. abortion of a viable foetus or repeated abortion as a convenient method of birth control). But protection of life can also be supported by the sheer act of contemplating the preciousness of life which must be sustained throughout the discussions. The selfless act of a woman who moves beyond her own interests for the sake of another (as in the case of protecting the foetus in contexts which allow for legal abortion) should be acknowledged as a phenomenal response to a phenomenal situation. From a secular perspective this might be called an act of extraordinary value while the comparable religious nomenclature would be «extraordinary virtue.» If for example, a woman decided to accept the challenge to protect a foetus that she knew would be born a mongoloid, she should be recognized as extraordinary by the society. (Of course it must be understood



that when arriving at this decision she should take into consideration the interests of other members of the family and be reasonably confident that they too can make the necessary adjustments to support this special situation.) This same criterion may be invoked for the extreme situation of the mother's conscious decision to sacrifice her life for the sake of saving the foetus. (xii)

Positive recognition of the phenomenal act of selflessness on the part of such extraordinary women contributes to the protection of life as a value. However, such recognition does not detract from the recognition that termination of pregnancy is also based on ethical criteria and represents *an ethical decision which is an appropriate response to the extremely difficult situations where there is a real conflict of interests.*

Furthermore, protection of life can be encouraged by a number of support systems provided by the society that a woman may resort to if she needs help during her pregnancy and after. Society needs to provide *concrete help not rhetoric* to make it easier for a woman to decide to protect life. Some proposals will be suggested below.

With this tripartite classification--«extraordinary value/virtue,» ethical termination of pregnancy, and unethical abortion--the positive aspects of the poles of pro-life and pro-abortion may be integrated.

The remaining task is to suggest criteria for defining the legal and ethical scope for termination of pregnancy. While a full discussion of such criteria is beyond the purpose of this article (and must in any case be developed through the interdisciplinary efforts of law, medicine, ethics and the various counselling services), we shall analyse a few examples to show the possible direction for the evolution of such criteria based on the above discussion.

1. *Rape leading to conception.* Conception resulting from rape should belong to the legal category *termination of pregnancy* for the following reasons. If the central argument is for human/feminine responsibility for conception, then it may be said that rape is the extreme form of subjugation of women, an act that can lead categorically to the denial to a woman of any decision making with regard to her destiny and her biological role of motherhood. Furthermore, on humanitarian grounds the trauma of rape, the pregnancy and nurturing of a child begotten through rape, not to speak of the mother-child relationship engendered through such a traumatic beginning, must be acknowledged as reasons for providing legal termination of pregnancy. While during the process of decision-making the woman should contemplate ways of protecting foetal life, she may arrive at the ethical decision to terminate the pregnancy. The decision is arrived at through counselling and the woman has the final power to decide her destiny, which must be respected by the hospital committee which authorizes and provides facilities for the termination of pregnancy.



2. *Severe deformity of the human foetus.* If medical tests establish that a human foetus is so severely deformed that after birth pursuit of a life of normal health and eventual self-sufficiency will not be possible, then there should be legal grounds for the termination of pregnancy. After entertaining the possibility of supporting foetal life, even when there is mental or physical damage, the individuals concerned might resort to ethical termination of pregnancy both for the sake of the human foetus and for the sake of the mother who must be responsible for caring for such an individual once born. While both the progenitors are involved in the counselling process, which has the mandate to reach a consensus for action, the woman must have the final power of decision in case of a conflict and her decision must be respected by the hospital board.

3. *Conception of a minor.* In the case of a minor it must be admitted that even when the minor is duly informed about the responsibilities for human life, the minor may make mistakes of judgement and may not realize the full implications of the sexual act. In addition, the minor does not have the maturity independently to care for the child once born. Consequently, conception of a minor should be recognized as a context for legal termination of pregnancy. Because a minor is involved, the counselling ideally should involve the parents of the minor. (xiii) Once again in the course of counselling ways to protect life should be explored. Moreover, society should provide channels to secure support for the minor through pregnancy and the support for both the minor and the minor's child until the minor reaches legal age and is capable of self-support.

The condition of *legal acceptance of support* could be made by any individual of legal age (who may be a progenitor, a parent of the progenitor, or any other person or institution), must entail adequate financial support to provide daycare facilities and occupational training for the minor, and must be legally recognized in a contract. Once this condition is met, it is possible to protect the foetus if the couple involved so desires. Once again, if consensus cannot be established, the will of the girl prevails and must be respected by the hospital board.

4. *Undesired conception of a responsible woman.* If it is established that a couple in good faith has utilized some medically or religiously recognized method of birth control that has failed to provide adequate protection, then termination of pregnancy may be legally resorted to. (xiv) Especially in this case there should be serious exploration of ways to protect the foetus, but the woman's ability to cope with the pregnancy and responsibility is central to the decision-making process. Once again the couple is to come to agreement through counselling and in a case of conflict the woman's will prevails. If it appears that the individual has repeatedly abused this argument to gain legal scope for termination of pregnancy due to irresponsible conception, then the hospital board may make a decision overriding the woman's will.



5. *First undesired conception of an irresponsible woman of legal age.* In such a case it could be reasonably argued that one, if not both, of the individuals concerned was irresponsible and foolish, but had no experience of the effect of the action on their lives. Hence through counselling they should come to terms with the *questionable status of their act* and through discussion explore ways of protecting life. However, a *hospital board as a last resort may decide to allow legal termination of pregnancy.*

In all of the above five cases we have argued for the legal scope for and ethical sanction of termination of pregnancy. Simultaneously, we have recognized the gradually decreasing merit of each ethical decision from the first case to the fifth based on the degree of human responsibility involved. Finally in each of the five cases we have encouraged the serious exploration of ways to protect human foetal life as an essential element of the counselling process.

Correlative to the legality of the termination of pregnancy is the issue of economics. It is suggested that once the decision to terminate pregnancy has been made through the proper channels, then the termination of pregnancy should be free of charge except in categories 4 and 5 which should involve a charge 1) sufficient to serve as a deterrent against irresponsibility for life and 2) prorated according to income.

To support respect for life, religious groups and social agencies should be encouraged to set up counselling and social services and adoption agencies which offer *concrete help* to the woman who is eligible for legal termination of pregnancy. This could be done in the following ways.

- 1) Economic support and counselling through the pregnancy should the woman wish to keep the child but cannot cope with the immediate strains of the pregnancy.
- 2) Economic support and counselling through the pregnancy should the woman wish to deliver the child but put it up for adoption at birth. Such an act on the part of the woman should be positively appreciated by the society with a renewed respect for a) the value of human foetal life, b) the woman's altruistic role of accepting a full term of pregnancy rather than termination of pregnancy, and c) the special gift of providing an infant to a childless couple.
- 3) Economic support, counselling, daycare and occupational training, and legal responsibility for a minor through pregnancy and thereafter until the minor reaches legal age.

When there is a comprehensive ethics that is commonly shared by women and men, the individual and society at large, then human life can once again be enshrined as a supreme/sacred value of modern society, not as dogmatism but as an expression of the fully human. With life so enshrined, one perhaps returns to the fundamental awe of its reality. For even reason and responsibility cannot assure that conception will occur exactly when one thinks the time is right or



indeed even at all. Given the unpredictability of life, new life remains in some ways a gift. One never knows that what were once the fears of coping with the responsibility of a new life may turn into the most precious of human activities. Human resourcefulness for the new and the creative should never be underestimated.

Perhaps then, on this positive note, we should usher in the Year of the Child.

#### Footnotes:

- i. The following method to overcome polarizations was first proposed in «Understanding the Hindu widow and *sati*» by Alaka Hejib and Katherine Young to be published in *Sati: an Historical and Phenomenological Study* edited by A. Sharma.
- ii. *Ibid.*
- iii. For this reason it cannot be argued that death itself is the *telos* of life, although in some religious perspectives death may be viewed as a transition to the teleological goal of human life. If, on the other hand, human destiny is viewed as limited to one life which is concluded by death, then death may be viewed as the exit from life.
- iv. Canadian abortion legislation states that "abortion is *prima facie* a criminal offence, but it may become legal if certain specified conditions precedent are fulfilled." See Criminal Code section 251 as summarized by Margaret A. Somerville in "Reflections on Canadian Abortion Law: Evacuation and Destruction—Two Separate Issues" in *University of Toronto Law Journal*, 1981, 31, p.8. The assumption behind the law is that foetal life is to be protected unless there is a conflict of interests. The ensuing ethical discussion accepts the general approach of the Canadian law, although there will be occasions to recommend some minor changes.
- v. Quickening refers to the moment a woman first feels the movement of the foetus.
- vi. Viability is defined as the capability of the foetus to live outside the womb with simple medical care or artificial aid. See Somerville, p.5, footnote 13.
- vii. See H. Patrick Glenn, "The Constitutional Validity of Abortion Legislation: A Comparative Note" in Extract from *McGill Law Journal*, Vol. 21, No.4, 1975, pp.683-84.
- viii. Canadian law reserves the definition of *human being* for the child that has "completely proceeded, in a living state, from the body of its mother whether or not (a) it has breathed, (b) it has an independent



circulation, or (c) the navel string is severed." See Criminal Code, S206 (2) as quoted by Somerville, p.10.

The definition leaves open the question of the status of the foetus. Is it categorically not human, and if so what is it? That the process toward complete human life not be undermined, it is advisable to refer to the foetus as the *human* foetus.

- ix. While we have chosen to speak of *human* responsibility, thereby acknowledging the *conjunction* of female and male in the act leading to conception and the necessary *cooperation* for some form of birth control to prevent unwanted conception, we acknowledge the central concern of women with reference to this issue. While conjunction of the sexes may lead to conception, it is the woman's body, psychology and activity that are primary thereafter. Hence while it may be argued that a woman does not have an *exclusive right to control her body*, she does have the *prevailing interest* with reference to her body that should be recognized to the extent that when there is a conflict of interests, she is granted the power to make the final decision when 1) there is *legal scope for termination of pregnancy* but the male refuses or 2) where she wants to go full term with the pregnancy but the male refuses. In other words, justice demands that just as the woman has the prevailing responsibility for birth control, so she should have power of final decision in the above situations. This logic should be extended to the hospital boards as well. In certain cases where there is scope for legal termination of pregnancy, e.g., rape, deformity, etc. a woman's decision must be honoured by a hospital board. (Note: this would change existing Canadian law which grants decision-making power to the hospital board for any request for abortion.) However, in other more ambiguous cases, such as the request for a second termination of pregnancy when it is unclear whether the woman acted in good faith regarding birth control, the hospital board may overrule the woman's decision.
- x. The intent of Canadian abortion law is to recognize abortion for therapeutic purposes. It avoids the extreme position that a woman has a "right to privacy" (which means that the state cannot intervene with reference to her decisions regarding her body). Consequently, Canadian law acknowledges 1) legal protection of the foetus as the general rule and 2) that the man and society at large also share a responsibility for the human foetus. Similarly, it avoids the extreme position that a woman has a right to the evacuation of her uterus. This position not only ignores the above two interests, it also is subject to the following ethical critique. The assumption is that a woman *intends* to evacuate her uterus. Although a human foetus may be killed in the process, that was not her intent. Put technically, of two foreseen effects, only one is directly intended. Yet the real question still remains, is not the practical motive of the woman to remove the foetus, which necessarily entails its death? In other words, it may be said that the concept of evacuating the uterus functions more as a euphemism, rather than a coming to terms with the ethical issues involved.



- xi.* This suggestion is derived from the observation made by M. Somerville, in conversation that Canadian law does not distinguish between abortion of an unviable and viable foetus. The issue of viability is important, for a premature child and a viable foetus may have the same development and share the capacity probably to exist outside the mother's womb; hence their legal status should be similar.
- xii.* When a woman chooses an obstetrician for pregnancy and delivery, the issue (of what action should be pursued if the doctor is faced with *saving either the child or the mother*) should be discussed and the woman's will recorded. Furthermore, it should be required that any hospital admitting a woman who is pregnant with a viable foetus or for the delivery of a viable foetus should request a written statement of the woman's will regarding the choice to be made in the case that both the woman and the foetus which promises normal life cannot be saved. The doctors involved would be required to follow the woman's will should such an extreme case arise.
- xiii.* The present legal system presents some confusion regarding the request for abortion on the part of a minor, primarily because of variations of provincial law.
- xiv.* It is suggested that until a form of contraceptive is developed that is safe, i.e. totally prevents contraception and is totally safe regarding the woman's health, this category is necessary. The method of natural rhythm could be included with the stipulation that it be pursued *de rigueur* with temperature charts.

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## PARISH AND CHURCH HISTORIES (PROVINCE OF QUEBEC)

HAS YOUR PARISH OR CHURCH HAD A SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY? WAS A HISTORICAL BOOKLET PREPARED? IF SO, THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES LIBRARY WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE A COPY. SUCH ITEMS ARE VERY USEFUL AS SOURCES OF CANADIAN CHURCH HISTORY.

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# TO LIVE OR NOT TO LIVE: THE MORAL AND PRACTICAL CASE AGAINST ACTIVE EUTHANASIA\*

J. ARTHUR BOORMAN

Daniel Maguire, a Catholic scholar, tells a story about a Donegal Irishman on his deathbed. The dying man was visited by friends who knew, as he did, that this would be their final visit. At his father's request, a son brought whisky for the guests and asked the old man if he, too, would have a drink. «Oh no,» the father replied, «I don't want to be meeting the Lord with the smell of the drink on my breath.» Comments Maguire: «If we were as at home with death as he, our deliberations on the subject might be more wise.»

Although I disagree with Maguire's basic contention that in certain cases involving conscious terminal patients «direct positive intervention to bring on death may be morally permissible», he is surely right in the above comment. Ours is a generation that would, if it could, deny the reality of death; witness the cosmetics, the slumber rooms, the memorial parks, the avoidance of the word itself in favour of euphemisms such as «pass away». Perhaps the first step in an intelligent approach to the difficult questions related to dying in the modern world would be a recovery of the simple recognition of death as a fact. «To every man upon this earth, death cometh soon or late.»

One of the difficult questions about death is this: does an aged person have the right to determine whether to live or not to live? I cannot answer «yes» or «no» to that.

However, before I discuss euthanasia, I want to say something more about the human situation today, because I believe it has an important bearing on the question. I refer to three characteristics of the modern person generally: a pre-occupation with individual rights and personal freedom; a certain softness in the face of hardship or pain; a preference for the tangible and the useful. To elaborate:

1. «Doing your own thing», in current jargon, is used to justify smoking pot, abortion on demand, refusal to accept unsuitable employment etc. I do not want to comment on whether these are right, but to point out that each is claimed as a «right». So Joseph Fletcher, Daniel Maguire and other such ethicists speak of a patient's «right» to die. I will return to this point, but we should note here that such a position would make suicide for whatever private reason entirely acceptable, rather than the rare, heroic exception it has traditionally been.

2. As for the «softness» I mentioned, one needs only consider the incredible sums of money spent on patent medicines, especially painkillers. I do not pass judgement on this, and certainly do not urge the reintroduction of physical

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misery into life. But I wonder how far we ought to go. Again, it is evident that the right to die implies freedom to choose death if we feel that the misery facing us is unacceptable.

3. The third point was perhaps best expressed by that great scholar Martin Buber. How commonplace for human relations to be expressed in terms of I-it, rather than I-thou; in other words, people are treated as things to be seen or used. In our era, says Erich Fromm, depersonalization is almost total. As one potent symbol of this, consider the professional athlete, the ball or hockey player--bought or sold like a prize racehorse. Now, applying this to the termination of life, we should ask: when is life expendable? If a man or a woman is no longer useful, if he or she is incapable of language, self-care etc. (just as useless and helpless as a baby) why should he or she not be «extinguished»? Is that an unfair way of posing the question?

We could probably all accept the view, expressed by Pope Pius XII in 1957, that extraordinary efforts to keep alive the unconscious terminally ill, are not mandatory. Further, I suggest such efforts are probably immoral, although scientific research can conceivably justify heroic efforts. But why not, as Maguire suggests, engage in «direct, positive intervention» to terminate such life? There are, in my judgement, several reasons.

Contrary to Fletcher and Maguire, I believe there is a difference between doing something and not doing something--even though the result may be the same. A case in point is that of Karen Quinlan. When taken off the respirator she ought to have died (assuming for the moment that she was and is alive)--but she didn't. There is a finality about direct euthanasia, perhaps a certain arrogance, that is not present in the passive approach. Moreover, miracles (of at least surprising recoveries) do occur, albeit rarely--there are some remarkable old people in our homes for the aged who bear witness to that.

There is another factor, too--one that was regarded as of overwhelming significance by British doctors some years ago when a bill to legalize euthanasia was debated--and defeated. That factor is the doctor-patient relationship. Can you imagine the thoughts that would go through a patient's head as he faced a critical illness wondering whether his or her physician might decide the effort was not worth it?

Finally, there is one consideration above all others that should help to guide our judgement in this matter. It will be too simplistic, perhaps, just to throw in the Biblical quotation «The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord.» Whether one is a priest, or a nontheistic agnostic, there is a profound truth in the idea that human life is therefore precious. Surely whatever enhances life should be affirmed, and whatever degrades it should be rejected. Is this not implicit in one of the physician's basic rules, «Do no harm»? Does our society really have a reverence for human life? Perhaps not; certainly, terrorism, racism, napalm bombs and other forms of violence do not lead to an obvious yes. Perhaps we ought to ask: what will happen--what does happen--when society loses its reverence or deep respect for



human life? I do not know whether «mercy killing» is the thin edge of the wedge.

The meaning of «respect for life» may vary with circumstances. But some authors (I think of Fletcher in particular) would have us believe there is something particularly disrespectful or undignified about intravenous feeding or the use of respirators or other artificial support systems. But why? If they are an expression of care--of genuine caring rather than of medical pride or anxiety or mindless routine--they could be regarded as showing respect or creating dignity and worth.

That, to my mind, is the operative word, *caring*: when the end is near, a too-large injection of morphine to relieve pain could be fatal, but it would not be wrong if it was an expression of caring. But such care ought also to give pause to those who claim the right to choose their own deaths (even by written authorization in a lucid moment earlier) because they care for their relatives or friends. Is it a tribute to a dear one to hasten death to spare expense, as if that was the really important consideration?

Finally, to think of life as a gift should engender, in the presence of life and of death, a certain humility that would hold presumptuous too much impatience in the face of the unknown.





## TO DEATH THEIR GOD

ROBERT WARREN

In the shop window of Eaton's on Sainte-Catherine Street is a mannequin. Her black shift has ridden up over her knees, which are bent slightly; her toes turned inward. Her arms are held spastically at her sides, and her head, atop a ridiculously extended neck, is tilted forward and to the side. The hair is pulled up into a pony-tail which sticks up from the top of her head. The most remarkable feature is the make-up which makes her cheeks look sunken and the eyes deep. The expression on her face is one of fright and confusion--she has been pushed out of a taxi. Perhaps she has been raped by a soldier on leave in Honolulu or set upon by dogs in Berlin. Whatever the circumstances she seems to be struggling to stand upright. In fact she is a corpse. More specifically, she is an icon of death--a death fantasy, if you wish. She has been hung by the Nazis or killed by a street gang. She is bound and gagged in the grimy hotel closet of every man who passes by this window, standing as a reminder, as an image, as a spark to the imagination of passers-by who add the circumstances of her agony and who add themselves, in many cases, as the aggressor.

The image itself is benign--albeit horrific. Plaster and fabric are unconscious of their situation. I would not be describing this still-life, however, if a great number of the sullen passers-by did not resemble our inanimate friend to the last detail. I speak of the after-ten crowd on Sainte-Catherine Street who mill around the theatre and the ice-cream parlour; who make it their policy and their past-time to be seen in all their frustrated glory. In days of old, one made up one's face in order to disguise unique features and to try and merge one's appearance with what the whim of fashion considered to be stereotypically beautiful. Make-up, and the alteration of one's physiognomy, male *or* female, is conformity to a predetermined «mask» which is more a medium for self-understanding in relation to chaos than it is a vehicle for self-expression. The china doll image considered «beautiful» in more classical forms of make-up is still around. More and more, however, the sunken eyes and hollow cheeks, the shorn hair and narrow sunglasses are seen on the streets. A reaction, perhaps, to cosmetic conformity or to the china doll role of women and the team captain role of men, and yet more than that. The new music is both a return to the basic monotony of rock-and-roll, and a radical departure from the idea that a song must contain a message. The lyrics are frequently nonsensical and erratic, poking fun at the norms and maxims of respectable youth, of society, and of humanity itself. Even the names of the groups are notable: The B52's, The Dead Kennedys, Talking Heads.

We are a transparent society. Our art and our music tell our tale, and the witness of our children points out our direction. This is not new. In the fifties, while Richard Nixon was running around Moscow demonstrating the efficacy of the American blender to Nikita Krushchev, our window at Eaton's would have housed a replica of the American kitchen, complete with the housewife in her china doll make-up, sporting a print apron and enjoying her eye-level range, her teflon



frying pan and arborite counter tops. Shop windows are demonstrators of «desirable» images. They inform us of what we are missing and what we should be striving for. As was seen at Eaton's, the image is fast changing--progress is just so much idle froth and crunch--political liberalism, success, physical fitness, romance, and education elicit no response. History and personal experience have shown us their feet of clay. I don't mean to suggest that these are dead topics; another horde of eager lemmings will always be found to keep the banners high! In fact, the situation in the world today would suggest that many are still chasing these goals--many more will follow. I suggest, though, that for many the nihilism of this century has finally hit home, and I perceive this to be a phenomenon largely of the last five years.

Bernard-Henry Lévy writes of the new nihilism of Europe, which in his case is a political reflection. Lévy, involved with the student socialist movement in Paris in the 60's, «believed in a new and joyful 'liberation'», but now suggests that all political movements in the Europe of this century have led to their ultimate horrible conclusions--Gulag and «the camps». For Lévy, as for many Americans involved in the Korean and Vietnamese conflicts, the ideology of politics is shot through and through with lies and with the awful realization of their inevitable conclusion. In respect to the future, the New Right in the United States and South America and the New Left in Africa will prove Lévy correct, for all political surges and reactions rely on *Power* and *submission*, which are the warp and woof of social development. (i) At the edges of the mainstream of *all* power, and left in the wake of the handiwork of the Prince of *any* age, however, are the little people; those who do not submit--those who do submit, but who cry out and voice their suffering in art and literature and writings on alley walls--those who are not included, for some reason, in the harvests of socialization. Sartre's Roquentin is an example of one who stepped off the merry-go-round. He is indicative of one who has taken the time and effort to observe the essential fallenness of all the «answers», and the nakedness of what remained when the answers and justifications for existence were stripped away:

...the diversity of things, their individuality, were only an appearance, a veneer. This veneer had melted, leaving soft, monstrous masses, all in disorder--naked, in a frightful, obscene nakedness. (ii)

Roquentin did not die in 1938. He is around today in the streets and in the factories, but he is especially present in the music and the art of the last few years:

I'm walking a line - I'm thinking about empty motion  
 I'm walking a line - Just barely enough to be living  
 Get out of the way - No time to begin  
 This isn't the time - So nothing was done  
 Not talking about - Not many at all  
 I'm turning around - No trouble at all  
 You notice there's nothing around you, around you  
 I'm walking a line - Divide and dissolve. (iii)



The author of these lyrics accepts the fact that his «walking» is his only claim to life--a feeble movement, «just barely enough to be living». There is no notable perception of other existence, «nothing around you» to mark out your being. Life is full of «empty motion», which is vaguely similar to Sartre's position:

Every existing thing is born without reason, prolongs itself out of weakness and dies by chance. *(iv)*

To fight against the Prince, to take political, social, or even rhetorical action against an oppressor, a judge, or a villain, presupposes the promise of a potentially «better» way. There can be no «better» ways, however, because they have been tried and have turned towards tyranny. Man is left in a «no exit» situation--holding on to the only two things he can trust: the insignificant little existence which he can call his own, and the unalterable fact that its termination heads towards him from the horizon. «Illusory security» *(v)* can fend off the anxiety caused by the threat of annihilation; these are the great idols of the day which occupy time and provide «immediate» satisfaction of libidinal cravings. Idolatrous sex (sex without relationship or sex with a mirror) is perceived as a momentary escape of mortality--a foray into the «other» of sensory stimulation masking as eternal.

A growing individual approaches the «secrets» of life with awe and trepidation. One's life is seen as a series of small flowers which open one by one to reveal fresh treasures and new avenues of experience. Today's children despair of secrets, for there are none. The human body is charted like a city map and examined microscopically in the realms of skin-books available to any twelve-year old. For the adult who is captivated by the Human Experience, all is explained away in theorems and reflections on will, destiny, and socialization. That one «is what one has learned» might well be the motto of North American society. Little value is placed on essential humanity--one «is» only to the extent that one «functions» in the collective body of organisms, and this amounts to the annihilation of the valuable «self». The origin of man, thanks to science, is explained away in the language of biochemistry--we are the great-great-descendants of anonymous pieces of crud which started as chance combinations of chemicals floating in the primeval soup. There is only one secret left. This is the essential secret which marks the furthest boundary of our consciousness and our aspirations. It defies «unlocking» and laughs at us when we attempt to hide in the «collective», for it strikes us as individuals. *(vi)* Death is not a stage in life to be compared with marriage, youth, middle age, or senility. Death stands in opposition to «being», as opposed to taking a «part» in it.

Man's possible reaction to the threat of termination or annihilation may be three-fold. Firstly, he may submerge himself in concerns which are far less than ultimate, in the hope of being too occupied to concern himself with dying, or even with considering «ultimate» questions. The second possible reaction is that which Sartre's character Roquentin seems to exhibit--to take a rather honest attitude toward contingency, and matter-of-factly to translate one's life through



contingency and total meaninglessness. There is no glorification of the *nihil*--Roquentin doesn't consider himself that lucky. He is content to remain at one with himself and to live his existence (which he can finally call his own) within the boundaries he has discovered.

The third possibility, and the one which I would like to examine, is one which Sartre doesn't seem to foresee. It springs from the innate curiosity of Mankind, and from the inborn desire to master the unmasterable--to conquer the incomprehensible. A normal and well-adjusted human being when faced with a problem tries to consume it. He perceives its immediate effect on him: does it shock him? Is it within his experience? As the human mind is a fascinating and easily fascinated phenomenon, we tend to set our problems upon altars. A scientist may devote his life to the study of the metastatic processes of cancer. A soldier will lay down his life for the conquest of a mound of dirt. An adolescent girl will go through the tortures of anorexia nervosa because of a delusion about obesity. This aspect of man's «concern» ranges from devotion to a cause to delusions of a neurotic nature. They are rooted in the fact that a problem can become «all important» and central to our lives and ambitions, it can take on the trappings of ultimacy. And as ultimate it produces awe. Perhaps this awe is delusory, but legitimate or not, awe can produce the necessary «identification» to allow the object of our awe to be expressed in the forms of expression which may originate in the subconscious. In art and in music our fears and triumphs, our delusions and our objects of veneration are presented for all to see. The preoccupation with death and suffering, violence and meaninglessness is having an ever-growing effect on modern music and art. The veneration of death as the only «secret», and as *the* normative reality has led people to mimic corpses in their dress and make-up. If one lives in the shadow of either an ideal or a delusion, one begins also to think of one's self constantly in relation to that ideal or delusion.

He would see faces in movies, on T.V....in magazines, and in books... He thought that some of these faces might be right for him...And through the years, by keeping an ideal facial structure fixed in his mind, or somewhere in the back of his mind...That he might, by...force of will, cause his face to approach those of his ideal...The change would be very subtle...It might take ten years or so...Gradually his face would change its shape...A more hooked nose...Wider, thinner lips...Beady eyes... A larger forehead.

He imagined that this was an ability he shared with most other people... They also had molded their faces according to some ideal. Maybe they had imagined that their now face would better suit their personality...Or maybe they imagined that their personality would be forced to change to fit the new appearance...This is why first impressions are often correct... Although some people might have made some mistakes...They may have arrived at an appearance that bears no relationship to them...They may have picked an ideal appearance based on some childish whim or momentary impulse...Some may have gotten half-way there, and then changed their minds.

He wonders if he too might have made a similar mistake. (*vii*)



*The Response*

It might be an idea to backtrack slightly and restate the main points covered so far:

1. There is an ever-growing group in our society which has rejected, or has been rejected by, the mainstream of society which remains content with its pseudo-ultimacies.
2. This group is «captivated» by the loss of meaning in the traditional goals and pursuits in life and posits that death is the only normative reality.
3. While some fear death and live their lives in the avoidance of finitude, and while others (perhaps) have come to grips with contingency and have begun to interpret their lives along the precepts of finitude, yet some others have gone further. As a result of human curiosity and the need to be «master» of all opponents, these individuals have given «ultimacy» to the concept of death. It has become a venerated symbol of the «last question» and, as such, has a transforming influence on the individuals involved. This can be seen in the emergence of art forms which give an almost «desirable» atmosphere to death and to finitude in general. (*viii*)

What should be the approach of Christian theology in witnessing to this generation? How should we spread the Good News to a group that is not only running from their contingency, but who have, in a sense, replaced God with a symbol of death that is seen as attractive? Firstly, I suggest that any theology must be revelatory. It must proceed, in other words, from God to Man. (*ix*) If it is to be Christian theology, however, it must be incarnational, which is to suggest that it must have a point of identification with the struggles and needs of humanity. Our God is a God who is «afflicted in the afflictions of (His) people» and this is demonstrated in the suffering of the Son.

A theology which responds to Death, to finitude, and to the veneration of Death as the normative reality must necessarily be a message of life and hope. We must combat the glorification of the *nihil* by proclaiming what God shall do *ex nihilo*. We must preach Hope, not to those who rest contented in their false security, who live in the comforting shadow of the idols they have made, but rather to those who have been abandoned!

On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloth. No one looked on you with pity or had compassion enough to do any of these things for you. Rather you were thrown out into the open field, for on the day you were born you were despised. Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you 'Live'. I made you grow like a plant of the field. You grew up and developed, and became the most beautiful of jewels.

- Ezekiel 16:4-7 NIV



Life is brought to the dying, not to the whole. Christ came to heal the sick, not the healthy, and our preaching must bear that message today--a message to this sickness of our age. The message of Hope restores the secret which has been lost in that Hope is *two-pronged*, being hope in a promise fulfilled in the *past*, as well as in one which will be revealed in the *future* (x) The *nihil* has no hold on Hope.

Is there no brokenness in the Gospel? It seems oddly lopsided to preach a gospel of Hope and Life to broken people without going into the «process» by which the Son was victorious over Death. We find affliction in the Cross--God's affliction--at the heart of the gospel. There is emptiness and the sound of the Accuser's belly-laugh. There is blood and there is pain--finally the silence, in which the observers pack their things and return to their homes. Emptiness is not antithetical to this affliction.

We are dealing now with half a pattern--an important half--in which dead men are *really* dead. There is no *natural* eruption of joy from desolation, no automatic progression of events which causes Hope to spring out as a corollary of all death. The gospel bears witness to God's event. The second half of the paradigm is not continuous with the first, for Hope within the darkness (and resurrection after Death) stands alone as an act of grace, the act of a sovereign. Sentimentalists and optimists, looking for Hope within each and every darkness, will search into eternity; such Hope is not seasonal, it is the New Thing!

Death is a reality for all of us. We will continue to shrink from its opposition to being. The dying children of this age will continue to give it a face, to give it a name. They will venerate its power over existence. Death is set in our lives by the fact of our humanity and stands in opposition to our hopes and achievements. Optimism in this context is not appropriate, for any act which will mediate the finality of our death will need to be discontinuous with it. Such an act is the act of a sovereign will.

Permit then this Jesus Christ *himself* to conquer your death in you, *himself* to accept it now for you: Let him who anticipated this acceptance on the cross do this for you. Then you will be reconciled with yourself, reconciled too with the indisputable fact of your death. In this way you will be given a freedom which no one else can give you for no other human being can take your death on himself. (xi)

#### Footnotes:

- i. Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Barbarism with a Human Face* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1979), pp. 24-26.
- ii. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea* (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 127.
- iii. David Byrne, Brian Eno, and Jerry Harrison, «Houses in Motion», *Remain in Light*, Talking Heads, Sire Records XSR 6095, 1980.



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## REVIEW ARTICLE

## ATTACHMENT AND LOSS: A SIGNIFICANT TRILOGY

MONROE PEASTON

Bowlby, John. *Attachment and Loss*. 3 vols. Hogarth Press/Basic Books.

- I. *Attachment* (1969)
- II. *Separation, Anxiety and Anger* (1973)
- III. *Loss, Sadness and Depression* (1980)

I well remember a dull, grey day in March many years ago when I was called upon to read the Burial Office over the dead body of a man who had been sent for burial from a nearby Psychiatric Hospital. I was the only person present to commit his body to the ground, «earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust». No one else was at hand, so presumably no one would grieve as a result of his death. Such situations, fortunately, are extremely rare. The death of one person usually means grief for another, or for others. Inevitably, death and mourning belong together. So in an issue of ARC devoted to the topic of death and dying, something, however slight, should be said about loss and bereavement.

Some, but perhaps not all, readers of this journal may be aware that only last year an impressive trilogy dealing with this theme was completed by John Bowlby. The three volumes were published by the Hogarth Press in the United Kingdom and by Basic Books on this continent under the general title of *Attachment and Loss*.

It would be impossible to compress the contents of roughly fifteen hundred pages within the confines of so brief a notice as this. Bowlby and his research group have not only carried out extensive, empirical studies themselves over more than twelve years, but they have been careful to record also the work and findings of others. Here I shall attempt only to indicate that basic perception of human living that underlies the unifying theme of the work - attachment behaviour. We shall then note what light this sheds on human grief and on the emotions most commonly evident in that process.

At the end of Volume Three Bowlby outlines what he believes to be a reliable conclusion.

Intimate attachments to other human beings are the hub around which a person's life revolves, not only when he is an infant or a toddler or a schoolchild but throughout his adolescence and his years of maturity as well, and on into old age. From these intimate attachments a person draws his strength and enjoyment of life and, through what he contributes, he gives strength and enjoyment to others (p. 442).



This perception is exemplified at the beginning of life in the form of attachment behaviour. Such behaviour, it is argued, is an instinctual form of behaviour that develops in humans, as in other mammals, during infancy and has as its aim the achievement of proximity to a mother figure. The purpose of this is to secure protection against predators. In humans, attachment behaviour is represented by such activities as suckling, grasping, clinging, smiling, following on the part of the child and care-giving responses on the part of the mother - cradling, cuddling, fondling, holding. Throughout the latter half of a child's first year and during the whole of his second and third years a child remains closely attached to his mother-figure, displays contentment in her presence and shows distress in her absence. However, the consequences of separating very young children from their mothers, from other subordinate nursing figures, and from familiar surroundings to a strange setting (like a hospital) and among strange people is a predictable series of behaviour pattern, the phases of which may be defined according to which attitude to the child's mother is dominant. These phases have been described by the terms *protest*, *despair* and *detachment*. Separated from his mother a young child will demand her back with tears and anger but as his yearning remains unfulfilled, his hopes will fade and he will appear subdued and in despair. If a child does not see much of his mother over a period of time he may become curiously uninterested in her when she returns and appear as if he does not recognize her. He has grown detached.

«Attachment behaviour», writes Bowlby, «does not disappear with childhood but persists throughout life. Either old or new figures are emerging and proximity and/or communication retained with them» (vol. 1, p. 350). Such behaviour is elicited whenever a person (child or adult) becomes ill or gets into trouble; and it reaches high intensity when the person is frightened or when his attachment figure cannot be found.

In the light of this understanding, separation and loss have a particular significance. Separation implies that an attachment figure is temporarily inaccessible, while loss suggests that it has become permanently unavailable. A child's refusal to go to school, a school phobia, may serve to illustrate the first modality (separation), while mourning, as we shall see, exemplifies the second (loss).

A child may well be afraid to go to school, not so much because he fears what may happen there, but because he has to leave home. But the same situation contains other possibilities. A mother who has experienced difficulty with her own attachment figures may treat her child as one and keep him at home as a companion. Or, a child may fear that disaster may befall his mother while he is away. So he stays at home to prevent it (he may have heard his mother say, threateningly, that if he does not behave himself she will fall ill or die). On the other hand, both the child and the mother may fear that something dreadful may happen at school and feel that for the child to stay at home is the best way to prevent it. (See vol. 2, pp. 264 ff.)



But it is the way in which adults respond to a major bereavement that best illustrates this theory, as Bowlby so convincingly shows in Volume Three of his study. By far the greater part of this book is devoted to the mourning of adults and the mourning of children (pp. 81-442). The most frequently observed phases of mourning are described together with their disordered variants, those variables that influence the work of grief, and the personality types most prone to experience unusual degrees of distress during the process. In the discussion of child mourning several poignant vignettes are included depicting the grief of children in their third and fourth years and even as early as the second year.

Bowlby is able to establish that although grief varies in intensity from individual to individual, an overall pattern of mourning is apparent. The stunned, incredulous response which a widow may make to the unexpected news of her husband's death has suggested that the term «numbing» may appropriately be applied to the first phase. Outwardly at least the woman remains controlled, more or less composed and utterly devoid of feeling. As the reality of her loss dawns, feelings of deep distress with tearfulness are experienced. The mourner then tends to exhibit great restlessness, is preoccupied with thoughts of the lost person and shows a marked tendency to respond to any stimulus that may suggest the presence of the person she has lost. One is reminded of a fine passage in Shakespeare's *King John* in which Constance laments the loss of her child Arthur.

Grief fills the room up of my absent child,  
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,  
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,  
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,  
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form. (III.4.93)

This is the phase of yearning and searching for the lost figure and may last for months or even years. Mourners seek to recover their attachment figures. They are sad because sadness is a normal response to loss or expected loss either of a loved person, a familiar place or a social role. Those who are sad know what they have lost and yearn for its return. A general irritability or bitterness may mask an underlying feeling of anger since high degrees of this emotion may be registered when attachment figures fail to be present to provide what is sought. More often than not some raw anger may emerge and become directed against specific targets - members of the medical team, comforters, clergy, or even the deceased person himself. Rather less prominent than anger is a feeling of self-reproach over something comparatively slight associated perhaps with the final illness.

Commenting on the phase of disorganisation and despair as a prelude to the phase of reorganisation, Bowlby remarks:

For mourning to have a favourable outcome it appears to be necessary for a bereaved person to endure this buffeting of emotion. Only if he can tolerate the pining, the more or less conscious searching, the seemingly endless examination of how and why the loss occurred, and anger at anyone who might have been responsible, not sparing even the dead person, can he come gradually to recognize and accept that the loss is in truth permanent and that his life must be shaped anew (vol. 3, p. 931).



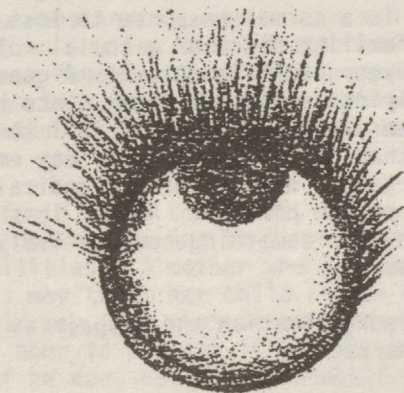
It is only with personal effort, aided by the support of others, that life can begin to be shaped anew, always assuming of course that this particular subject does not become victim to one of the disordered variants of the grief process. The assumption here is that the process of mourning is proceeding «healthily», this particular grief is «good».

Grief is the emotion that is involved in the work of mourning, whereby a person seeks to disengage himself from the demanding relationship that has existed and to re-invest his emotional capital in new and productive directions for the health and welfare of his future life in society.

(E.N. Jackson, *Understanding Grief* (Abingdon, 1957), p. 18)

It is to be hoped that, despite the omission of so much, enough has been said to convey the basic theme of these volumes and its relation to bereavement. Attachment theory sheds abundant light on what is for everyone the most poignant of life's experiences. It also illuminates the complex problems of depression and suicide. For all those whose professional responsibilities oblige them to offer support to the bereaved, these books will be required reading. But there is much in them for the ordinary reader, too, particularly parents who may want to know what should be said to a child when there has been a death in the family.

Should the reading of three volumes present itself as too daunting a task for persons with a heavy schedule it may be a consolation to know that significant parts of their subject matter have been condensed into a much shorter book (also by John Bowlby) containing seven occasional lectures given between 1956 and 1976. The book is called *The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds* and was published in London by Tavistock Publications in 1979.





## SELECTED READINGS IN BIOETHICS

(No attempt has been made to be comprehensive, but diverse perspectives are represented.)

- Norman Anderson. *Issues of Life and Death: Abortion, Birth Control, Capital Punishment, Euthanasia*. InterVarsity Press, 1974. An evangelical approach--conservative, but fair.
- Daniel Callahan. *Abortion: Law, Choice and Morality*. Macmillan, 1970. By the Director of the Institute of Society, Ethics and the Life Sciences, Hastings, N.Y.
- Joseph Fletcher. *Morals and Medicine*. Beacon Press, 1961. An early, provocative book by the author of *Situation Ethics*.
- R.F.R. Gardner. *Abortion: The Personal Dilemma*. Eerdmans, 1972. Cautious, but very comprehensive.
- Bernard Häring. *Medical Ethics*. Fides, 1973. Generally liberal views of a leading Roman Catholic ethicist.
- Michael Hamilton, editor. *The New Genetics and the Future of Man*. Eerdmans, 1972. A valuable selection of essays representing different approaches and views.
- Daniel Maguire. *Death by Choice*. Schocken, 1971. A Roman Catholic and President of the Society of Christian Ethics, argues persuasively for positive euthanasia.
- Michael A.H. Melinsky, editor. *Religion and Medicine*. Vols. I and II published for the Institute of Religion and Medicine by the S.C.M. Press, 1970 and 1973. Wide-ranging, useful collection of addresses by mostly British scholars.
- J.T. Noonan, Jr., editor. *The Morality of Abortion in Legal and Historical Perspective*. Harvard University Press, 1970. Particularly useful, bringing together views of such eminent scholars as James Gustafson, Bernard Häring and Paul Ramsey.
- Paul Ramsey. *The Patient as Person: Explorations in Medical Ethics*. Yale University Press, 1970.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Fabricated Man: The Ethics of Genetic Control*. Yale University Press, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ethics at the Edges of Life: Medical and Legal Intersections*. Yale University Press, 1978.
- One of the leading American students of biomedical ethics, Dr. Ramsey takes a very cautious, conservative line, which some of his interpreters find similar to a Thomistic «natural Law» stance.



Thomas A. Shannon, editor. *Bioethics: Basic Writings on the Key Ethical Questions*. Paulist Press, 1976. An excellent selection of articles on bioethical issues by a score of outstanding scholars.

Harmon L. Smith. *Ethics and the New Medicine*. Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1970. One of the earlier books in the field, it probably represents the main stream of progressive Protestant ethics.

Kenneth Vaux. *Biomedical Ethics*. Fitzhenry & Whitehead, 1974.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Case Studies in Medical Ethics*. Harvard University Press, 1976.

Two useful volumes by a leading scholar associated with Texas Medical Center in Houston.

Le Roy Walters. *Bibliography of Bioethics*. Gale, 1975. Not quite up to date, but covers most important literature in a rapidly expanding field.

J.A.B.

## AWARDS FOR 1981

### Ph.D.:

Morny Joy. *Thesis*: «Toward a Philosophy of Imagination: A Study of Gilbert Durand and Paul Ricoeur.»

### Birks Award:

Jane Aikman B.Th.

Beth Hodges B.A.

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## SPECIAL REPORT

## WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO MCGILL'S DEAD SEA SCROLLS?

A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION BY R.B.Y. SCOTT

McGill alumni/ae who graduated in the mid-fifties or earlier may welcome an answer to this question. The 1947-52 discoveries near the Northwest shore of the Dead Sea of manuscript material from the library of a Jewish sect of the time of Jesus and earlier had been widely publicized. The manuscripts were important to scholars because they included copies of Old Testament books about a thousand years nearer to the original writings than the standard text of the Hebrew Bible from which our English translations were made. In addition there were many apocryphal books, some previously quite unknown, and also the religious writings of the sect in question.

McGill became involved following an announcement by Père de Vaux of the École Biblique in Jerusalem made at a congress of Old Testament scholars I attended in Copenhagen in 1953. The widely-known archaeologist appealed for help in an emergency: the richest find of manuscripts yet made by the bedouin had been put on the market through an agent in Bethlehem. The Jordan Department of Antiquities and the Rockefeller Museum in the old city of Jerusalem had invested heavily but their funds were exhausted and more material was still being offered for sale. To save this from being sold piecemeal and thus lost to scholarship, it had been decided that learned institutions abroad which contributed could have ownership of the scrolls bought with their money. The manuscripts could not be exported, however, until an international committee of Biblical scholars had completed their study in preparation for publication.

This seemed too important an invitation to be ignored. On returning to Montreal I reported to Principal Cyril James. Approaches were made to possible donors and before long one of these was successful. The J.H. Birks Foundation agreed to provide up to \$20,000. I informed the Jordan Director of Antiquities of the offer, and on November 27, 1953 received the following cable from him--

«Government have agreed to scheme please send your contribution earliest possible--Harding»

The specification of government agreement is important in view of what happened later. The money was sent, in three instalments between March 1954 and December 1955. The first purchase was made immediately of transcript material already examined and at a price already set. It was «a fine lot», including some large pieces of Biblical and non-Biblical texts from Qumran Cave IV, as well as many smaller fragments. In 1955 I spent the month of May in Jerusalem listing what had been bought with McGill's money--436 pieces large and small, most of them already tentatively identified as from more than 160 different manuscripts. In December 1955 a further lot offered for sale was bought by Père de Vaux for the Birks Collection for \$4,200, in addition to \$15,000 already spent; these too were marked as belonging to McGill but came too late to be listed by me.



The primary stipulation in the bargain was that the Scrolls bought for McGill and other institutions which had sent money were to remain in Jerusalem with the committee until ready for publication. A corollary of this was that when the distribution was made to contributors, pieces of the same manuscripts would be kept together; any exchanges would be for pieces of equal value.

A third condition was unmentioned but was taken for granted. This was that government policy would be the same when the Scrolls were ready for shipment as it had been when the bargain was struck and the payments were made. This was to prove our undoing. Most unfortunately, the chronic political instability of the Arab states in the Levant was exacerbated by the events of the year 1956, just when the agreed preliminary work on the Scrolls was approaching completion.

For years President Nasser of Egypt had been sending out anti-British and anti-French propaganda over Radio Cairo, «The Voice of the Arabs». British troops had been stationed in Egypt from 1882 and until after 1954. France's Algerian war was another grievance. The establishment of the State of Israel, with the consequent miseries of Palestinian Arabs in refugee camps, was a thorn in the flesh. Britain and the United States first offered and then withdrew their offer to help with the financing of Nasser's planned Aswan Dam. Nasser retaliated in July 1956 by nationalizing the Suez Canal Company in order to appropriate the tolls paid by ships for passage. Now the fat was in the fire.

The Canal had been built by the French. Since Disraeli's time the British Government had owned a controlling interest in its shares, and French citizens also held shares. Use of the Canal was guaranteed by treaty to ships of all nations. Britain and France were now fearful for their investments, their sea communications and their prestige. They decided to use force to thwart Nasser's plans by seizing the Canal, and made joint plans to attack Egypt by land, sea and air. At the same time, in the summer of 1956, there was danger of war between Israel and Egypt, which might involve Jordan; Ben Gurion, Israel's Defence Minister, planned a preventive attack to capture Gaza, a guerrilla base, and seize the Straits of Tiran where Egyptian forces blocked Israel's access to the Red Sea. There certainly was collusion between French and Israeli planners; Britain denied being a party to this but later admitted to having had «a shrewd idea» of what was going on.

Thus, well before hostilities actually broke out at the end of October, Jordan was seething with anxiety and anger against the British and French; waves from the distant storm were to reach as far as McGill. Lankester Harding, the Jordan Director of Antiquities with whom we had negotiated and who had secured Government agreement to the bargain, was summarily dismissed from his post in September. General Glubb, creator of the Jordanian army, had earlier suffered the same fate. In both cases their fault was that they were Englishmen. Père de Vaux was French; he could not be dismissed from his professorship in a French Dominican Convent, but his own position in dealing with officialdom became distinctly delicate, to say the least. The sequel was inevitable: at the



beginning of January 1957 the Jordanian Council of Ministers decreed that the Qumran Scrolls must remain the property of Jordan and might not be exported, bargain or no bargain. It did not help matters that the Scrolls found in Cave I in 1947 were now in Israel, after being smuggled out of the country and sold in New York.

McGill *did* get its money back--six or seven years later. Principal James made representations through various diplomatic channels, and the Vatican presumably was not without influence. Whether the Vatican Library and the English and German universities which contributed, also were re-imbursed, I do not know. The chief credit in any case belongs to the late Père de Vaux. When we met afterwards he said to me--«I risked my life to get the money back!» I do not think he was exaggerating; for such a man this was an affair of honour.

Even though McGill and the other learned institutions failed in the end to gain possession of their promised Scrolls, the effort was more than worth while. These priceless relics of antiquity were saved for the use of Biblical and historical scholarship. All--or almost all--have been carefully examined and *photographed*. Otherwise they might have been damaged further by unskilled handling or sold to tourists as souvenirs. The pity is that the Jerusalem international committee of scholars had not quite finished preparing them for publication when man's warring madness brought the undertaking to an abrupt stop. Whether they are now being preserved as carefully as they would have been in the care of reputable learned institutions, is another question. Both Lankester Harding and Père de Vaux have died. The McGill Dead Sea Scrolls project is a classic example of *proxime accessit*!

There has been, however, a minor but intriguing sequel. In May 1955 I was about to leave Jerusalem for home when an antiquities dealer in the Old City told me some tribesmen had shown him a small match-box with tiny fragments of what appeared to be Scrolls material. The Arabs claimed they had been found near the Qumran caves. In addition they showed about a dozen coins, two of them silver: when identified by a numismatic expert these proved all to be from the period of the Qumran settlement. I asked Mr. Harding whether I should offer to buy both for the McGill collection if the price were reasonable. «Why not?» he replied. «It might open a new channel of communication with tribesmen who are holding back what they have.»

So, after taking the precaution of arranging for the presence of two scholars who actually were working on the Scrolls committee, I asked to see the contents of the little matchbox. Two desert Arabs arrived, and we three agreed that at least some of the fragments seemed genuine; Professor Skehan indeed thought he recognized a few letters in the script of a manuscript which he had been studying. So I bought 17 tiny pieces for the Birks Collection for under \$50, and sent them to Mr. Harding with the suggestion that he might allow me to take the coins with me since they were not rare, and in any case we had no proof that they had been found at Qumran. The Director did send back the coins, and with them a piece of papyrus about one inch square which showed no sign of writing.



When I reached home I put these minor treasures away and thereafter showed them occasionally to students and others. In 1978 when McGill's Faculty of Religious Studies acquired my small collection of antiquities, Professor Donna Runnalls came to Toronto to receive them. When we came to the piece of papyrus we were astounded to discover that it was in two layers that had been stuck together. In the course of time they had separated a little and through a tiny hole that had opened in the upper one, written characters could be seen on the lower! After careful humidification it should be possible to separate the two pieces, read what is written and possibly identify the document of which they once formed a part.

So McGill will have what is very probably one tiny fragment of the Dead Sea Scrolls, after all!

Postscript: by Donna Runnalls

The papyrus fragments which came to the Faculty Museum collection from Dr. Scott have turned out to be five small pieces. Each of the five seems to have traces of writing, but many holes break up letter or word continuity. After careful infra-red photography, one or two of the 'squiggles' have tentatively been identified and appear to be similar to Hebrew and Aramaic consonants written in the cursive script of some of the papyrus manuscripts found in the Wadi Murabba'at (published by J.T. Milik in *Les Grottes de Murabba'at*, Discoveries in the Judean Desert, II 1961). With only a few letters available, deciphering the fragments may never be possible. The work involved in trying to do so is like assembling the picture of a jig-saw puzzle with the majority of the pieces either lost or not readily available. However, the possibility that we have received from Dr. Scott some fragments from the Wadi Murabba'at is very exciting and the attempt to confirm the identification continues.



## DEAN'S DESK ...

The 1981/82 semester is well begun for our Faculty. *Thomas Wright* arrived from Cambridge with his family (Margaret and four children) to begin New Testament teaching along with *Fred Wisse*. *Alaka Hejib's* replacement, *Telwatte Rahula*, managed to clear a way through customs and immigration in early September, after eight years teaching in Sydney, Australia. The saffron robes of this Buddhist monk from Sri Lanka moving quietly among us are a colourful reminder of the spectrum of religion represented here. As for *D.J. Hall* on sabbatical in France, it takes three teachers to replace him! *Tom Nordberg*, *Eric Jay* and *George Johnston* attempt to keep up with his lectures and seminars.

Our Birks Event 1981 was most successful, not least owing to the dynamism of the lecturer, *William Sloane Coffin, Jr.*, of Riverside Church, New York. Familiar to the '60s generation as civil rights activist and anti-war (Viet Nam in those days) crusader, he continues to speak powerfully on behalf of social issues, particularly Disarmament. His lectures were homilies laced with one-liners and throw-aways, a change of pace from the more «academic» tradition of Birks Lecturers, and much appreciated by the audience. The Alumni/ae attended in good numbers, with a Wine and Cheese reception in the Faculty on the first night a special success (as one would expect, knowing our Faculty tradition of social eating and drinking!).

Currently concern in all educational institutions is that of budget. McGill shares this problem, intensified somewhat by the Québec government announcement of cuts well beyond previous notices. While negotiations continue, our Faculty expects to have to work with a budget for 1982/83 some 8 to 10% below this year. Just how we can do this exercises us at present. What is most alarming is the fact that this «shortfall» happens annually, so that a cumulative decrease over several years will affect not only the «quantity» of staff and support services but surely the «quality of life». Therefore both administration and staff will be giving priority to this concern over the coming months. But be of good cheer: this is not quite a «life and death issue». Or is it?

Just what constitutes «life and death» issues? Québec students protesting fee increases are using a logo depicting a student hanging on a cross. Apart from the interesting fact that «student» is identifiable because of his cap and gown (!) one has mixed feelings that the agony of the Crucified is trivialized to symbolize even what may be called an «unjust» charge or higher education. Is university education itself the sort of right or necessity that is a matter of life and death?

The social issues featured by our Birks Lecturer recall the struggles of the '60s - a theme of widespread «lament» these days as the flower children confess their guilt at having joined the middle class. Coffin talked about «burn-out» (which I discover is a temptation as I look back on three decades of anger at various establishment theories and practices) and also about the problem of motivation for righteous anger, that is about *desire*. Today the prominence of



social issues over personal ethics, once the chief distinguishing characteristic of «liberal» from «conservative», has become more ambiguous than ever. Too often social issues derive from mixed motives, from a doctrine of individual liberty that is not far from libertinism. Perhaps we in the West need to refresh our memories by reckoning seriously with Hegel's «philosophy of right» from which Karl Marx started out in his quest for social justice. Where is the life and death issue here, «order» or «freedom» ... or something else beside, or above? That is, what is the *doctrine* of moral suasion and of moral power that can direct the conscience through right to responsibility?

On sabbatical leave this past year such thoughts were often with me as I visited several cities in Europe and the Middle East. Working in London's British Museum the ghost of Marx sat beside me and the loot from the Parthenon was stored below me. In Geneva - not far from Voltaire's Ferney! - dialogue with Orthodox theologians was both a nostalgic return to the Fathers in this year of Constantinople I (381) and a reminder that these fellow Christians from situations of minority status and sometimes persecution are as «relevant» and «contextual» in their quoting of Athanasius or Basil as our Western anxiety to read what is latest.

And there is Rome, where you can telephone to discover who's on strike today. Athens, such pollution as will destroy the Acropolis remnants where Turk and British failed. And also Cairo. Perhaps it will be the world's largest city in a decade or so - already such overpopulation as threatens the health of its 8 millions. Let us speak of life and death issues, but let us keep our sense of proportion - in this case truly the beam is lodged in the eyes of others, while our irritation is but a mote. My travels suggest to me that the future may not wind up in Orwell's fascist 1984 so much as run down into Burgess' *Clockwork Orange* - a vision of neglected buildings, chaotic conditions in inner cities with selfish ghettos outside, complete relativism in morals and might as the only right

Meanwhile (to relieve this gloomy daydream) my sabbatical included the cities partly for research (on atheism and on the Italian Reformation) and for other purposes, such as visiting the Institute of Isma'ili Studies in London, now linked with our own Institute. My favourite city, by the way, is Florence - Firenze where Pietro Martire Vermigli was born, spending his novitiate at the nearby (Etruscan) town of Fiesole. The beauty of the city and of its works of art reminds us of what one small town in a particular time and place can accomplish. Beyond our pessimism (and optimism) there remains *hope*, and such phenomena as Renaissance Florence serve as symbols.

J.C. McLelland



## NOTES FROM THE PRINCIPALS

ANTHONY CAPON (Montreal Diocesan Theological College)

Greetings to the alumni from Diocesan College! Here is some up-to-date news of the College.

Total student enrolment, at 27, is the same as last year. Of these, 21 are men and 6 are women. The breakdown by programmes is Pre-Theology 2, Theology 19, In-Ministry Year 2, Internship Year 1, Associates 3. Two of our current students are from Zaire (and working in French at Université de Montréal), one from Uganda and one from Kenya.

In addition, an increasing number of Anglican students are preparing for ministry through the Reading and Tutorial Course. About 40 are working at the programme at present, and we are now seeing students each year coming in to complete their studies through the Institute for Ministry and graduating with the College's L.Th. Diploma. As «late vocations» and non-stipendiary ministries increase, this route to ordination is likely to become even more important.

For some years the College has not had an organized faculty, apart from *Don Thompson* and myself. This is in sharp contrast to the Presbyterian and United Colleges, both of which have taken their faculty very seriously. The Board of Governors has now recognized as the Faculty of the College (besides the two of us) *Dr. Monroe Feaston*, *Dr. N. Thomas Wright*, and *Dr. Eric Jay* (emeritus). The support of these men already means a great deal.

It has been a great pleasure to welcome *Dr. Wright* to Montreal, from his post as Chaplain of Downing College, Cambridge, England. His new appointment is as Assistant Professor of New Testament at McGill. He has already won many friends at the College, and has proved himself an able teacher. This term he has been giving a series of Bible expositions on the parables of our Lord at Tuesday evening chapel.

At this year's Convocation, honorary doctorates were conferred on *Mother Anne Marie* of the Sisters of St Margaret, *Mrs. Mary Naylor*, and the Reverend *Sam Pollard*. The Address was given by *Dr. Cyril Powles*. There was a fine attendance from alumni and others. Next year's Convocation is scheduled for Monday, May 3rd at 8 p.m. An interesting feature will be the presentation to the College of an oil painting of Principal William Henderson (1877-96) by members of the family, and this will bring to completion our collection of portraits of our former principals.

A programme of evening courses, intended chiefly but not exclusively for the laity, has been begun this term. The topic is «A Matter of Death and Life», and the goal is to relate the Christian Gospel to problems and questions surrounding the fact of death. *Dr. Eric Jay* is responsible for a first hour



concentrating on an approach from the standpoint of Biblical theology, and in the second hour the *Reverend Bryan Pearce* guides discussion on the personal and relational aspects. The course runs for seven weeks, and at the time of writing the first session has been held, with an attendance of over fifty. It is hoped that a second course on another topic will be held next term.

We continue to work on a model of training for ministry based on the living out of a community of faith and love. I believe that we have witnessed a true work of God in our whole community over the past few years, enabling us to work through many of our sources of tension and conflict, and to identify and rejoice in a deep underlying unity in Christ. Through this joint participation in Christ, and through the sharing of insights as well as problems in a spirit of Christian openness, I see our whole community as being capable of growth. This will affect all our relationships, not only within the College, but also in terms of social and world vision.

Central to our relationships this term has been our experience of communal worship and prayer, focused particularly but not only on the Eucharist. For the first time, spouses and families have become an essential part of our fellowship; we have become very accustomed to the sound of children's voices around the College! This fact has done a lot to guard us against an «ivory tower» mentality.

I should like once more to pay tribute to Director of Studies *Dr. Don Thompson* as a fine colleague, and also to send good wishes from Dio to all our alumni and friends.

#### WILLIAM KLEMPA (Presbyterian College)

Before reporting on the 1981-82 academic year, two events from the last academic session deserve mention. The 114th Annual Convocation of the College was held at the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul on Wednesday, May 13th when nine students received the Diploma in Ministry and eight others received in addition the Diploma of the College. The degree of Doctor of Divinity (*honoris causa*) was conferred upon three ministers: the *Reverend John Cameron* of the Kirk of St. James, Charlottetown, P.E.I., the *Reverend Frederick A. Miller* of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Owen Sound, Ontario, and the *Reverend Professor Charles H.H. Scobie* of Mt. Allison University, who gave the Convocation Address. A large audience was in attendance.

The second event was the Alumni Association Dinner in connection with the meeting of the General Assembly at the beginning of June in Ottawa. The dinner at the Château Laurier Hotel was attended by approximately sixty members, spouses and guests. Five members of the College faculty were present and there was a helpful exchange of views about the work of the College and the new Master of Divinity degree programme. The Senate of the College has undertaken a three-year programme to establish closer connections with our Alumni. Next year the Alumni Dinner will be held in Toronto.



Twelve new students enrolled in the College in September, ten of whom are full-time students and two part-time. Of the total number three are enrolled in the S.T.M. programme, one in the Ph.D., and the others in the B.Th.-M.Div. stream. There are seven College students in the In-Ministry year programme this year. The total number of students enrolled in the three years is thirty-one.

The College held its Annual Retreat on Friday, September 25th to Sunday, September 27th at the Gault Estate, Mont St. Hilaire. Thirty-five students and faculty were in attendance. The speaker was *Mrs. Heather Johnston*, President of the Canadian Council of Churches and our Church's delegate to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. She addressed the group on such issues as the Church's involvement in social, economic and political affairs, relations between rich and poor nations, and the WCC Committee to Combat Racism. Each of the talks was followed by rather vigorous discussion of some of these issues.

Continuing education is the cutting edge of ministerial education. More and more it is being recognized that lifelong learning is a necessity for the present-day pastor. Presbyterian College continues to make continuing education one of its priorities. Four successful one-week programmes were held last March and April with fifty-eight ministers attending the programmes. Four programmes are planned for March and April, 1982, of which notice is given elsewhere in this edition of ARC.

The 1981 L.W. Anderson Lectures were given on March 12, 1981 by *Frederick Buechner*, noted American novelist and theologian, on the theme «The Sacred Journey.» He presented his own spiritual autobiography in three lectures entitled, «Once Below a Time», «Once Upon a Time», and «Beyond Time.»

The 1982 L.W. Anderson Lectures will be given by *Professor Brian Gerrish* of the University of Chicago who will have as his theme «Schleiermacher and the Beginnings of Modern Theology.» The titles of the three individual lectures will be «What is Theology?», «The Christ of Faith», and «Acts of God.»

*Professor Hendrikus Berkhof* of the University of Leiden in Holland has accepted our invitation to be the 1983 L.W. Anderson Lecturer.

Our residence has thirty-eight students including theological, medical, law, arts, science, and students from other faculties of McGill. The dean of students for 1981-82 is *Mr. George Harper*, a Ph.D. candidate in New Testament in the Faculty of Religious Studies.

The College is exploring the possibility of publishing a list of its rare books, which include the Complutensian Polyglot Bible, the first complete Bible printed in the original languages between 1514 and 1517 in six folio volumes. (Only six hundred were printed at a cost of \$100,000, of which only about 60 remain). Other rare books include a rare facsimile of the Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Alexandrinus, a Codex Vaticanus, a rare copy of the Epistles of Clement of Rome,



and the Seabright Collection of books probably not duplicated anywhere in North America.

This summer over a hundred French theological books came to the library to be housed there for the Francophone Institute. A part-time person has been hired to assist our librarian, the Reverend Daniel Shute, in cataloguing these additions to our College library.

## REPORT FROM THE MONTREAL INSTITUTE FOR MINISTRY

DON THOMPSON (ACTING FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)

The first thing of interest to readers of this report will be to hear that the normal author of it, *Art Van Seters*, is currently on sabbatical--from June of this year through to the beginning of January, 1982. In fact, at the moment Art is in Costa Rica for a month giving a series of papers in relation to preaching, and experiencing that function of ministry set in relation to a context of liberation.

According to his most recent epistle (it was literally that!), he has overwhelmingly experienced the issues of liberation, and will come home looking for the church and theological education to be far more vitally committed to those issues.

Another major bit of news is that the long talked of Master of Divinity degree programme is now in place, and at the spring convocations we will see the first degrees awarded. While on the one hand, our programme is still recognizable as it has existed in the past (B.Th. or S.T.M. studies plus the In-Ministry Year, both set in the context of one of the colleges), on the other hand there are new components to the programme--such as the Integrative Paper being begun at the end of the first year of studies, «intersession» seminars spread over the academic years dealing with issues of theology and ministry, and an «Inter-disciplinary Seminar» as part of the McGill programme. In general, the effect should be to encourage integration of theology and ministry earlier in the overall programme, and thus to enable students to utilize better the resources of both the academic and in-ministry components.

In the In-Ministry Year itself, the only major shift has been a broadening of the field of focus for what were the Supervised Pastoral Education groups--they have been re-named «Core Groups». They now are to provide analysis and theological reflection on events and issues that surface for students in any of the three components of the year: parish field, community field, and Institute programme. This year's fall workshop for the students will be utilized as the training ground for these Core Groups, in helping students to acquire the skills of economic, social, political, and feminist analysis, and to integrate theological reflection as a part of such analyses. Another significant step of the year will be the fact that one of these Core Groups is functioning entirely in French--an option that should spread throughout the In-Ministry Year programme.

In general, things are alive and well at the Institute, and we hope, in touch with the world in which we are called to minister.



## 1982 PROGRAMMES OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

## THE PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, MONTREAL

PROGRAMME A: March 1 - 5, 1982

*«Confessing the Christian Faith in Canada in the 1980s»  
Study and Research*

Leaders: The College Faculty

PROGRAMME B: March 8 - 12, 1982

1982 L.W. Anderson Lectures, March 11, 1982

Lecturer: Professor Brian Gerrish, University of Chicago

*«Preaching from the Letter to the Romans»  
«Schleiermacher and the Beginnings of Modern Theology»  
«Workshop on Christian Education»*

Leaders include

Professor N. Thomas Wright, McGill  
Reverend E. Margaret MacNaughton, Toronto  
Professor Brian Gerrish, Chicago  
College Faculty

PROGRAMME C: March 15 - 19, 1982

*«Inspiration of Scriptures»  
«The Authority of the Bible from a Historical Perspective»  
«The Irony of Modern Atheism»  
«The Minister as Communicator in Church and Community»*  
PANEL DISCUSSION: *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*

Leaders include

Professor Paul Achtemeier, UTS, Richmond, Virginia  
Dean Ian Rennie, Ontario Theological Seminary  
Dean J.C. McLelland, McGill  
Reverend Harry A. Crawford, Seneca College, Toronto  
Faculty Members

PROGRAMME D: April 26 - 30, 1982

PAULIN MINISTERS' INSTITUTE

Conference on the Preaching and Pastoral Ministry  
led by

Dr. James D. Smart, Dr. William Klempa, College Faculty and  
Montreal Area ministers

PROGRAMME COSTS: \$100 (1 week) \$175 (2 weeks)

A few travel bursaries are available upon application.

Send Registration Form to : The Presbyterian College, 3495 University Street  
Montreal, PQ H3A 2A8



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*Donna Runnalls* is Associate Professor of Old Testament and Judaism at the Faculty of Religious Studies.

*R.B.Y. Scott* was Professor of Old Testament at the United Theological College from 1931, and then assumed that chair in the Faculty of Divinity when it came into being in 1948. He was Dean of the Faculty during its first year, 1948-49. He continued to teach Old Testament until 1955 when he moved to Princeton University. In 1977 Dr. Scott received from McGill the D.D. (*honoris causa*) in recognition both of his Old Testament scholarship and his particular contribution to the Faculty and University.

*Robert Warren* is a third-year B.Th. student from British Columbia studying at present in conjunction with the Montreal Diocesan Theological College.

*Norman J. Whitney* is Professor of Biology and Counsellor in Student Services at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. At present he is on sabbatical leave at the Centre for Bioethics, Clinical Research Institute, Montreal.

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The editorial committee of ARC urges *each* of its readers to make a financial contribution for the support of ARC. Beginning with this issue, we are asking for an annual contribution of \$5.00. With ever-increasing printing and distribution costs, \$5.00 annually from each reader is the only way we can ensure continuation of publication. If you have not contributed recently to ARC, please consider making a larger contribution.

We always appreciate hearing from our readers. Letters to the editor and manuscript submissions are especially welcome. In particular, please notify us of changes in address.

Thank you for your help and attention.

*The Editorial Committee*

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ARC is an attempt to provide a means of maintaining the ties that exist between the academic community and its Alumni/Alumnae. To aid in this continuing theological education, we are publishing two issues per year which are distributed to almost 1500 graduates and friends of the Faculty of Religious Studies of McGill University, its affiliated Colleges (Anglican, Presbyterian and United Church) and the Montreal Institute for Ministry. We are asking for an annual contribution of \$5.00 per person in order to offset costs of printing and distribution.

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