
BOOK REVIEWS



Thomas A. Mappes and Jane S. Zembaty, *Biomedical Ethics*, 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1991. 641 pp. \$37.82 (hardcover).

Recent developments in health care such as macroallocation issues, genetic research, and the rights and duties of health-care professionals have led to considerable moral perplexity and reflection. This book contributes positively to the discussion of the complex ethical issues raised by these developments and others in contemporary health care. *Biomedical Ethics* provides an effective teaching tool for courses in applied ethics in the health sciences with only a few limitations specific to its usefulness in pharmacy education. The strengths and limitations of the book will be highlighted. Additionally, two texts that are similar in content and format will be contrasted with *Biomedical Ethics*.

The book is organized according to categories of ethical issues. The authors have made an effort to arrange the content in an efficient and logical manner. The introductory chapter provides background information regarding traditional ethical principles and theories. The subsequent chapters cover a comprehensive array of the most compelling issues in bioethics.

Each chapter begins with an introduction written by Mappes and Zembaty. The introductions identify the central ethical issues and arguments presented in the chapter. The introductory material of each chapter also does a good job of referring back to the material on principles and theories in the first chapter of the book. This helps the reader tie the material together.

The greatest strength of the book is the timeliness and breadth of the readings that are classified under a variety of topical headings such as "Justice and Health Care Policy" and "Professionals' Obligations, Institutions, and Patients' Rights." The readings include selections that deal with the most current problems in health-care ethics such as maternal/fetal conflicts and institutional ethics committees as well as classics in the field of bioethics such as "The Prostitute, the Playboy and the Poet: Rationing Schemes for Organ Transplantation" by George J. Annas and "Suicide" by Immanuel Kant. The authors of the readings are from a wide variety of disciplines lending balance to the selection and a diversity of viewpoints.

Argument sketches precede each reading summarizing the salient points of the reading along with background information on the author of the reading. An annotated bibliography follows each chapter which is an excellent addition to the book. Finally, the book includes a series of brief case studies that include questions to facilitate discussion and analysis. The title of each case is followed by a number or numbers in brackets that refer to the chapter or chapters that correspond to the key ethical issue in the case.

The weaknesses of *Biomedical Ethics* are quite small compared to all of its strengths. Since the book focuses on "medical" ethics, the pharmacy educator would have to supplement the readings with material specific to pharmacy. The contributions of Robert Veatch, the one ethicist in the book with a pharmacy background, do not deal with ethical problems in pharmacy. An additional oversight is the omission of content on an ethic of care. The critical look that feminists and other ethicists have taken at traditional moral philosophy is worthy of inclusion particularly in light of the shift to pharmaceutical care as the desired practice model.

Two other texts are comparable in several ways to *Biomedical Ethics*. These texts are *Intervention and Reflection: Basic Issues in Medical Ethics* by Ronald Munson, 4th ed., Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc., 1992, and *Contemporary Issues in Bioethics* by Tom L. Beauchamp and LeRoy Walters, 3rd ed., Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc. 1989. All three texts are very similar in terms of the readings, some of which appear in all three. The Munson text includes a few readings that are even more timely than those included in *Biomed-*

cal Ethics such as Larry Kramer's "A 'Manhattan Project' for AIDS." The Munson text also includes an interesting addition to the introductory material in each chapter—a social context component to help the reader understand the current political and social situation surrounding the ethical issue. The Munson text also includes case studies and questions at the end of each chapter.

The Beauchamp and Walters text provides minimal introductory material to each chapter and no summary of the arguments of each reading. Furthermore, Beauchamp and Walters do not include case studies which makes their book less useful in the classroom.

Readers, especially teachers of pharmacy ethics, will find little to distinguish *Biomedical Ethics* from *Intervention and Reflection: Basic Issues in Medical Ethics*. Both texts provide considerable pedagogical aids to assist the ethics instructor.

Faculty who are responsible for ethics instruction in their respective programs will find either text helpful for their own enrichment and as a useful complement to materials specific to the profession of pharmacy.

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Nick Yapp, *Bluff Your Way in Teaching*. Horsham, West Sussex, UK: Ravette Books, Ltd., 1987. 62 pp. £1.99 [approx. \$3.20] (paperback).

This book review is short since this softcover book contains but 55 pages of text in large size type plus several additional pages of great names in education and a glossary. A sample entry: "Tertiary Education—an attempt to fudge the unemployment figures by keeping the virtually ineducable at school until they are 25."

Actually, this book is one of a series of *Bluffer's Guides* that have already been published for 50 different occupations. Some other interesting titles include: *Espionage*, *Fortune Telling*, *Weather Forecasting*, and *Sex*. The book uses British terminology and only addresses the British educational structure and environment.

Nevertheless, it is silly funny. There are five sections describing life at private and public institutions, descriptions of the roles of different personnel types in education; classroom techniques, and handy information about jobs. Under class control, some tips include: "Frequently spend a long time giving the children information that is useless and that they will not understand, but which somehow involves them."

This reviewer can think of several uses for this book. It is a good present for someone you don't want to spend more than \$3.00 on, and since it can be read in 30-40 minutes, it can be offered to aviophobic people about to take a flight or to persons about to sit down in an oral surgeon's office to take their minds off upcoming activity. The book should be given or loaned after you have read it first.

Understandably, the book probably won't be found in pharmacy company or school libraries, but the book is recommended when a mental tickle is called for.

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