

The Linacre Quarterly

Volume 45 | Number 1

Article 15

2-1-1978

[Book Review of] *This Curette for Hire* by Eugene F. Diamond

Sean O'Reilly

Follow this and additional works at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq>



Part of the [Ethics and Political Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

O'Reilly, Sean (1978) "[Book Review of] *This Curette for Hire* by Eugene F. Diamond," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 45: No. 1, Article 15.
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol45/iss1/15>

and reflections are distilled in this remarkable little book. In this unimposing volume she describes the best of genetic counseling: how it should be done for maximum services to the families who seek this kind of assistance.

Kelly emphasizes the *process*, in particular certain phases of it which she (rightly) perceives to be of central importance. Thus, a large part of the book is devoted to the follow-up letter and follow-up visit. Chapter five is almost entirely given to a lengthy annotated transcript of the dialogue in such a visit — allowing the reader to reflect on the dynamics of interchange between counselor and family as the latter only gradually come to understand the full implications of what they have been told about their genetic condition.

The style of counseling (chapters seven and nine) is discussed with an eye toward contributions from the fields of crisis intervention and guidance. Kelly enunciates what is now fairly orthodox teaching: that it is best for the genetic counselor to always *fully* inform, *humanly* support, and *ruthlessly* avoid interposition of her own biases in the decision-making which belongs to the family and only to the family.

Dealing with Dilemma is probably the best discussion of the genetic counseling relationship that has yet come to print. It is highly recommended both for seasoned clinical geneticists (who will profit by reading it) and for neophytes (for whom it should be required reading in any relevant course of studies). Although her aim is directed toward the functioning of larger, more complex clinical operations, the individual practitioner will also find this book full of insight and challenge.

— Robert Roger Lebel, S.J.
Kennedy Fellow in Medicine, Law and Ethics
University of Wisconsin—Madison

This Curette for Hire

Eugene F. Diamond, M.D.

ACTA Foundation, 4848 N. Clark St., Chicago, Ill. 60640, 1977. 140 pp., \$3.95.

Although the title of this book by Doctor Diamond suggests it is yet another treatise on the abortion issue, its scope is very much broader. A look at the table of contents makes this evident and it is seen that it addresses many of the pressing and, indeed, burning issues in bio-ethics and social mores — fetal experimentation, contraceptive sterilization, infanticide, euthanasia, violence in society, informed consent, sex therapy and juvenile promiscuity. In addition to this sad litany of immorality and man's inhumanity, there are a couple of penetrating essays on justice in the fee structure and the alleged shortage of doctors.

It is Doctor Diamond's thesis that in recent times the physician has become a scapegoat, a modern folk villain responsible for escalating costs of health-care, and the target of unscrupulous malpractice lawyers no less than of the bureaucratic socialistic planners. He dates much of this malaise — the forced estrangement between the public and the medical profession — to the decade of the 1960's when the profession in the U.S. first began to show an official inclination to follow in the footsteps of the doctors in Hitler's Germany by abandoning its age-old prohibition against abortion. When the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Medical Association embraced the abortion philosophy, medicine became a killing profession as it had been prior to the

Hippocratic tradition. Doctor Diamond uses the salient core pledges of the Hippocratic oath as yardsticks to highlight the gross incompatibilities between the new medical ethic and the 2500 year old tradition of the medical profession. His analysis is incisive, buttressed by inexorable logic and very cogent statistics.

Most of the issues discussed in the sixteen chapters of this book have been exhaustively explored and ridden into the most dense existential fog imaginable by hordes of ethicists, pseudo-scientists, medical and theological charlatans. In a few pages on each topic Dr. Diamond presents the salient medical, legal and philosophical facts and discusses them sanely and logically, supporting his arguments with relevant and revealing statistics.

For the most part, his discussion of these emotion-laden issues is calm and dispassionate, though there are throughout the book some very pungent and pointed comments. The only real bias the author displays is toward the truth and his belief in the sanctity of life. On this topic he is passionate and intense, as when he writes, "If you ask me, therefore, to speak for the fetus, then speak for him I will. I speak for him intact or deformed . . . wanted or unwanted . . . illegitimate or highborn. I am for life and the preservation of life. I believe that any life is of infinite value and that this value is not significantly diminished by physical or mental defects or the circumstances of that life's beginning. I believe that this regard for the quantity as well as the quality of life is a cornerstone of western culture. I believe our patients are served best by a medical ethic which also holds this principle sacred."

In this reviewer's opinion, Doctor Diamond has succeeded admirably in defending his thesis in this small but comprehensive book. The last chapter is a gem; it expertly explodes the over-population myth and concludes with a satirical effort worthy of Jonathan Swift. I will not reveal what he did and how he did it: buy the book and read it for yourselves!

— Sean O'Reilly, M.D., FRCP
The George Washington University Medical Center

The Church and the Homosexual

John J. McNeill, S.J.

Sheed, Andrews and McMeel, Inc., Kansas City, Kansas, 1976. xiv + 211 pp., \$10.

In writing this review, I am aware that the Sacred Congregation for doctrine has requested that the *imprimi potest* be withdrawn from future printings, while the author has been forbidden to lecture publicly on sexual ethics. I am also aware that "12 well known Catholic theologians have charged the Vatican's doctrinal congregation with a flagrant violation of due process in prohibiting McNeill from speaking on sexual ethics." (John Deedy, *Commonweal*, Dec. 9, 1977, p. 772.) In the wake of these events I am sorely tempted to comment on the Vatican's action and the response of the American writers, but I believe that I can shed more light on the issue by commenting on the content of the book, as I have done in previous reviews.

The basic thesis of this book is that stable homosexual relationships between those who discover themselves to be genuine homosexuals are morally good, with the proviso that a given relationship "is responsible, respectful, loving and truly promotive of the good of both parties." (p. 21) Those who come to the conclusion that their sexual desires and feelings are oriented toward members of their