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### [Book Review of] *Law and Ethics of A.I.D. and Embryo Transfer*, Ciba Foundation Symposium J7

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be acceptable)." It is obvious that the reference is to XYY ("double Y") rather than XXY (Klinefelter's Syndrome). But the relationship of the supernumerary Y chromosome to antisocial behavior is not by any means clearly established; there is a good chance that we have all met such men without having noticed anything special about them. XXY, for its part, is characterized by mental retardation and sterility, not "notably sexual criminal behavior."

Jacobs points out that about 20% "of the existing population carries some deleterious mutation." This may be an underestimate. But he seems to overstate the biological problems of artificial insemination by donor, which are played down by the experts.

These few objections notwithstanding, this book is valuable as a refresher-stimulant to those already experienced in the field of ministry to medical personnel and patients, and a fine starting place for those entering the work.

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## Book Review

# Law and Ethics of A.I.D. and Embryo Transfer

*Ciba Foundation Symposium 17, Associated Scientific Publishers,  
New York, Amsterdam, London, 1973, 110 pp.*

Twenty-two experts took part in the 1973 Ciba symposium — 17 of them British, two French, one Polish, one Canadian and one American. Their expertise ranged through genetics, physiology, philosophy, law, moral theology, psychology and obstetrics-gynecology.

Forty percent of the book is devoted to the discussions. The editors seem to have departed from custom in keeping these intact rather than tidying them up for publication. There is a sense

of liveliness: one can almost hear the chiming in from opposite ends of the room . . . the particular interests and biases. On the other hand, there is a problem of *non sequitur* remarks that suggests a lack of listening among the participants. Flair and awkwardness are both preserved. This disjointedness is perhaps to be expected, reflecting the state of the questions in the minds of the 'experts' as well as the public. We can hope for clarification to emerge, somewhere, soon.

Some interesting material is presented. In particular, the biological aspects of both A.I.D. and embryo transfer are carefully laid out, with attempts to spell out both hopes and risks. Also, there is fine exposition of legal status of these procedures in England and France, with occasional reference to the situations in the U.S.A. and elsewhere.

It is apparent that the legal status of A.I.D. remains ambiguous, although the procedure has been in use since the late 18th century, and legal decisions concerning it date from the 1860's. The procedure itself is legal by presumption in most places, but the offspring derived from it are officially 'legitimate' in only few jurisdictions. One speaker, G. D. Dustam (professor of Moral Theology, King's College, London), suggested abolition of the entire concept of legitimacy. We should not impute guilt to a *child* for the circumstances of its birth; the *parents* are illegitimate.

There are prevalent fears concerning the results of wide-spread A.I.D. and/or embryo transfer. But some 100,000 persons have already been born as a result of A.I.D., and the statistical analysis shows no proof that they are confusing the gene pool by threatening large numbers of unrecognized consanguineous marriages. Illegitimacy rates due to ordinary adultery are high enough to cast doubt on the accuracy of birth records in any case. The suggestion is made that we look with

equanimity to the day when adultery will be acceptable, and so minimize the importance of paternal consent to A.I.D.; this would seem to fall short of the ethical mark.

Some participants expressed the growing concern that these artificial methods introduce dangerous unassessable stresses to the uterine environment — concern that needs attention. But Edwards and Steptoe remain remarkably sanguine about the capacity of preimplant embryos to resist teratogens, the nobility of their embryo transfer endeavors, and the obvious backup of amniocentesis to monitor developing fetuses.

Dr. M. Revillard (Centre de Recherches, Lyon), concluded a discussion of the legal aspects of these techniques in France by invoking the scientist as a great hero who lives on the cutting edge of societal values: he uncovers taboos and forges ahead, to mold new moralities. At the same time, of course, he must be of high moral character, to avoid indiscretions in his prophetic work. The ensuing discussion took no notice of this interesting contradiction!

Revillard's view is in sharp contrast to that of Amitai Etzioni, whose recent book *Genetic Fix* seems to rest on profound distrust of scientists and doctors.

The prepared papers contain some well researched information about biological and legal aspects of A.I.D. and embryo transfer. But the discussions are diffuse,

and the ethical treatments do not reach the cogency or clarity of, for example, Paul Ramsey's article on the morality of embryo transfer experimentation, in *JAMA* 220:1346-1350, 1480-1485

1972), published six months before the symposium was held.

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## Book Review

### Ethical Issues in Human Genetics

by Bruce Hilton et al., editors

Plenum Press, 1973, 455 pp.

*Ethical Issues in Human Genetics* contains the proceedings of a 1971 conference sponsored by the Hastings Center. Some 80 geneticists, doctors, lawyers, philosophers, theologians and sociologists participated, most of them Americans. Twenty-six major papers were delivered, but 100 pages of the book are also devoted to discussion transcripts. A helpful glossary and index are provided.

More than 200 genetic counseling services now operate in this country. Diagnostic and therapeutic techniques are being developed rapidly, while public awareness of available genetic knowledge also grows. The call for genetic counseling services will certainly continue its rapid increase. But of all the applied sciences, this one stands out for its thorny ethical problems. It is encouraging that geneticists are discussing these problems openly, and seeking input from other concerned disciplines.

The unifying impression one receives from this book is the genuine personal concern of the participants for the *people* involved. People clearly are more important than theories, abstract concepts, or unattainable eugenic goals (J. F. Crow). Education is preferable to legislation (M. M. Kaback). Privacy is a prime value (J. Hill), as is *helping* families reach informed decisions rather than making the decisions for them (J. R. Sorenson).

The human values of personal integrity, inviolability and dignity have grown slowly as our species has come of age. It would be tragic folly to abrogate these now in favor of restrictive approaches to the problems of human genetics . . . to construct a human anthill (D. Callahan). Both scientific (J. F. Crow) and sociological (J. V. Neel) reasons can be put forward to discourage precipitous commitment to specific eugenic policies.