

Man." One can accept not knowing or understanding everything, yet or even ever, without having to adopt a system of instant answers, and without becoming suicidal or ready for the asylum.

Nowhere in *Whatever Happened to the Human Race* is the possibility discussed of an empiric adoption by mankind of a "golden rule" as the basic premise of an ethical system. Such a possibility is implicitly denied, since even ordinary biological evolution of man is rejected, let alone evolution of behavior and personality.

As is pointed out in the book, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race* is based on a "magnificent five-episode color motion picture." Spaced throughout the text are illustrations from the movie; some of them of dubious taste (1,000 plastic dolls strewn on the beach) and pertinence (Shaeffer atop Mt. Sinai). The book becomes a slick and staged presentation by two undoubtedly sincere, highly motivated Christians, who are alarmed by current practices concerning abortion and euthanasia.

The book is not recommended generally. For those who want more temperate discussions from a variety of viewpoints, Marvin Kohl's *Infanticide and the Value of Life* is more suited to their needs. *Whatever Happened to the Human Race* might be of some interest to those who want a fairly detailed exposition of a rigid "Christian" position on the issues. For those who have the inclination and energy to be contentious about an exposition of philosophy, the book is highly recommended.

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INFANTICIDE AND THE VALUE OF LIFE, Marvin Kohl, ed., Prometheus Books, Buffalo, N.Y., 1978, 253 pp. \$15.95

Edited by Marvin Kohl, a philosophy professor at SUNY/Fredonia, *Infanticide and the Value of Life* is a collection of essays whose primary purpose is "to understand what conditions, if any, warrant allowing or inducing the death of a seriously defective infant." The authors, from the fields of medicine, law, religion, and philosophy, present contrasting viewpoints and various styles of writing. They have produced a thoroughly readable book with a good bibliography and mechanics (table of contents, index, footnoting, etc.).

The essays are organized into four sections: 1) religious-ethical; 2) anthropological, psychological, and medical; 3) legal; and 4) philosophical-ideological. Part I contains essays by theologians and ethicists, with two arguing that infanticide is permissible in certain instances and two arguing that infanticide is murder and is therefore never acceptable. Part II comprises five chapters written by an anthropologist, a psychiatrist, a neurosurgeon-philosopher, a pediatrician, and a surgeon. They discuss infanticide in different cultures, killing and allowing to die (active and passive euthanasia), and who should decide the care of defective infants. An unrelated chapter discusses death from child abuse.

Part III presents various viewpoints, written by lawyers and a professor of religion, on laws relating to infanticide or euthanasia for the severely defective child. Part IV contains five chapters by philosophers and a person with myelodysplasia, who discuss the meaning of the phrase "value of life."

This well-written book cannot just be read and put aside; rather it prods us to reflect on the value of life and the conditions, if any, for infanticide (or euthanasia, which sounds better and is somehow easier to accept). Today, few professionals could accept infanticide as it was practiced in some past cultures. But should some severely abnormal children be killed or allowed to die? Which ones? Who decides? How does death come to occur? The who, how, when, and where of infanticide are valid points of discussion in some cases. However, the discussion should never be carried on with a preconceived answer: We must be careful not to force our personal values onto families. Normality is everyone's dream, but it cannot be over-emphasized that many physically and mentally handicapped children can and do lead lives that are enriching to themselves, their families, and friends.

*Infanticide and the Value of Life* provides no easy answers, but it is highly recommended as a readable, affordable, and well-balanced presentation of a variety of viewpoints on the issues.

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