

SYMPOSIUM INTRODUCTION

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I am very pleased to introduce this issue of Global Virtue Ethics Review. The papers in this issue exemplify the recent rise to prominence of practical ethics, especially medical ethics and business ethics, within both the Analytic and Continental schools of philosophical thought. The first essays in this issue, “Unwittingly De-Humanizing Patients; Rehabilitating Informed Consent,” by Barbara J. Russell is from the second of these traditions. Professor Russell argues that the doctrine of informed consent as it is currently practiced has become impoverished as it is currently practiced because too much is overlooked. In particular, she argues, the possibility of patients’ alienation, inauthenticity, and silence is not fully recognized, either by healthcare professionals or by academic medical ethicists. Professor Russell attempts to remedy these deficiencies in informed consent—a “rehabilitation” of this doctrine—by drawing on Marx, Heidegger, and feminist theorists. The second paper in this issue, “The Role of Cognitive Development in Pediatric Medical Decision-Making” by Susan Zinner, similarly focuses on an issue in informed consent; the issue of when a minor can give his or her informed consent to the procedures that he or she is to undergo.

Both Professor Russell and Professor Zinner criticize current biomedical practices. Similarly, Professor Brugger criticizes medical ethicists reliance on “rights-talk” as an appropriate way to address bioethical problems. Rather than focusing on rights-claims, Professor Brugger argues, medical ethicists should instead turn to the “Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition of practical reason, first principles and moral norms” when addressing bioethical questions. In addition to medical ethics, philosophers have also turned their attention to problems within law and business. The last paper in this issue, “Philosophy and Practical Ethics”, by Professor Satris, outlines two different foundational approaches that have been taken by philosophers who address these issues. The first of these, “applied ethics”, “seeks to find and/or justify moral principles as part of moral philosophy itself. Then these principles are *applied* to problem areas in business, medicine, etc.” The second, “practical ethics”, “takes the practices as themselves incorporating moral values.” It is noticeable that the first of these approaches is that which is adopted by the authors of the three papers that precede Professor Satris’ paper—a fact that supports Professor Satris’ contention that this “approach

Global Virtue Ethics Review,
5(1), 2004 pp. 2-3

has been underestimated by philosophers and deserves closer attention.” Thus, not only do the papers in this issue of Global Virtue Ethics Review engage with practical problems, and previous attempts to solve them—they also engage with each other.

Biographical Sketch

James Stacey Taylor is an Assistant professor in Philosophy at Louisiana State University. His main research interests lie in theoretical ethics, applied ethics, and action theory. He has published widely in these areas in journals such as *Social Philosophy & Policy*, *The Journal of Applied Philosophy*, and *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*. He is the editor of *Personal Autonomy* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), and is currently working on two additional books, one on personal autonomy, the other on the ethics of using markets to procure human transplant organs. Dr. Taylor can be contacted at jtayl25@lsu.edu.