**Book Reviews**

*Health Policy and Ethics: A Critical Examination of Values from a Global Perspective.* By Roger Worthington and Robert Rohrbaugh. London: Radcliffe Publishing Ltd.; 2011. 156 pp. US $45.00 Paperback. ISBN: 978-1846193101.

Almost 2 years ago, our national debate about changing the American health care system devolved into a war of words over whether these changes would enable the creation of “death panels,” an extreme euphemism for rationing. In *Health Policy and Ethics: A Critical Examination of Values from a Global Perspective*, Roger Worthington and Robert Rohrbaugh have compiled a number of essays addressing how ethics can and should influence rationing, the relationship between pharmaceutical companies and doctors, and the determination of appropriate treatments. The authors argue not only that ethics is influenced by a number of variables and should be an important consideration in determining health care policy, but that health care itself provides insights into the ethical standards and priorities of a given society.

The book is divided into three sections of contributions. The first focuses on ethics, law, and health, primarily in the context of the British health care system. The second section broadens this outlook by considering the health care systems and associated challenges in China, India, and Malaysia. The final section links all of the earlier case studies and identifies universally shared ethical concerns. Unfortunately, the ethical analysis of rationing is both revealing and too brief. One of the contributors offers a framework for using rationing to make health care determinations, but subsequently presents a rather weak hypothetical case to illustrate the challenges of rationing:

What is more deserving of funding: mental health services or assisted reproduction treatments? While this hypothetical case is presented as a genuine dilemma, it is unclear whether most readers would actually see it that way. Public opinion data on this type of question or others would have been useful — especially since several contributors present public opinion as a valuable consideration in ethics.

There seems to be a slight bias against centralization in health care throughout the book, and although this is certainly a valid opinion, some of the arguments presented are superficial. For example, one contributor suggests that, in the wake of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine controversy, the public could be trusted to determine whether vaccination is necessary because medical professionals have done a poor job of providing information. While the latter point is a concern, the contributor was too dismissive of the potential ramifications of eliminating mandatory vaccinations, namely, the loss of herd immunity. It seems far more risky to allow the poorly informed public to make decisions that could impact everyone adversely than to have the government mandate certain public health care procedures.

*Health Policy and Ethics* would be a valuable read for anyone interested in health care and ethics, but it lacks cohesiveness and would have benefitted from more case studies and an increased effort to link the case studies that comprise the individual sections. The case studies also vary greatly in terms of quality and value to the overall book. For example, the case study on the ethical concerns raised by doctor associations with the pharmaceutical industry is topical and important, but the case study on the ethics of electroconvulsive
treatment (specifically in Italy) reads like an advertisement for this form of therapy. Ultimately, the book raises a number of thought-provoking questions that should be important to both health care professionals and the general public.

Saheli Sadanand  
Yale Graduate School of Arts & Sciences

**Integrated Molecular Evolution. By Scott Orland Rogers. Boca Raton: CRC Press; 2012. 391 pp. US $91.99 Hardcover. ISBN: 978-1439819951.**

*Integrated Molecular Evolution* by Scott Orland Rogers lives up to its name. The book covers all aspects of molecular evolution in a comprehensive manner. Nothing is assumed. The author begins with the basics and incorporates chemistry, history, and geology when required. The drawback of this approach, however, is that the identity of the target audience is unclear. The constant return to the fundamentals of biology and genetics may grow tiresome to an expert, but the inclusion of so many quantitative details and descriptions of every exception to the rule may overwhelm beginning students.

Overall, there is a strange discontinuity between the simple prose, avoidance of jargon, wealth of analogies, and the depth and breadth of the material presented. A huge quantity of facts is outlined, and although there are a lot of details, few if any generalizations are made. The trouble with all these details is that there is no way for a student to determine which facts are the important ones and which do not need to be memorized. Therefore, this book would not be appropriate for a class setting, though perhaps a particularly ambitious student would enjoy it.

The book is laid out like a course on molecular evolution and begins very basically, with the definition of life, an overview of earth’s history, and a primer on genetics before addressing the more particular problems of molecular evolution, including horizontal gene transfer, classification into phylogenetic trees, and a number of chapters that discuss the entire genome of different organisms. The index is extensive, but the text is dense, with few section breaks and no key terms, although “key points” are provided at the end of each chapter as a summary. In addition, the figure legends often restate many of the important ideas from the main text and may provide a good shortcut for catching the main points without needing to read every page.

Still, there are gems of information scattered throughout the book. For example, I was intrigued to learn that the measles virus sometimes integrates into the genome of its host, and years after a patient has recovered from the infection, expression of measles virus genes in the patient’s brain cells causes brain lesions that eventually lead to death (p. 158). Many topics are introduced with an historical approach, describing who discovered what when and how ideas have changed over time. There are several interesting evolutionary explanations, and the author carefully explains his rationale for each conclusion. Furthermore, the text does serve a useful purpose as a repository of numerous detailed and informative charts and graphs. The difficulty is in having enough patience to find these intriguing facts among the pages and pages of mundane details.

Jamie Schwendinger-Schreck  
Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology  
Yale University

**Atlas of Neuroanatomy for Communication Science and Disorders. Edited by Leonard L. Lapointe. Illustrations by Markus Voll and Karl Wesker. New York: Thieme Medical Publishers, Inc.; 2012. 176 pp. US $69.99 Paperback. ISBN: 978-1604066494.**

The *Atlas of Neuroanatomy for Communication Science and Disorders*, which is part of the Atlas of Anatomy Series, is a beautifully illustrated, full-color guide to human neuroanatomy in communication and brain-based disorders. The atlas is divided into six major sections, and there is also a