

world currently recognised by Quakers as a group, have tended to take other forms; in the arts, or in the pursuit of advanced scientific research in the physical or biological sciences. Duncan Wood's account of the studies of his mentor and friend demonstrates that the pursuit of natural history can also provide a way of reconnecting not only with the world around us, but with the spirit within.

Geoffrey Morries
University of Birmingham

Scully, J. L., *Quaker Approaches to Moral Issues in Genetics*, (Series in Quaker Studies Vol. 4). Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002. pp. viii + 276, ISBN 0 7734 7064 6, Cloth, £74.95, \$119.95.

Jackie Leach Scully's book documents the wide variety of responses of Friends to various issues raised by genetic manipulation. Her project, financed by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, involved a number of different lectures and workshops with different Quaker meetings and the use of questionnaires. Although the book covers issues such as patenting and GMOs, the heart of the study is with *human* genetic manipulation.

A central example (fictitious) is used of Freda whose father is believed to have died of what is now called Scully's disease (also fictitious) – a long drawn out degenerative and generally horrible disease. Freda has a 50% chance of inheriting the gene responsible. If she gets it, she *will* die of it, barring earlier death by accident, earlier cancer etc. There is now a test that will tell her whether she has it. Should Freda take it? Scully gets her groups to consider it from four perspectives: Freda herself, her children, her employer and scientists examining the case. These perspectives form the basis of the next four chapters.

Should Freda from her own point of view take the test? Some answered 'yes', since whether the result is positive or negative, it would be better to know – even if positive, self-knowledge is valuable; the knowledge is useful for preparing for the future, and it ends uncertainty. Others felt that she should not find out – she would know later on, meantime her job would be more secure, etc. For some the pain of the knowledge that she had it could be seen, from a theological point of view, as being an opportunity for learning. On the other hand, suppose (in a variation of the story) gene therapy were available which could inhibit or stop the onset of the disease, should she take it? Whilst it may seem obviously beneficial, some saw it as altering 'who she was', so should she do it?

Similar sets of questions are discussed in the later chapters from the perspectives of the children and employers (and also insurers). Ought she to take the test for the children's sake? Do they have a right to know the results (which would affect how they think of their future) or has she a right to keep the information secret? Third party access to genetic information (by insurers and by companies employing people) raises certain issues too. Is giving one's company such information (e.g. if positive) Quaker truthfulness or mere naiveté, given that firms operate generally on the model of 'Money Grabbing Capitalist plc' rather than 'Quaker Elders Company Ltd'?!

There follow chapters on various issues such as the genetic manipulation of non-human organisms and issues raised over 'celebrating diversity: genetic variation and disability'.

One of the themes of the book is that of the role of genes in our understanding of our lives. As Scully remarks we often talk of there being a 'gene for' something, and this invites the idea that who we are and what we do is *determined* by our genes. This needs to be resisted, as she notes. Even in the case of 'Scully's disease' which is so set up as to be *inevitable* if one has the gene (barring earlier death or gene therapy which stops an otherwise necessary process), what we do and how we respond are not. But generally so called genetic traits do not determine behaviour anyway – it's our own choice whether we accept or resist the tendencies that may exist. In any case, as she notes, in family relations it is the emotional relationships that count not the biological ones. Whether we think that there is a separate 'soul' to each of us or not, who we are has really little to do with what genes we have. Answering that of God in others, whether acknowledging our common-ness or the unique special-ness of each of us, is definitely not to be reduced to recognising that another being has the genes he or she has.

There is a wealth of ideas, facts and moral perspectives in this book. Anyone wanting a rich survey of the ethics of genetics will be well rewarded. If however the reader wants to get a clear line of moral argument, or an assessment of which moral ideas are preferable, she or he will be disappointed. In the final chapter on 'making moral evaluations' a picture of ethics as contextual, relational and rooted in emotions which endorse our intuitions is presented. In the context of a scepticism about the Enlightenment attempt to find a rationally based ethic, Scully reports about the Quaker responses: 'an observer might therefore have identified them as making indiscriminate use of justice ethics, principlism, Kantian deontology, rights theory, utilitarianism, feminists care ethics, casuistry or virtue ethics, all within the same moral evaluation' (p 211). She came to see that it was not her role to provide better philosophical arguments. Earlier on p. 24 she remarks, 'I emphasised there were no correct answers to any of these questions' – a good Quaker approach at one level for listening to and accepting each perspective as serious moral thought, but at another level it is I sense problematic for the whole idea of moral *truth*. But without a truth about these matters, all these views on genetics, sincere as they are, are merely the data for mutual accommodation. I sense that Scully does have a view about what it really is reasonable to think about genetic ethics, but for the most part she bites her lip. For me as a philosopher as well as a Quaker, this absence is a pity. For some other Friends, it may be thought a blessing. Anyway, do read the book.

Nigel Dower
University of Aberdeen, Scotland

Arweck, E. and Stringer, M. D. eds., *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual*, Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2002. pp. vi + 186, ISBN 1-902459-33-4, Paper, £19.95.