design of the universe came about, "design" understood as the laws of physics. Evolution cannot give us an explanation for the laws of physics, because evolution, like all scientific theories, must *presuppose* these laws. The matter and energy involved in evolutionary change follows or obeys the laws of physics in ways we have discovered in science. Evolution is not an explanation of these laws; rather, it operates according to them.

These are all serious problems for Dawkins' view, problems which are, in fact, fatal to his atheistic account of reality, yet he does not give them the attention an honest thinker should. Instead, he advocates totally speculative theories about how evolution produced religion as a by-product of something else that was somehow connected to our survival—another example of a scientist, who elsewhere insists that we should stick to the evidence and the facts, resorting to mumbo-jumbo to paper over problems in his position.

He does the same thing later, when returning to the question of where our universe came from, by appealing to the theories of Lee Smolin. Smolin has suggested that ours may be one of multiple universes, where daughter universes are born of parent universes coming out of black holes. Dawkins thinks this explanation is more probable than the God hypothesis! He does not address the question of how the whole process began, of where the first "parent" universe came from. He also suggests that objective moral values are probably biological, having their origins somehow in our evolutionary past. (It *must* be that way in his worldview, but of course no account of how this occurred is possible; instead, he must accept it as an article of faith.)

Talk of morality exposes another major problem for his view: free will. Free will is the root not only of moral decisions, but of responsibility, punishment, and democracy. This is a very thorny problem for secularists, who are faced with having to say that, since all of our actions are rooted in our brains and central nervous systems, which have been created by the random, impersonal process of evolution, then all of our "choices" should be explicable in terms of scientific causal laws operating on bits of matter. In short, there is no room in a naturalistic universe for free will. Many secularists realize that it is almost impossible to conceive of human life as we understand and experience it without believing in free will, and so the cost of giving it up is huge, and yet they can see no way to fit free will into a completely physical universe. On this major problem for his view, Dawkins is silent.

If Dawkins' book is anything to go by, it may tell us three things about the modern face of atheism: (1) atheists want to keep religion out of politics so that *their* worldview can have significant influence on society; (2) atheists can be just as dogmatic as religious believers, regarding themselves as "the enlightened ones," which (in a democratic context) can be dangerous; (3) atheists are not as interested in honestly debating their worldview as they make out.

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***A Merciful End: The Euthanasia Movement in Modern America,* by Ian Dowbiggin. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. 270 pages. Bibliography. Index.**

This is a history of the "organized" advocates of euthanasia; it is also "the first to chronicle" how Americans came to think as they do today about suffering, refusal of unwanted medical treatment, and "death with dignity" (xii). Based on files, archives, and interviews, this book chronicles "one of the most contentious yet neglected chapters in the history of American policy reform, a cautionary tale of a political, social, and cultural struggle" (xii).

This record teaches us that life is messy, that Americans are resilient, willing to forgive, and that "the complexity of the process leading to reform and policy change does not lend itself to a neat division between 'good guys' and 'bad guys'" (xiv).

A Merciful End does not focus on Karen Ann Quinlan as it develops a cultural history of the evolution in American values and beliefs about death and dying, as does Peter Filene's *In The Arms of Others* (1998). It does not trace the thinking of a group, as does Donald J. Childs' *Modernism and Eugenics: Woolf, Eliot, Yeats and the Culture of Degeneration* (2001). Dowbiggin is not interested in the "Dr. Death" motif found in novels such as H.G. Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) or Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). Nor does this book provide an account of changing values at the grassroots, like those found in twentieth-century movies, plays, novels, short stories, magazines, and newspapers.

This book does contain some surprises. For example, in its fourth chapter, "Riding a Great Wave, 1960–1975," we are told that "it was a pope, of all people, who truly revolutionized the national discussion over the right to die" (98). How? New York City's Francis Cardinal Spellman, "a warhorse in the Church's battles with the Euthanasia Society of America (ESA) and Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State [POAU]" was at the same time, "on a few topics"—the ethics of palliative care—not only "more flexible" but "refreshingly open to new ideas" (99). And it was through Spellman's influence that, on February 24, 1957, Pius XII took the occasion of an international conference of anesthesiologists to openly endorse an opinion that had been held for some time by Catholic moral theologians: that it is not unethical for patients or their representatives to refuse "extraordinary" medical treatment.

This was a brilliant maneuver that caught the supporters of euthanasia for compassionate, eugenic, or economic reasons—supporters like Joseph Fletcher—completely off guard, according to Dowbiggin. And it blunted their cause so much that for almost fifty years now it has failed to win the support of the majority of voting Americans (98–100).

Dowbiggin begins his history with euthanasia's recent origins. His first chapter looks at the attitudes of the nineteenth-century medical community and the nation at the time of the Civil War. He finds the roots of the modern euthanasia movement in the opinions of the Harvard-educated physician William Duncan McKim (1855–1935), whose widely read *Heredity & Human Progress* (1900), advocated killing severely impaired infants "out of pity." Dowbiggin locates these foundations in the stands taken about suicide and euthanasia by the disciples of Francis Galton and Charles Darwin who, as John Dewey realized in 1909, introduced "a mode of thinking that in the end was bound to transform the logic of knowledge, and hence the treatment of morals, politics, and religion" (8).

Dowbiggin states, "The two great revolutions before the 1960s that affected Americans' attitudes and expectations regarding euthanasia were the late-nineteenth-century growth of scientific knowledge and the coming of Progressivism (7)." Here his attention focuses on Robert G. Ingersoll (1833–1899), who, besides being a "positivist" and "agnostic," was the first American to use Darwin to defend a "right to euthanasia" (10). He was also (although the author does not mention it) a decorated Union soldier known to his friends as "Colonel Bob," Illinois attorney-general, arguably the most popular orator of his time, a great defender of the family, and a tireless champion of the separation of Church and state.

Sparingly and with precision, Dowbiggin covers the role that Progressives—the novelist Jack London, the socialist William J. Robinson, and Stanford sociologist E. A. Ross—played as champions of eugenics, euthanasia, and scientific naturalism.

This chapter also deals with the rise of the eugenics movement. And Dowbiggin reminds us that "by the 1920s, the United States had become perhaps the world's most eugenic nation" (15). It ends with an account of the highly publicized Bollinger case, in which the chief of staff at Chicago's German-American Hospital, Dr. Harry J. Haiselden, went before the nation's media to announce that rather than operate on Anna Bollinger, a badly deformed newborn, he would "merely stand by passively" and "let nature complete its bungled job" (23).

Dowbiggin might have given a little more space here to Charles Davenport, who established the Eugenics Record Office (ERO) in 1910; the role played by the Rockefeller Foundation, which set up the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Eugenics and Human Heredity in Berlin in 1929; Charles Brush, founder of the Brush Electric Company and the Brush Foundation for Race Betterment; Clarence Gamble, who started more than twenty sterilization clinics; and Harry Laughlin, the Iowa biology teacher who became superintendent at the ERO, and a key figure in assisting the American Breeders' Association, whose mission was to "emphasize the value of superior blood and the menace to society of inferior blood," to quote from Peter Quinn's "Race Cleansing in America" (*American Heritage,* February–March 2003).

This book's second chapter ("Breakthrough, 1920–1940") records the "dry years" when the Euthanasia Society of America was run out of a "broom closet" in New York, had fewer than five hundred members, and was kept alive by the publicity surrounding the suicides of prominent figures such as George Eastman and Charlotte Perkins Gilman (34–35). It chronicles the efforts of the Unitarian humanist and liberal modernist Charles Francis Potter, Inez Celia Philbrick, a physician in Lincoln, Nebraska, and faculty member at the University of Nebraska, and Ann Mitchell, the co-founder with Potter of the ESA, as they worked to change attitudes, policies, and laws by preaching the virtues of euthanasia.

"Stalemate, 1940–1960," Dowbiggin's third chapter, contains a valuable section on the rise of the euthanasia movement in Nazi Germany, and describes how news of the Nazi death camps was a severe blow to the advocates of active euthanasia in United States. Readers will find insightful comments on the values and power of the U.S. Catholic Church during these decades.

Being closer to my own times, and dealing with individuals and debates in which I was involved (if only on the perimeter), Dowbiggin's fourth and fifth chapters ("Riding a Great Wave, 1960–1975," and "Not That Simple, 1975–1990"), and his conclusion, "The 1990s and Beyond," were the most interesting to me. Each is highly illuminating and well paced. Dowbiggin focuses on the tensions within the pro-euthanasia organizations, the split between Concern for Dying and the Society for the Right to Die, and the "profound effect on the national right-to-die debate" of Derek Humphry and the Hemlock Society.

Readers will gain from what Dowbriggin says about ESA's role in the Quinlan and Cruzan cases; the association's attitudes toward Dr. Jack Kevorkian and AIDS; Ralph Mero's crusade to pass Initiative 119 in Washington State; and the efforts to pass Measure 16 in Oregon in 1994. Something might have been said about Barry Keene and his efforts to secure the passage of the California Natural Death Act (1976)—as well as more about the influence of the hospice movement; the "Frontline" programs about Nancy Cruzan on PBS television; Nat Henthoff, who alerted Americans to what was happening to severely impaired newborns in the nation's neonatal intensive care units; the quiet opposition of America's rabbis and Jewish communities; and Philip Nitschke, Australia's foremost right-to-die advocate. It would also be good to know to what extent U.S. attitudes were affected by news coming not only from the Netherlands but also from Australia (as well as Canada and England) about "living wills" and efforts to change end-of-life laws.

Dowbiggin is accurate in his remarks about the Catholic Church's "organized" opposition to euthanasia, although he does not cite letters, memos, or meeting agendas of groups such as the USCCB, Catholic Hospital Association, and Catholic Medical Association. Interviews with some of the leaders of the pro-life movement, like Richard Doerflinger at the USCCB, would have added to his narrative. Exactly why the U.S. Catholic leadership changed sides on the matter of living wills, after years of open opposition, is a another gap. Likewise, Dowbiggin might have explained why, besides a large number of bishops, Catholic bioethicists such as Kevin O'Rourke (St.

Louis University), Kevin Wildes (Georgetown University), and Richard McCormick (Notre Dame) openly defended letting Nancy Cruzan die.

The author fails to give Forrest Hatfield, Joseph Fletcher's first wife of sixty years, her due, but his portrait of Fletcher's leadership in advancing euthanasia is vivid, while his comments about the impact of Fletcher's *Morals and Medicine* demonstrate the sometimes forgotten truth that timely books, authored by articulate, charismatic individuals not afraid of the media, will have significant influence on public opinion.

Fletcher, arguably the "father of modern bioethics," was a colorful figure at ethics meetings and conferences during the 1970s and 1980s, with his bow ties and sparkling eyes, his energy and wit. It is not hard to picture him telling the Society for the Right to Die in 1986 that "the origin is the future" (159). Dowbiggin's remarks make us think of other bestselling writers of those same years—Michael Novak, Hans Kung, Teilhard de Chardin, William Bennett, Carl Sagan, Rachel Carson, Allan Bloom, Harvey Cox—writers who influenced millions not because of their skills (necessarily), but because what they wrote was better equipped to ride the spiritual, political, and cultural tides of the times.

What the author says about Americans' reactions to Jack Kevorkian's killing of Janet Adkins in 1990 or to the "news coming out of the Netherlands in 1991" (169) bears witness to the validity of W. D. Ross's astute insights into morality, namely, that (a) "everyday morality" is grounded in the "average" person's sense of decency, the "common" person's anger or hurt, for instance, when he or she sees a person physically injuring a dog or a child, and (b) there is a distinct—if shadowy, hard to articulate—difference between "the right" and "the good."

Because of these convictions, the majority of Americans, in spite of their cultural, political, and religious differences, have remained consistently united in opposing "active euthanasia" for eugenic or economic reasons, even while they have been sympathetic toward physicians who, because of their compassion, have assisted in the killing of terminally ill adults or severely handicapped newborns.

Dowbiggin's lessons:

> Whatever the fate of the euthanasia movement, there is no denying how resourceful its advocates have been in crafting their message to fit America's changing times. (176)

Talk of a right to die raises troubling questions (177). And

> The history of euthanasia in America reminds us that, despite a century of intensive debate and passionate political battles, these questions remains largely unanswered." (177)

I highly recommend this book because of the way it provides order, context, and sequence and because of its balance and fair-mindedness. It also sets an excellent historical context for earlier works, including William H. Colby's *Long Goodbye: The Deaths of Nancy Cruzan* (2002), Diane Paul's *Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present* (1995), and Sue Woodman's *Last Rights: The Struggle over the Right to Die* (1998).

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***Midwife for Souls: Spiritual Care for the Dying*, by Kathy Kalina. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006. 146 pages. Appendices.**

Kathy Kalina is good at telling stories because she is good at listening to them. As a certified hospice and palliative nurse, she has paid close attention to what her patients, their families, her peers, and her God have had to say to her. Not infrequently, it seems what the Good Lord has recommended is (1) talk less, and listen more closely to your patients, their families, your coworkers, and (2) trust me.

The result, *Midwife for Souls: Spiritual Care for the Dying*, has the ring of truth and