

Dilemmas in Bio-Medical Ethics: Playing God or Doing Good?

21A.302J/WGS.271J

Fall 2013

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Paper Topic #1

Byron Good and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good both describe the way in which American biomedicine is a materialist, scientific endeavor that not only constructs its object, the body, through particular techniques and practices, but also constructs physicians in a professional realm that possesses its own moral order.

Claire L. Wendland affirms, “[a] substantial and high-quality body of research on the process of medical socialization ... seems to argue strongly for the existence—and persistence—of a durable moral order in medicine” (21). Wendland also argues, however, “the values that underlie medical science are far more culturally specific than previously understood, and therefore not consistently and inevitably reproduced across locations where medicine is taught and practiced” (23-24).

In your ~2500 word paper (not including notes and the bibliography), compare and contrast the medical socialization processes (and structural conditions of practice) between the U.S. and Malawi, as described in the works of Good, Good, and Wendland. As you write, discuss to what extent biomedicine is a “cultural product” or a “culture-neutral technology” (Wendland 2010: 8).

Use a standard citation style with (author date: page) citations in parenthesis (as above) and give the full reference in a bibliography. Draw upon the introductory readings you have been studying to support your argument. Use the terms that we have been discussing if appropriate (i.e. the “three bodies,” “medical/clinical gaze,” “clinician competence,” the “professional moral voice,” “habitus,” etc.).

Good luck!

ECJ

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