



Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides)

By Leon Kass

Download now

Read Online →

Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) By Leon Kass

At the onset of "Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity," Leon Kass gives us a status report on where we stand today: "Human nature itself lies on the operating table, ready for alteration, for eugenic and psychic 'enhancement,' for wholesale redesign. In leading laboratories, academic and industrial, new creators are confidently amassing their powers and quietly honing their skills, while on the street their evangelists are zealously prophesying a posthuman future. For anyone who cares about preserving our humanity, the time has come for paying attention." Trained as a medical doctor and biochemist, Dr. Kass has become one of our most provocative thinkers on bioethical issues. Now, in this brave and searching book, he also establishes himself as a prophetic voice summoning us to think deeply about the new biomedical technologies threatening to take us back to the future envisioned by Aldous Huxley in "Brave New World." As in Huxley's dystopia, where life has been smoothed out by genetic manipulation, psychoactive drugs and high tech amusement, our own accelerating efforts to master reproduction and genetic endowment, to retard aging, and to conquer illness, imperfection, and death itself are animated by our most humane and progressive aspirations. But we are walking too quickly down the road to physical and psychological utopia, Kass believes, without pausing to assess the potential damage to our humanity from this brave new biology. In a series of meditations on cloning, embryo research, the human genome project, the sale of organs, and the assault on mortality itself, Kass evaluates the ongoing effort to break down the natural boundaries given us and to remake the human body into an instrument of our will. What does it mean to treat nascent human life as raw material to be exploited? What does it mean to blur the line between procreation and manufacture? What are the proper limits to this project for the remaking of human nature? These are the questions we should be asking to prevent runaway scientism with its utopian longings from reshaping humankind in the image of our own choosing. Kass believes that technology has done and will continue to do wonders for our health and longevity and that we have much to be thankful for. But there is more at stake in the biological revolution than saving life and avoiding death. We must also strive to protect the ideas and practices that give us dignity and keep us human. "Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity"

challenges us to confront the posthuman future that may await us by thinking deeply about the life and death issues we face today.

 [Download Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challen ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Chall ...pdf](#)

Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides)

By Leon Kass

Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) By Leon Kass

At the onset of "Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity," Leon Kass gives us a status report on where we stand today: "Human nature itself lies on the operating table, ready for alteration, for eugenic and psychic 'enhancement,' for wholesale redesign. In leading laboratories, academic and industrial, new creators are confidently amassing their powers and quietly honing their skills, while on the street their evangelists are zealously prophesying a posthuman future. For anyone who cares about preserving our humanity, the time has come for paying attention." Trained as a medical doctor and biochemist, Dr. Kass has become one of our most provocative thinkers on bioethical issues. Now, in this brave and searching book, he also establishes himself as a prophetic voice summoning us to think deeply about the new biomedical technologies threatening to take us back to the future envisioned by Aldous Huxley in "Brave New World." As in Huxley's dystopia, where life has been smoothed out by genetic manipulation, psychoactive drugs and high tech amusement, our own accelerating efforts to master reproduction and genetic endowment, to retard aging, and to conquer illness, imperfection, and death itself are animated by our most humane and progressive aspirations. But we are walking too quickly down the road to physical and psychological utopia, Kass believes, without pausing to assess the potential damage to our humanity from this brave new biology. In a series of meditations on cloning, embryo research, the human genome project, the sale of organs, and the assault on mortality itself, Kass evaluates the ongoing effort to break down the natural boundaries given us and to remake the human body into an instrument of our will. What does it mean to treat nascent human life as raw material to be exploited? What does it mean to blur the line between procreation and manufacture? What are the proper limits to this project for the remaking of human nature? These are the questions we should be asking to prevent runaway scientism with its utopian longings from reshaping humankind in the image of our own choosing. Kass believes that technology has done and will continue to do wonders for our health and longevity and that we have much to be thankful for. But there is more at stake in the biological revolution than saving life and avoiding death. We must also strive to protect the ideas and practices that give us dignity and keep us human. "Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity" challenges us to confront the posthuman future that may await us by thinking deeply about the life and death issues we face today.

Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) By Leon Kass Bibliography

- Rank: #388950 in Books
- Published on: 2004-01-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.08" h x .92" w x 6.08" l, 1.03 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 297 pages

 [Download Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challen ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Chall ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) By Leon Kass

Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

For many people, the brave new world of biotechnology promises a utopian society where we will be free from diseases because of our manipulation of the genetic code. According to Kass, chairman of President Bush's Council on Bioethics, this vision of the future involves dehumanization, because the fundamental principles of cloning and stem cell research involve altering our human nature so dramatically that we are no longer human but posthuman. Fundamental to our human nature, Kass contends, is our human dignity, "our awareness of need, limitation, and mortality to craft a way of being that has engagement, depth, beauty, virtue, and meaning." Modern biology, he argues, has persuaded us that our embodiment is a fact of life to be overcome through germline manipulation or other biotechnological techniques. Through stimulating examinations of genetic research, cloning and active euthanasia, Kass makes a case that, in spite of its many promises, biotechnology has left humanity out of its equation, often debasing human dignity rather than celebrating it. In the end, he calls for a new bioethics and a new biology that will provide "an ethical account of human flourishing based on a biological account of human life as lived, not just physically, but psychically, socially and spiritually." Although some will object to Kass's importing the spiritual into the biological, his cry will strike others as a clarion call to protect human freedom from the excesses of biotechnology. Still others will be wary of his influence on the present administration.

Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From The New England Journal of Medicine

Leon Kass is the Addie Clark Harding Professor on the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago and a founding fellow of the Hastings Center, the nation's first bioethics research center. Given these credentials, when Kass speaks, we should listen, particularly since August 2001, when President George W. Bush appointed him to chair the President's Council on Bioethics. It is not that one expects the administration to turn to this council for moral advice, but rather that Kass was chosen to vet its membership to ensure its compatibility with the President's political stands on the matters submitted to it -- most notably, on the propriety of stem-cell research. Thus, Kass's *Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity* is not merely another theoretical disquisition on bioethics but, rather, in my opinion, expresses the administration's likely positions on issues central to medicine and medical research. For that reason alone, it warrants close reading. What one discovers is disquieting. This is what Kass asserts about moral life in the United States and the role of science in its decay: It is hard to claim respect for human life in the laboratory in a society that does not respect human life in the womb. It is hard to talk about the meaning of sexuality and embodiment in a culture that treats sex increasingly as a sport and has trivialized gender, marriage, and procreation. It is hard to oppose federal funding of baby-making in a society that increasingly expects the federal government to satisfy all demands, that -- contrary to so much evidence of waste, incompetence, and corruption -- continues to believe that only Uncle Sam can do it. During the past few decades, we have heard claims of a right to health or health care, a right to education or employment, a right to privacy (embracing also a right to abort or to enjoy pornography, or to commit suicide or sodomy), a right to dance naked, a right to clean air, a right to be born, even a right not to have been born. In this atmosphere, we hear much about the ultimate rights claim, a "right to die." How persuasive are these allegations? The waste, incompetence, and corruption that brought us Enron, WorldCom, and Tyco occurred in the private, not the public, sector and arose from lack of government regulation. Right-to-lifers (professing reverence for life in the womb), not laboratory scientists, have assassinated physicians and health workers. Church officers, not federal officials or biologists, have covered up for pedophiles. Our society is imperfect, but most Americans are remarkably decent folks. Why, according to Kass, has the quality of moral life deteriorated to such an extent? His book traces the "dehumanization" to the very ideology of biologic science, not merely its techniques: The deepest threat to human dignity lies not in the techniques of biotechnology but in the underlying science itself, in an

"objectified" treatment of life that fails to do justice to its subject. The sciences not only fail to provide their own standards for human conduct; their findings cause us to doubt the truth and the ground of those standards we have held and, more or less, still tacitly hold. The challenge goes even further than the notorious case of evolution versus Biblical religion. Is there any elevated view of human life and goodness that is proof against the belief that man is just a collection of molecules, an accident on the stage of evolution? . . . Does not the scientific world view make us skeptical about the existence of any natural rights and therefore doubtful of the wisdom of those who've risked their all to defend them? If survival and pleasure are the only possible principles that nature does not seem to reject, does not all courage and devotion to honor look like folly? . . . We are quite frankly adrift without a compass. Can contemporary bioethics save us? Not a chance. Its theories, based on analytic philosophy, are "hyper-rational." The bioethicist Kass most admires is the late Paul Ramsey, professor of Christian ethics at Princeton, whose principles were based on religious faith. But to build on faith in a pluralistic society is to build on sand. As John Locke noted four centuries ago, "Every church is orthodox to itself; to others, erroneous or heretical." Kass's book dismisses the rationalists who disguise themselves as bioethicists in these woeful times of ours: "Expert" professors of ethics or bioethics are . . . unequal to these tasks. They are tasks, rather, for families and for communities of worship, where cultural practices enable the deepest insights of the mind to become embodied in the finest habits of the heart. Not for nothing does the Good Book say that the beginning of wisdom is the fear [awe, reverence] of the Lord. The theoretical and rationalistic approach to ethics has grave weaknesses. . . . Though originally intended to improve our deeds, the reigning practice of ethics, if truth be told, has, at best, improved our speech. Would that it had improved speech! Language is not neutral; words have connotations. Labeling stem-cell research "human cloning" summons images of scientific Frankenstein's creating monsters. Call the process "nuclear transfer" (introduction of the nucleus of an adult somatic cell into an enucleated egg allowed to multiply for no more than 14 days), and the project will hardly raise an eyebrow. Label it "stem-cell research," recall that the 100,000 or more fertilized eggs now in a frozen limbo are slated for destruction, and compassion urges their use for research to combat degenerative diseases. Kass insists that he is not a Luddite. Notwithstanding his disavowal, what other than a Luddite should we call a man who would ban not only stem-cell research, but also reproductive medicine itself? He writes: even the benevolent uses of humanitarian technologies often have serious unintended and undesired consequences. . . . The ability to intervene technologically in the human body and mind brings vexing dilemmas, anxious fears and sorrowful consequences -- about abortion, genetic manipulation, organ transplantation, euthanasia, and use and abuse of drugs and worst of all . . . the conquest of nature for the relief of man's estate could lead to severe dehumanization -- in C.S. Lewis's words, to "the abolition of man." We learn to prevent all genetic disease, but only by turning procreation into manufacture. We have safe and shame-free sex, but little romance or lasting intimacy. We live much longer, but can't remember why we wanted to. Kass professes to "sympathize with the plight of infertile couples," but it is difficult to discern anything resembling sympathy in his moral fulminations about extracorporeal fertilization: Any honest biologist . . . must be inclined, at least on first glance, to the view that a human life begins at fertilization. . . . The most sensible policy is to treat the early embryo as a pre-viable fetus, with constraints imposed on early embryo research at least as great as those on fetal research. . . . The need for a respectable boundary defining protectable human life cannot be overstated. The current boundaries, gerrymandered for the sake of abortion -- namely, birth or viability -- may now satisfy both women's liberation and the United States Supreme Court and may someday satisfy even a future pope, but they will not survive the coming of more sophisticated technologies for growing life in the laboratory. "Gerrymandering" by the Supreme Court has reduced the rate of death from abortion by 90 percent during the past two decades. Human lives outside the womb are less important to this philosopher than the Court's lack of precision about the boundaries of viability. He goes on to lament in vitro fertilization: "What is the significance of divorcing human generation from human sexuality, precisely for the meaning of our bodily natures as male and female, as both gendered and engendering?" As much as a third of infertility, Kass tells us, results from tubal obstruction secondary to gonococcal pelvic inflammatory disease. This belief leads to a savage comment: leaving aside any question about whether it makes sense for a federally-funded baby to be the wage of aphrodisiac indiscretion, one can only look with wonder at a society that would have Petri dish babies before it has found a vaccine against gonorrhoea. . . . Much as I sympathize with the plight of infertile couples, I do not believe they are entitled to

the provision of a child at public expense, especially now, especially at this cost, especially by a procedure that involves also so many moral difficulties. Kass then adds, with disgust: "A few years ago an egalitarian Boston-based group concerned with infertility managed to obtain private funding to pay for artificial insemination for women on welfare!" If Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity were simply another jeremiad about the decline of morality, there would be little reason for concern; as a blueprint for federal policy, it is alarming. It is not accidental that "the pursuit of happiness" is not to be found in the book's title: Kass elevates suffering to a moral virtue. Where moral analysis is called for, he provides moral exhortation. We are given cant, not Kant. *Leon Eisenberg, M.D.*

Copyright © 2003 Massachusetts Medical Society. All rights reserved. The New England Journal of Medicine is a registered trademark of the MMS.

From [Booklist](#)

Bioethicist Kass, who left physiological biochemistry when cloning arrived on the scene, offers an almost airtight philosophical argument that draws heavily on slippery slope thinking to support his conservative perspective. He doesn't believe that individuals or groups can exert sufficient restraint once physician-assisted suicide, pain-management to the point at which death might occur, and research on brain-stem cells enter the picture. He argues that problematic experience with physician-assisted suicide in the Netherlands shows the inevitable results once that practice has been legitimized, that beyond a certain point pain-management destroys human dignity, and that the use of stem cells is equivalent to encouraging abortion. He draws attention to the breakdown of trust between patient and physician incumbent upon allowing his three bugaboo procedures, and he raises questions concerning research, practice, and policy that should be thoroughly debated. That this book will, as it is intended to, stimulate intense discussion may be an understatement. *William Beatty*

Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary Alexander:

Now a day individuals who Living in the era everywhere everything reachable by match the internet and the resources in it can be true or not require people to be aware of each information they get. How people have to be smart in having any information nowadays? Of course the reply is reading a book. Reading a book can help folks out of this uncertainty Information especially this Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) book as this book offers you rich details and knowledge. Of course the information in this book hundred pct guarantees there is no doubt in it you probably know this.

Tara Carlson:

The book untitled Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) contain a lot of information on the item. The writer explains your girlfriend idea with easy way. The language is very straightforward all the people, so do not worry, you can easy to read it. The book was compiled by famous author. The author gives you in the new time of literary works. It is easy to read this book because you can please read on your smart phone, or gadget, so you can read the book in anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can wide open their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice study.

Anthony Tipton:

In this age globalization it is important to someone to find information. The information will make someone to understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information better to share. You can find a lot of sources to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You can view that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. Often the book that recommended for you is Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) this guide consist a lot of the information in the condition of this world now. This book was represented just how can the world has grown up. The words styles that writer value to explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some investigation when he makes this book. This is why this book appropriate all of you.

Marivel Tye:

Is it you who having spare time in that case spend it whole day simply by watching television programs or just resting on the bed? Do you need something new? This Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) can be the solution, oh how comes? A fresh book you know. You are consequently out of date, spending your extra time by reading in this brand-new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these books have than the others?

**Download and Read Online Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity:
The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) By Leon Kass
#05AX8HEK3MJ**

Read Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) By Leon Kass for online ebook

Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) By Leon Kass Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) By Leon Kass books to read online.

Online Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) By Leon Kass ebook PDF download

Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) By Leon Kass Doc

Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) By Leon Kass Mobipocket

Life Liberty & the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge for Bioethics (Encounter BroadSides) By Leon Kass EPub