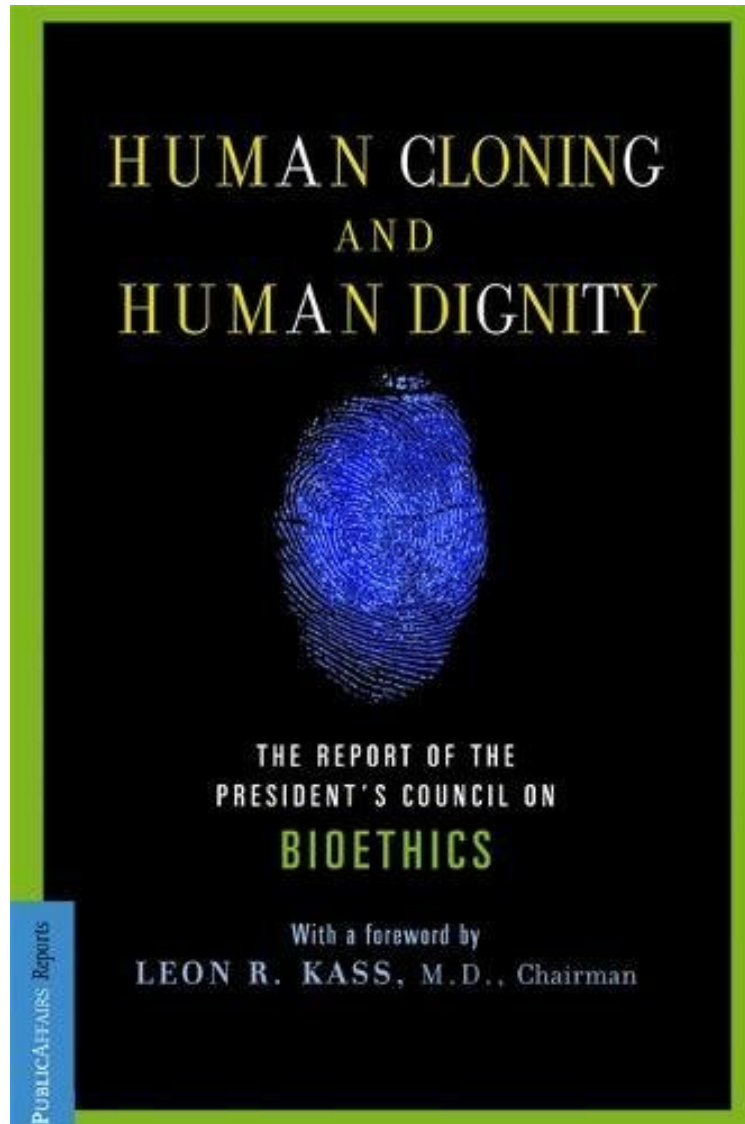


(Free read ebook) Human Cloning and Human Dignity: The Report of the President's Council On Bioethics

Human Cloning and Human Dignity: The Report of the President's Council On Bioethics

Leon R. Kass

*ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#2043732 in Books PublicAffairs 2002-10 2002-10-22Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x .95 x 5.50l, 1.14 #File Name: 1586481762400 pages | File size: 67.Mb

Leon R. Kass : Human Cloning and Human Dignity: The Report of the President's Council On Bioethics before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Human Cloning and Human Dignity: The Report of the President's Council On Bioethics:

5 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A collection of opinions with no firm ethical foundation.By Dr. Lee D. CarlsonThe subject of human cloning has gained considerable press recently, due mainly to claims made by various

individuals in successfully producing a human clone. These claims have remained unjustified, due to the refusal of these individuals to permit their scientific verification. The successful birth of a healthy human clone would be a major achievement, both from a scientific standpoint, and from an ethical one. It would give humans yet another option of how they are to reproduce themselves, and far from demeaning or devaluing human life, would actually celebrate it. There is no question that the first human clones will be viewed as somewhat of a novelty by many, but like all other humans born as the result of advances in technology, such as in vitro fertilization, they will be accepted as another unique and valuable addition to the human species, deserving of every legal right and every measure of respect. Having unique fingerprints does not distinguish us as individuals, only our achievements do. It is the total contributions we have made in the entire span of our lives that distinguishes us as individuals. But Leon Kass, the main author of this book, and the chairman of the President's Council on Bioethics, has chosen the fingerprint as its focal point. Indeed, in the first sentence in the forward, he states that "the fingerprint has rich biological and moral significance", and that it "signifies our unique personal identity." It is ironic perhaps that he has chosen to address the issue of human cloning by beginning with a purely physical characterization of human individuality. Why worry about how different we are from others anyway? If a handful of clones, all with the same fingerprints, make brilliant contributions to humanity, should we not celebrate this? And if a physical attribute is needed to differentiate us as individuals, then should not human clones be regarded as unique by reference to the way they came into this world, i.e. by asexual reproduction? The main virtue of this book is that it omits the vituperation that frequently accompanies discussion of genetic engineering and human cloning. It addresses the main issues calmly, without hype and without personal attacks against those who advocate the genetic engineering of or cloning of human beings. It does however present a very narrow view of the ethical philosophy behind the technology of genetic engineering. The authors cannot seem to find a sound ethical framework in which to speak. Utilitarian considerations behind reproductive cloning for example are abandoned, and are to be replaced with a "different frame of reference". The Council Members (interesting use of capital letters here) though never articulate in detail just what this ethical "frame of reference" is, but only seek a "deeper meaning" in that act of human procreation, which in their view will then give meaning to the raising of children. The reproductive cloning of humans has, interestingly, a certain shock value for the council members (no caps are needed). It, to them, is the "most unusual, consequential, and most morally important" of the ways of bringing children into the world. Why indeed is this so? If the council members were suddenly to find several children in the world that were brought into the world as a result of cloning, would they find these children that much different than any other children born as the result of "ordinary" reproduction? The actions taken to produce cloned children are certainly different than taken to produce "ordinary" children, but will the children themselves be any different in terms of their humanity? Cloned children will play in the sand box, get into fights with each other, face the same struggles, and require the same kind of nurturing as any other children. The moral significance of the actions taken to voluntarily produce children shrink in comparison to their value as humans. It is perhaps ironic that the council members believe that sexual procreation gives each human being a "sense of individual identity". They inadvertently express a belief that genetic structure is primarily responsible for making humans unique as individuals. Genes and not life experiences and the accumulated wisdom obtained from these experiences are believed by the council members to have great weight in determining our uniqueness as individuals. They don't believe in total genetic determinism though, as further analysis of the book reveals, but their emphasis on the genetic makeup is actually quite surprising given their anti-cloning stance. It is usually the technophilic pro-cloning groups who over-emphasize the role of genetics. One can safely bet though that both the council members and these groups would forget their differences if they saw a lovely cloned human child in a crib, one that is deserving of all the warmth and care that should be given to any other human on this planet. Stem cell research has complicated the cloning debate, and with the announcement last month of promising work involving pluripotent human embryonic stem cell cells derived from a cloned blastocyst, and with the reorganization of the President's Council of Bioethics to make it more anti-cloning and anti-stem cell in its beliefs, one can certainly expect much more contention in the near future. Scientists, geneticists, and genetic engineers must make sure their work and its ethical justification are not left to the sometimes myopic and unjustified opinions such as can be found in this book. The members of the Council of Bioethics do not speak for everyone, and any authority regarding scientific or ethical matters imputed to them is incorrect. Any advice they give is purely their own personal opinion, a result of their own biases and personal history. As such it does not have moral or legal binding for anyone.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. greatBy mia kingi ordered this book for class. it was all that i expected. i would highly recommend this book to anyone.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A balanced considerate report with strong reasons for opposing human cloningBy Shalom FreedmanThere is a great deal of information provided in this report on the subject of human cloning. There is also a fundamental argument at the heart of the discussion concerning whether human cloning is advisable or not. I tend to agree with the line of thinking of the Chairman of the Commission Leon Kass, who basically argues that human cloning is incommensurate with human dignity, and the future benefit of mankind. At the heart of such a perception is a belief that limitation is wisely built into the human situation. And that an opening up of 'reproduction' in this way will ultimately undermine our common humanity. 'Cloning' would probably lead to a promotion of a false hope of immortality on the part of those who could

afford to have themselves have themselves cloned many times. It will lead to an undermining of our whole sense of family life, and human relations.

Few avenues of scientific inquiry raise more thorny ethical questions than the cloning of human beings, a radical way to control our DNA. In August 2001, in conjunction with his decision to permit limited federal funding for stem-cell research, President George W. Bush created the President's Council on Bioethics to address the ethical ramifications of biomedical innovation. Over the past year the Council, whose members comprise an all-star team of leading scientists, doctors, ethicists, lawyers, humanists, and theologians, has discussed and debated the pros and cons of cloning, whether to produce children or to aid in scientific research. This book is its insightful and thought-provoking report. The questions the Council members confronted do not have easy answers, and they did not seek to hide their differences behind an artificial consensus. Rather, the Council decided to allow each side to make its own best case, so that the American people can think about and debate these questions, which go to the heart of what it means to be a human being. Just as the dawn of the atomic age created ethical dilemmas for the United States, cloning presents us with similar quandaries that we are sure to wrestle with for decades to come.

From Library Journal Established in late 2001 by President Bush to consider the ethical ramifications of biomedical research, the President's Council on Bioethics is made up of 17 scholars representing medicine, law, genetics, government, international studies, psychiatry, philosophy, and ethics. Its first report focuses on three major issues: cloning to produce children (reproductive uses), cloning for biomedical research (therapeutic uses), and various public policies that could be enacted. The council members were divided on their recommendations regarding human cloning, so both a majority and a minority opinion are presented here. While both groups favored a ban on human cloning to produce children, they disagreed in the areas of therapeutic research; ten members recommended a four-year moratorium on cloning for biomedical research, while seven urged the regulated use of cloned embryos for biomedical research. Along with brief background information on human cloning and a discussion of terminology related to the field, the report also includes a glossary and a bibliography. In addition, many of the members have included a personal statement that clarifies their own specific viewpoint. Although the prepublication version of this report is available on the web, the reasonably priced paper copy fairly represents the many opinions and complexities related to human cloning, making it a worthy purchase for convenience and archival stability. Highly recommended for all libraries. Tina Neville, Univ. of South Florida at St. Petersburg Lib. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. About the Author Leon R. Kass, M.D. is the Addie Clark Harding Professor at the University of Chicago, and the Hertog Fellow at American Enterprise Institute. A nationally renowned bioethicist, he has written extensively on biology and human affairs; his books include *Toward a More Natural Science*, *The Hungry Soul*, and *The Ethics of Human Cloning* (with James Q. Wilson). He lives in Washington, D.C.