



Life's Dominion

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One of the country's most distinguished scholars presents a brilliantly original approach to the twin dilemmas of abortion and euthanasia, showing why they arouse such volcanic controversy and how we as a society can reconcile our values of life and individual liberty.

Life's Dominion Details

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From Reader Review Life's Dominion for online ebook

Samuel Brown says

The classic elaboration of the liberal (ie focus on individual as locus of meaning) account of the sanctity of life. He argues a few things, some more persuasively than others but all with great care and power. First, abortion should be seen as a religious act (because it expresses one's specific views about the balance between natural/divine and human sources of life's sanctity) hence a religious freedom protected by the bill of rights. He makes a similar argument about euthanasia, especially for demented people, although he also advances the argument that we have "critical" interests in the shape of our lives (roughly, moral convictions about what our lives ought to look like, in sum) that provide a mandate for honoring precommitments refusing medical treatments in the event of certain states of disability and/or diminished consciousness. I found myself disagreeing with him at many different points but pleased that he had actually made an argument that was elegant and mostly internally consistent. The book is required reading to be informed on the abortion and euthanasia debates, even if you find the axioms of his arguments sometimes rather tangled and less persuasive than he hopes.

Cowology says

Dworkin's stuff is just very, very clear.

Pollo says

Espectacular ensayo. Pienses lo que pienses sobre el aborto o la eutanasia. Cambia tu mirada de ver las cosas. O al menos, conmigo lo hizo.

Kamala says

Dworkin spends a bit too much time going over the same principles -- it's like he intended for the book to be read in isolated chapters rather than as a whole. The abortion section is a bit repetitive in that sense (yes, we get it, life's intrinsic value), but still useful, especially if you have trouble reconciling peoples' views on abortion and the sanctity of life. But what makes this book really worth reading is the euthanasia section, which is fantastic.

Daniel Hageman says

An overall well-balanced approach of philosophical and judicial considerations when making cases from either side regarding both abortion and euthanasia. This sort of perspective is a must read for those that feel passionately about the issues, as it effectively highlights the juxtaposition of rhetoric surrounding debate and the inherent beliefs that people actually hold.

Leonardo says

...si nos alejamos del estado actual del derecho constitucional estadounidense y tratamos la libertad religiosa como parte de la independencia ética, la posición liberal se vuelve obligatoria. Lo mismo sucede con la igualdad de género en el matrimonio. He hablado en favor de estas opiniones en otra obra y, aunque incluso esta declaración sumaria puede generar consternación, no repetiré aquí mis argumentos ni los ampliaré.

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Dworkin escribe en lenguaje técnico eso de que "con la legalización del aborto nadie te obliga a abortar". Demasiado basado en la idea de que el feto no es sujeto de derecho, para mi gusto.

Michelle says

"Life's Dominion" is basically an argument for individual moral and legal liberty to intentionally destroy innocent human life. A more apt title might be "The Individual's Dominion Over Life."

I would not recommend reading this book no matter what your stance is on the topics of abortion and euthanasia. If you agree with Dworkin, you may be blinded by your beliefs to embrace his skewed logic -- and if you disagree, you will get a bad impression of the actual arguments his side could give.

Marie says

An easy philosophical read, this book changed the way I looked at life- I say this as a new student to realm of philosophy and bioethics.

It touched upon controversies such as abortion and death, and how the "sacredness" of human life should affect the choices we make in regards to these controversies.

All in all, it was an interesting read.

Krystle says

A brilliant piece of work that near perfectly articulates the life sanctity argument from both sides. Dworkin definitely challenged my views on abortion and made me confront my reasoning behind riding the fence on my opinion. His breakdown of both arguments, the reasons behind them, and the reasons why people tend to not even understand their own positioning on them, helped me to examine and change/re-affirm my standpoint of several other issues of similar importance. A really delicious piece with much re-read value.

Sarah says

I read this book for my Constitutional Law class, and therefore it took me awhile to get through because forced reading reduces my motivation to absolutely 0%.

Once I got into it, however, Dworkin makes some very well thought out arguments and analyzes the deeply-rooted beliefs that many of us hold. He argues for liberal abortion and euthanasia laws, relates the two issues together, and cites the Constitution throughout the book. I found his writing to be more accessible than many other philosophers, but perhaps that is also why I was left very unconvinced by many of his points. I agreed with almost all of his conclusions, but I thought his logic was flawed in many cases, particularly in his analysis of why our Constitution should be viewed as fluid and why we should restrict the autonomy of the demented. His strongest arguments were of course about abortion, as that was the primary focus of the book, but I wished he'd delved deeper into the euthanasia part of the spectrum (and not just because that's what my term paper is about).

The end of the book also left me very unconvinced, as the last chapter is on the rights of Alzheimers patients. To be fair, this is a very difficult issue, but his argument was unclear and he also did not acknowledge the incredibly slow decline that demented people encounter. It is easy for him to claim that a completely demented person should not be free to exercise their right to autonomy, but it is much more difficult to pinpoint the exact timeframe in which a person no longer has the capacity to know what is in their own best interest. He tries to address this issue but his argument, while logically sound, is realistically flawed. Overall, the book certainly made me think and it introduced some great questions. I just think the answers he gave to many of the questions were convoluted and flawed.

Adam Lubin says

An interesting book that, at the very least, makes an attempt at clarifying the issue. Plenty would argue with the distinctions Dworkin makes, and I do, in the end, find him to be in line with the majority of 'liberal' writers who discuss abortion, in their inability take somewhat more seriously the pro-life position. Nonetheless, a rhetorically well argued book.

Sarah Hackley says

I found Dworkin's argument both compelling and refreshing, though it assumes an inherent sacredness I don't believe exists and that he failed to prove.
