FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Science

The Body Politic: The Battle Over Science in America
Jonathan D. Moreno
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Historians will agree that 'progress' is as American as apple pie. What constitutes progress, of course, is always a point of contention. In *The Body Politic*, Jonathan D. Moreno examines the attitudes Americans hold about modern science's treatment of the human body. "Just as the twentieth century was the age of physics, the twenty-first is the age of biology," says Moreno, and for some, the boundaries scientists are pushing in such areas as fertility treatments, stem cell research, chimera, and end-of-life decisions raise moral concerns. For others, these boundaries are the modern 'frontier' that can provide solutions for human ailments and capture the imagination of our nation.

Moreno, a professor of bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania and editor of Center for American Progress' online magazine, showcases his expertise in this book. Throughout the discussion, it's clear he has his finger on the cultural and historical contexts in which these issues have arisen. Like any grounded academic, Moreno spends the first two chapters giving a rich narrative of the roots of our relationship with science. Our love affair began with our founding fathers embracing Enlightenment values of free speech and tolerance; they saw science as the most reliable method of obtaining knowledge. Moreno follows the growth of this seed through two centuries of political and cultural development, hovering on certain themes such as the emergence of American pragmatism and progressivism. By the end of the book, the reader is clear on how we got here—to a point, Moreno postulates, where many in the American public are not confident that the government can control the 'new biology' of the twenty-first century.

Indeed, even the government may not believe that it can fully understand or control the potentially negative effects of scientific breakthroughs. With so many technologies available to manipulate conception, death, and treating disease, the nation is asking itself about what is now 'natural,' and moral, and what is overly moralistic. The responses to these concerns are varied and do not fall along the conventional right-left spectrum. Moreno explains that people on both

sides of the aisle are expressing concern for unrestricted use of bioscience for different reasons, and those who support the unfettered flourishing of this research often come from unconventional places.

As may be expected from this author's pedigree, *The Body Politic* is heavy on academic theory, and some chapters may be too theoretical for a lay audience. However, it is an excellent addition to any syllabus examining bioethics, or for any layperson willing to trudge through philosophical prose. Regardless, the book improves as the reader progresses through it, leaves us with more questions at the end than the beginning, and even provides a surprise. Moreno challenges the notion that our greatest concern is the manipulation of living cells. Instead, he points to the blurring of lines between human and machine as the true threat that no one is yet talking about.

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