



Respect for Life in Medicine, Philosophy, and the Law (Thalheimer Lectures)

Professor Owsei Temkin

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The idea of respect for life has long been a central notion in the scheme of values of Western civilization. Despite many lapses in practice, this respect is what sets much of Western civilization apart from other civilizations. Recently, there has been a marked increase of interest in questions of medical ethics, both on the part of the general public and on the part of scholars in philosophy, medicine, and law. We find the liberal, utilitarian outlook becoming more widespread, and in conflict with the traditional, more humane idea of respect for life. This principle is itself obscure and controversial. The three contributors to this volume approach the idea of respect for life from different perspectives -- the history of medicine, moral philosophy, and criminal law -- seeking in different ways to shed light upon its meaning.

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