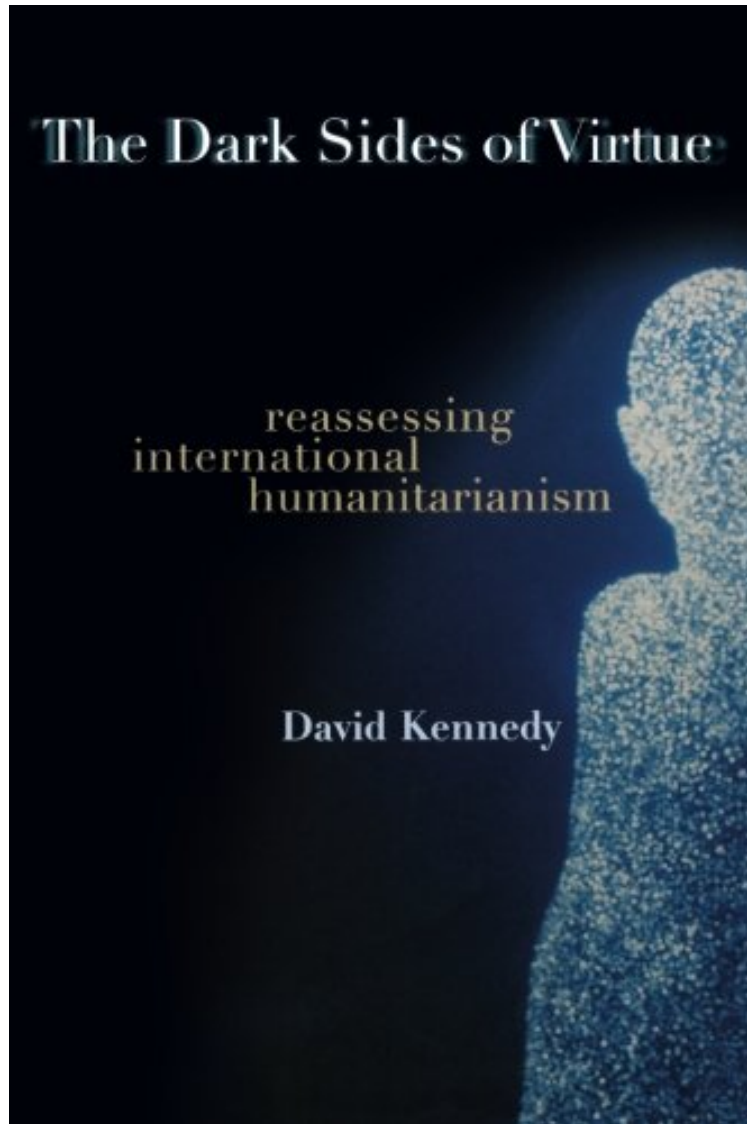


[Ebook free] The Dark Sides of Virtue: Reassessing International Humanitarianism

The Dark Sides of Virtue: Reassessing International Humanitarianism

David Kennedy

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



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#943307 in Books Princeton University Press 2005-08-28 2005-08-28 Original language: English PDF # 1
9.21 x .91 x 6.14l, 1.25 #File Name: 0691123942400 pages | File size: 38.Mb

David Kennedy : The Dark Sides of Virtue: Reassessing International Humanitarianism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Dark Sides of Virtue: Reassessing International Humanitarianism:

17 of 20 people found the following review helpful. A very perplexing book By Peter F. Rousmaniere I would love to attend a lecture by the author or dine with him and a small group, or attend a seminar held by him --as his personal

style of communicating, largely autobiographical and without notes, fits these mediums. This style in book format is exasperating. The author is clearly a keen observer and has had access to many people and institutions involved in international humanitarianism, which (I think) he means as international promotion largely through law of human rights. Means other than though law -- religious movements, cultural movements, economic vehicles, public health, public discourse, philanthropy, collaborations among small sets of nations -- these are not taken up. His case studies are few and seem selected not on the basis of a schema but it appears mainly as postcards from his personal experience. There are no footnotes, no bibliography, no direct evaluation of the UN, WTO, WHO, World Bank. He has developed no methodology to use to predict or explain success or failure of a legal initiative, while it is clear from the first pages that he believes these undertakings have at least very mixed results. Thus the reader cannot straightforwardly apply the lessons of the author to a real or hypothetical legal initiative -- for instance, abolition of capital punishment. The reader has pretty much to yank the author's findings out of these verbose pages. 6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. *Sui Generis in Style and Substance* By Signs and Wonders Though the style of this book might seem "perplexing" to new readers of Kennedy's work, this book is a culmination of a distinctive style of critical appraisal which meshes personal experience with doctrinal detail. For a more schematic version of the same theses, see the author's *International Legal Structures* or Martti Koskenniemi's *From Apology to Utopia*. Here, Kennedy logs with humor and self-analysis his own imperfect quest to combine the "good fight" with the "good life." In the second and third chapters ("Spring Break" and "Autumn Weekend") Kennedy reprints two classic first-person narratives. The first takes place at a Paraguayan prison, (p. 37) and the second at an international conference on the future of East Timor (p. 85). These memoir-fragments invert the familiar human rights narratives of heroic war correspondents and indignant statesmen; Kennedy's frontline is neither the killing fields nor the seat of power, but a more familiar world for most of us: the mundane conferences and awkward conversations of a nascent "international civil society." He reveals with sympathy but not superiority the ambiguous motives, human faults and fantasies underlying cosmopolitan activism. While we might sometimes wince as Kennedy skewers well-meaning doers and hard-won deeds, the forcefulness of his critique increases proportionally with the political power of his targets. 8 of 10 people found the following review helpful. I learned nothing from this book. By Jeffrey R. Campbell The author understands that the human rights movement has gone badly wrong, but he cannot explain why or what to do about it. Instead, Mr. Kennedy gives us mere repetition of plastic words like "vocabulary", "heuristic", and "pragmatism". With such little content, its length (357 pages, I read every one of them) is damning. A good book on this topic would discuss some of the worst failures of the human rights movement. For example, applying the laws of war exclusively to states has induced non-state belligerents to use civilians as human shields. It would then proceed to apply clear analytical thinking to their correction. The author appears to have no appetite for such an undertaking, and he certainly doesn't have the required tools. The author is the Manley O. Hudson Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. If I were one of Mr. Hudson's heirs, I would try to get his money back.

In this provocative and timely book, David Kennedy explores what can go awry when we put our humanitarian yearnings into action on a global scale--and what we can do in response. Rooted in Kennedy's own experience in numerous humanitarian efforts, the book examines campaigns for human rights, refugee protection, economic development, and for humanitarian limits to the conduct of war. It takes us from the jails of Uruguay to the corridors of the United Nations, from the founding of a non-governmental organization dedicated to the liberation of East Timor to work aboard an aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf. Kennedy shares the satisfactions of international humanitarian engagement--but also the disappointments of a faith betrayed. With humanitarianism's new power comes knowledge that even the most well-intentioned projects can create as many problems as they solve. Kennedy develops a checklist of the unforeseen consequences, blind spots, and biases of humanitarian work--from focusing too much on rules and too little on results to the ambiguities of waging war in the name of human rights. He explores the mix of altruism, self-doubt, self-congratulation, and simple disorientation that accompany efforts to bring humanitarian commitments to foreign settings. Writing for all those who wish that "globalization" could be more humane, Kennedy urges us to think and work more pragmatically. A work of unusual verve, honesty, and insight, this insider's account urges us to embrace the freedom and the responsibility that come with a deeper awareness of the dark sides of humanitarian governance.

"David Kennedy's new book reflects on the misunderstandings and mistakes that sometimes lurk amidst the work and results of well-intentioned people who are trying to make the world a better place. . . . This is a disheartening but essential book."--Donald W. Jackson, *The Law and Politics Book* "Important and timely. . . . The most systematic and attentive treatment of the problems that arise when ideas of humanitarian professionalism contradict the real needs of people in distress."--Eric A. Heinze, *Perspectives in Political Science* "This is an interesting and important book. . . . [W]hat Kennedy does do well is to argue that the humanitarian community has by and large failed to confront the reality of bad consequences flowing from good intentions."--Ramesh Thakur, *Japanese Journal of Political Science* "David Kennedy . . . has written in this work a provocative analysis of those who would better the lives of

individuals through action in international relations. . . . Kennedy is always stimulating and well worth reading."--David P. Forsythe, *The American Journal of International Law*"There is a sort of almost spiritually liberating quality in [Kennedy's] relentless self-examination, in his search for a meta-shift of focus for the discipline, in his search for new boundaries to trespass beyond what can be concretely said. . . . Kennedy's call for a pragmatic and responsible humanitarian self-empowerment can appeal to many."--Ignacio de la Rasilla del Moral, *European Journal of International Law*From the Inside Flap"Here, finally, a practical guide for the world's idealists. David Kennedy reveals international human rights as a noble cause easily perverted when ideals substitute for thought. He wisely asks advocates and policy makers to look at the real needs of real people in real distress, and avoid the seduction of lofty aspiration. A wise and sobering look at a field in particular need of wisdom and sobriety."--Robert B. Reich, University Professor of Social and Economic Policy, Brandeis University, and former U.S. Secretary of Labor. "David Kennedy's challenging and thought provoking arguments should be read, considered, and internalized by all activists and policy makers in international humanitarianism."--Mary Robinson, former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights and former President of Ireland "Kennedy's work is sometimes disturbing--even shattering--but always enlightening and ultimately liberating. This is the deepest, most challenging, and effective collection of essays on international and humanitarian activism available today."--Marti Koskenniemi, New York University, author, *Gentle Civilizer of Nations* "Kennedy's original insights come out of his attention to the way personal alliances and ideas of professionalism intersect and often contradict humanitarian commitments. This book is a distinctive and original contribution in which Kennedy's bold iconoclastic voice is given full rein."--Hilary Charlesworth, Australian National UniversityFrom the Back Cover"David Kennedy's challenging and thought provoking arguments should be read, considered, and internalized by all activists and policy makers in international humanitarianism."--Mary Robinson, former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights and former President of Ireland"Here, finally, a practical guide for the world's idealists. David Kennedy reveals international human rights as a noble cause easily perverted when ideals substitute for thought. He wisely asks advocates and policy makers to look at the real needs of real people in real distress, and avoid the seduction of lofty aspiration. A wise and sobering look at a field in particular need of wisdom and sobriety."--Robert B. Reich, University Professor of Social and Economic Policy, Brandeis University, and former U.S. Secretary of Labor."Bold, courageous and penetrating, David Kennedy's book provides a critical focus and insight."--Commander Glenn T. Ware, USNR, Deputy Legal Counsel, Office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff"The portrayal of military life aboard the Independence and the decision-making calculus resident in the naval warfare realm are described with uncanny accuracy."--Commander Dale Stephens, Royal Australian Navy"Kennedy's original insights come out of his attention to the way personal alliances and ideas of professionalism intersect and often contradict humanitarian commitments. This book is a distinctive and original contribution in which Kennedy's bold iconoclastic voice is given full rein."--Hilary Charlesworth, Australian National University"Kennedy's work is sometimes disturbing--even shattering--but always enlightening and ultimately liberating. This is the deepest, most challenging, and effective collection of essays on international and humanitarian activism available today."--Marti Koskenniemi, Professor of International Law, Helsinki University