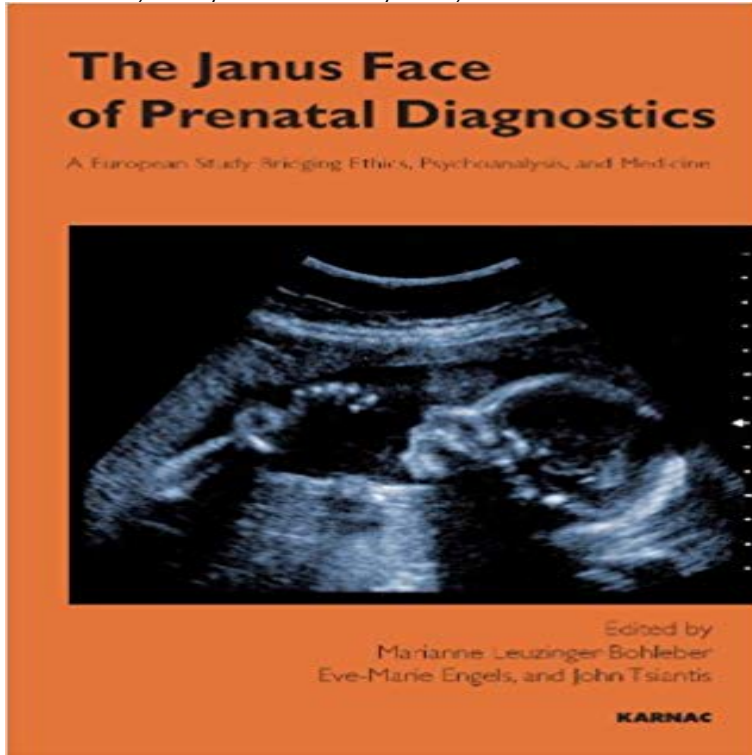


The Janus Face of Prenatal Diagnostics: A European Study Bridging Ethics, Psychoanalysis, and Medicine



Coping with modern technology in the life sciences (biology and medicine) became a major issue for people living in the Twentieth Century, and continues to be so in the present century. Biotechnology creates new opportunities and possibilities, but also new dangers, risks, and ethical concerns. In this volume, ethical dilemmas in the context of a specific biomedical technology are discussed. Experts in ethics, philosophy, psychoanalysis, and medicine jointly investigated a field of prenatal and genetic research that seems particularly challenging: prenatal diagnostics. The new and innovative interdisciplinary dialogue on this topic that is presented in this volume offers a deeper understanding of the ethical dilemmas raised by prenatal and genetic diagnostics, and explores ways to support couples in this extremely difficult situation. In many European countries amniocentesis, for example, is a routine diagnostic tool for women becoming pregnant after the age of thirty-five. In recent decades, enormous progress has been made in diagnosing genetically-based diseases and other serious prenatal abnormalities. Today, we know that a positive prenatal genetic diagnostic creates distress for all women and their partners, and necessitates making the difficult decision as to whether or not to allow the pregnancy to continue. As is demonstrated in this volume through the summaries of interviews with couples, the reactions of women and their partners who are facing this situation can be very different.

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