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Ms. Jordan

Academic English

Genetically Modified Humans

Should we alter specific genes in human beings—and create “ designer babies”—like in the famous 1997 science-fiction film, *Gattaca*? It is a contentious issue, since there are pros and cons to both sides of the debate. On one hand, artificially modifying the genetic code could cure many illnesses directly tied to DNA, such as Sickle Cell Anemia, Down syndrome, Tay-Sachs disease, and Turner syndrome (“ Specific Genetic Disorders”). On the other hand, creating a “ super”-race of humans with perfectly symmetrical appearances and virtually no illnesses could fragment mankind into a much starker divide of the haves versus the have-nots. I think it is morally wrong to genetically modify humans if only the wealthiest people have access to the technology.

Consider what happened in the movie, *Gattaca*. The protagonist of the story, Vincent Freeman, is a natural-born human who is considered “ inferior” by society—so much so that he is discriminated against. With future technology, Freeman’s genetic code is read like a book, and his pages say he has a high probability of developing a heart condition. With the intention of safety and efficiency, space travel is reserved only for genetically modified people. Freeman desires to be an astronaut, but his potential heart disease has classified him as second-rate, only capable of unskilled work.

It would be a shame if the division between the rich and the poor widened even greater with the advent of gene-selection. Greed has already warped humanity into engaging in ugly, self-mutilating wars. Just imagine if there

was a species differentia so pronounced that the privileged were significantly stronger, more attractive, healthier, smarter, and—quite possibly—steeped in an unnatural superiority complex.

Works Cited

“ Specific Genetic Disorders.” National Human Genome Research Institute. National Institutes of Health, n. d. Web. 4 June 2014. .