

# Genetic engineering 10543

Engineering



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## Genetic Engineering

Within the last two decades scientists have developed several new techniques, which manipulate and alter the genes found in the cells of living organisms. This wonder of the century, genetic engineering has turned heredity -the passing of inheritable characteristics from parent to off spring- from a natural, random event into a process that can be artificially controlled and exploited. It has the potential of giving humanity unprecedented power over life itself, and it has thus raised profound questions in such diverse areas as the environment, agriculture, biological warfare, and animal rights. Genetic engineering has clearly become the controversial topic of today and no doubt will extend into future. It will soon be, if not already, invading our schools, workplaces, and homes. And I personally believe it should never take place.

First of all, who are we to be playing God? Since when have we decided that nature's role in our lives becomes invalid just because we now have the technology to change it. You may be thinking that humans have been playing God since the beginning, but that just isn't so. In fact, recently we have tried to tweak nature's creation by such practices as life support systems and medications for terminal diseases. But prolonging someone's life cannot compare to completely rearranging the sheer fabric of life on this planet.

Many people are concerned with the emotional stress on the parents of a genetically altered child. You may question, as you watch your child suffering from a painful genetic condition, ' how can I live with myself, I could have

prevented my child's pain,' But how would you feel if your choice to alter your child ended up harming them? What if they were born with physical deformities or altered immune systems making life painful or impossible. Surely, we must consider the merits of genetic engineering from all angles. Genetic engineering is a new technology, which has only been around for a few short years. Although scientists know how to alter genes in some cases and assume that it is possible in others, little is really known about the long-term effects of the process. Adverse reactions and genetic mutations have the possibility of creating a strain of disease that could rival AIDS or even become much stronger. Another issue to consider is the mental and emotional state of genetically altered people. Considering the emotional effects of genetic engineering, it is unimaginable to think of the kind of devastating mental effects a child that was grown in a test tube would feel, knowing that you had no 'real' parents. If they looked very different from the parent, would they still feel part of the family?

I'd like to call your attention to the name Adolph Hitler; Adolph Hitler was the leader of the Nazi party in Germany. One of Hitler's goals in his, "Reign of Terror", was to create a master race. He believed that all people should look a certain way, now since the technology seems imminent, it would be as easy as passing a law to prevent babies to be born with brown hair or green eyes. If in the near future it is possible, would the fact that we can make that choice make it right?

Once we decide to begin the process of human genetic engineering, there is really no logical place to stop. If diabetes, sickle cell anemia, and cancer are to be cured by altering the genetic make-up of an individual, why not

proceed to other “ disorders”: myopia, color blindness, left-handedness? Indeed, what is to preclude a society from deciding that a certain skin color is a disorder? In fact, why would we ever say no to any alteration of the genetic code that might enhance the well being of the individual or the species? It would be difficult to even imagine society rejecting any genetic modification that promised to improve, in some way, the performance of the human race.

The question, then, is whether or not humanity should begin the process of engineering future generations of human beings by technological design in the laboratory. What is the price we pay for embarking on a course whose final goal is the “ perfection” of the human species? How important is it that we eliminate all imperfections, all

defects? What price are we willing to pay to extend our lives, to ensure our own health, to do away with all inconveniences, the irritations, the nuisances, the infirmities, the suffering, that are so much a part of the human experiences? Are we so enamored with the idea of physical perpetuation at all costs that we are even willing to subject the human species to rigid architectural design?

With human genetic engineering, we get something and we give up something. In return for securing our own physical well being, we are forced to accept the idea of reducing the human species to a technologically designed product. Genetic engineering poses the most functional of questions. Is guaranteeing our health worth trading away our humanity?

#### Bibliography

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