

# Objections against human reproductive cloning philosophy essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In this commentary, the writers put forth a number of objections against human reproductive cloning. They claim that reproduction should aim at giving birth to a new human being with rights that are identical to those of her/his parents and not simply at producing a child 'at all costs'(266). It is posited that the resulting child of reproductive cloning would be denied the basic human right to be born with diversity resulting from randomly inheriting the DNA of a man and a woman as he/she will only be the biological child of one parent (266). However, this argument is not entirely persuasive as one is led to question a fundamental assumption made by the writers. Is it truly a basic human right to have a genetic uniqueness? Why should so much emphasis be placed on genetic uniqueness, when it can be so easily demonstrated that genetic identity does not entail personal identity, simply by considering the world's identical twins? Because the writers have not supplied a further warrant to bolster this assumption, their argument is on shaky grounds.

Another argument that has been put forth against reproductive cloning relates to the safety of the procedure. Namely, that there is no scientific basis for the assumption that reproductive cloning poses negligible concern to humans regarding the incidence of developmental abnormalities (267). In addition, it is asserted that a new human being should not be considered a 'commodity' to be created and disposed of if defective even if developmental errors can be identified through diagnostic tools prior to birth (267).

However, it appears that the writers are merely addressing the technical aspects of the procedure but have failed to undermine the morality of the

procedure in itself, in the event that its safety can be reliably confirmed. This is therefore a weak objection to human reproductive cloning.

Gillon, Raanan. 1999. Human Reproductive Cloning - a look at the arguments against it and a rejection of most of them. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 92: 3-12.

In this publication, Gillon argues against the claim that human reproductive cloning undermines the autonomy and individuality of the clone. He contends that even if reproductive cloning were to produce a person genetically identical to the person from whom he or she was cloned, this is not necessarily morally unacceptable. His argument relies on two major premises. Firstly, reproductive cloning does not produce two identical people, only two people with identical sets of genes. Secondly, genetic identity neither means nor entails personal identity. This is demonstrated by the mere observation that genetically identical twins are clearly different people despite the identical nature of their genes (5).

At this juncture, an objection can be made to this point. One might argue that it is not merely personal identity that must not be replicated but genetic identity as well, for that in itself is morally significant. Gillon defends his position by asserting that everyone, including genetic identical twins, does not necessarily have the right to genetic identity. He claims that if we do indeed have a right to genetic uniqueness, then we must also have the corresponding duty to destroy one of each pair of existing identical twins since they cannot possess genetic uniqueness (5). However, I believe Gillon's argument may be resting on a false analogy in mistakenly drawing parallels

between existing identical twins with clones. What he has neglected to consider is the possible moral difference between cloning that occurs naturally and cloning that occurs by deliberate intent. It may be argued by some that the existing identical twins may in fact have suffered inevitable harms in their inability to claim genetic uniqueness. The same harm, when brought about by the deliberate act of reproductive cloning by an agent, however, is avoidable through the omission of the act. The agent's failure to prevent an avoidable harm by refraining from using reproductive cloning technology is morally reprehensible, while the parents of existing identical twins cannot be blamed if they were unaware that they were producing identical twins prior to their birth.

Kitcher, Philip. 2000. "There Will Never Be Another You". In *Human Cloning: Science, Ethics and Public Policy*, ed. Barbara Mackinnon, 53-67. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

In this commentary, Kitcher argues that human reproductive cloning should only be undertaken in scenarios in which it is the only reproductive option available and when the prospective parents are interested in having a child for his or her own sake, and not simply as a means to a particular end. He claims that if the cloning is undertaken with the aims of generating a specific type of person whose goals and necessities are imposed upon, then it is morally repugnant, not because merely because the process involves human interference, but because it is consistent with other traditional ways of undermining human autonomy (61). He therefore believes that all morally permissible cases of cloning must necessarily entail the omission of this objectionable feature (61).

<https://assignbuster.com/objections-against-human-reproductive-cloning-philosophy-essay/>

Kitcher presents to us the case of a lesbian couple devoted to each other for years who wish to produce a child that is biologically connected to each of them. Cloning would enable the devoted pair to have a child biologically related to them (62). There exists no issue of imposing a pre-determined plan on the newborn's life, only the wish to have a child who is biologically their own. Kitcher asserts that human cloning is only defensible in such contexts (62). However one may argue that the lesbian couples already have the option of producing a child who will be biologically related to both. If an egg from one of them is fertilized with a male donor's sperm and the resultant embryo is implanted in the womb of the woman who did not supply the egg, then both would have a biological connection. That method of reproduction might even be preferable, as it diminishes any sense of burden that the child might feel because of his/her special biological semblance to one of the mothers. While it must be conceded that cloning would create a closer biological connection than the above mentioned method, it may nevertheless still be contested if that extra degree of relationship should be assigned such a high value.

Peters, Philip. 2004. *How Safe Is Safe Enough? Obligations to the Children of Reproductive Technology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

In this monograph, Peters argues that we have a duty not to harm future people. He begins by contesting David Heyd's claim that people who control whether or not a future person exists cannot have obligations to the very people whose very existence they control (11). However as Peters points out, Heyd fails to explain why the power to reproduce necessarily implies the lack of an obligation to the children created. Even assuming that we have no

<https://assignbuster.com/objections-against-human-reproductive-cloning-philosophy-essay/>

moral obligation to conceive any future people, and thus have the moral power to deny them existence, it still does not necessarily follow that we have no moral obligation to the children we choose to create.

Peters goes on to argue that because the wellbeing of future people matters, we have prima facie obligation to avoid causing harm to our future children (19). Under conventional legal analysis, to 'cause harm' is to render someone worse off than he/she would otherwise have been. Therefore, no 'harm' has been caused by reproduction via any means unless the children born are forced to lead lives that are worse than the alternative - never existing at all (19). While Peters is largely successful in his rebuttal of Heyd's argument, he has yet to present any real argument as to why we have a duty to future people. He has made no mention on Parfit's non-identity problem which states that it is not coherent to speak of causing harm to a child through his/her birth if life for that individual does not entail tremendous suffering. Peters may have perhaps responded that the non-existence comparison should not be employed at all, because it is inconsistent with the principle that all life is equally valuable, and that we owe our future children more protection than the nonexistence comparison implies.

Strong, Carson. 2001. "Cloning and Infertility". In *Ethical Issues In Human Cloning: Cross - Disciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Michael C. Brannigan, 148-163. New York: Seven Bridges Press.

It has been suggested in this publication, that while cloning on the whole is morally objectionable, there might be exceptional cases in which cloning humans would be permissible. One such example involves infertile couples

<https://assignbuster.com/objections-against-human-reproductive-cloning-philosophy-essay/>

who want to have children by cloning. Strong first explores several objections against cloning. First, cloning transforms baby-making into a process similar to manufacturing and resulting children would become products made according to specification thus objectifying them and adversely affecting parental attitudes. Second, additional abuses might occur if this technology were obtained by totalitarian regimes (149).

I am inclined to dismiss the second objection as a slippery slope argument as there appears no absolute reason to suggest that producing children according to specification will necessarily lead to negative parental attitudes towards these children. The issue lies not in the method of reproduction but in how one treats the resultant child. The third objection falls prey to a similar fallacy. The most effective way of avoiding abuse is not to ban cloning but to reform the social structures that would give way to such harms.

Because the main reason to use cloning in the above case is to have children who are genetically related to at least one member of the couple, Strong questions whether reasons can be given to the value of genetically related children (150). One such reason offered by the writer is the value of the participation in the creation of a person. The member of the couple whose chromosomes are used would participate by providing the genetic material for the new person, and the other may participate by gestating and giving birth to the child. One might object that the infertile couple could still participate in the creation of a person by using donor gametes or pre-embryos. In reply, although the above methods also constitute types of participation, a more direct involvement would occur if one member of the <https://assignbuster.com/objections-against-human-reproductive-cloning-philosophy-essay/>

couple contributed genetically to the creation of the child. In this sense, cloning can be understood as a superior reproductive procedure than its alternatives.

**WORD COUNT: 1620**