

Human cloning
should be banned
(affirmative) –
argumentative
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It is the year 2010. As you pick up your daily issue of The Age, you begin to read some of the articles on the front page. Interesting articles include, "Cure to Cancer Found Due to Cloned Stem-cells" and "Former President George Bush's Cloned Heart Transplant a Success." Everyone thinks, all these good things are coming from cloning, I can't believe we didn't try this sooner. However, 10-15 years down the track those headlines begin to change to be more like, "Mutated Clones- Are They Still Classified as Human?" and "Clone Armies- Could it Happen?" It's only then that people will start to feel nervous and realise the implications of their actions but by then, it would probably be too late. So the question that is has been posed to us now is this: should cloning be allowed? The answer to this is a clear no.

Many argue that cloning will benefit many people in various ways such as providing genetically related children for people who are infertile and allowing for stem-cell research. However, they choose to blatantly ignore the many risks associated cloning a human being. When man attempts to play God, it can never turn out well.

One of the risks that I'd like to discuss is the health risk from mutation of genes - an abnormal baby would be a nightmare come true. A particular worry is the possibility that the genetic material used from the adult will continue to age so that the genes in a newborn baby clone could be 30 years old or more on the day of birth. Many attempts at animal cloning produced disfigured monsters with severe abnormalities. So that would mean creating cloned embryos, implanting them and destroying those that look imperfect as they grow in the womb. However some abnormalities may not appear till after birth. A cloned cow recently died several weeks after birth with a huge

abnormality of blood cell production. Dolly the Sheep died prematurely of severe lung disease in February 2003, and also suffered from arthritis at an unexpectedly early age which was probably linked to the cloning process.

Even if a few cloned babies are born apparently normal we will have to wait up to 20 years to be sure they are not going to have problems later for example, growing old too fast. Every time a clone is made it is like throwing the dice and even a string of “ healthy” clones being born would not change the likelihood that many clones born in future may have severe medical problems. And of course, that’s just the ones born. What about all the disfigured and highly abnormal clones that either spontaneously aborted or were terminated by scientists worried about the horrors they might be creating?

Even if the cloning was “ successful”, there are still the emotional risks involved. For example, a child knows it is the twin of a dead brother or sister. What kind of pressures will he or she feel, knowing they were made as a direct replacement for another? It is a human experiment doomed to failure because the child will NOT be identical in every way, despite the hopes of the parents. One major reason will be that the child will be brought up in a highly abnormal household: one where grief has been diverted into making a clone instead of adjusting to loss. The family environment will be completely different than that the other twin experienced. That itself will place great pressures on the emotional development of the child.

Also, as always there is a risk of people abusing the technology. What would Hitler have done with cloning technology if it was available in the 1940s?

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There are powerful leaders in every generation who will seek to abuse this technology for their own purposes and pursuing cloning technology makes this far more likely. I mean, why have 10, 000 individual men and women go to war when you can take the cells of the strongest man or woman and replicate 10, 000 of them? So technically, if all 10, 000 of them died it would be the same as only one person dying, right? This is the kind of erratic reasoning we will be confronted with if we let this continue.

Lastly, human cloning would diminish the sense of uniqueness of an individual. It would deeply violate widely held convictions concerning human individuality and could lead to a devaluation of clones in comparison with non-clones. How would you feel if a clone were introduced to the class? Could anyone honestly say that they would feel completely indifferent about the fact that they're cloned and not think of them as anything less than human?

It is to be expected that humans, with the inquisitive nature we have, to strive to know and discover more. However, the cloning of human beings is a discovery that could ultimately lead to the destruction of the human race. Are we willing to risk that?