



Issues of Human
Development
Towards A
Prosperous Life

PART III
Community

CHAPTER 6

DEVIANCE AND DYSTOPIAN SOCIETIES: Genetics in Never Let Me Go

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III

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Introduction

Technological innovations in science, particularly in the field of biotechnology have surpassed human imagination. There seems to be a blurring between science fiction and actual sciences today as there are breakthroughs in every scientific field be it genetics, neuroscience, nanotechnology, robotics or psychopharmacology. Human advancement technologies are applied more than ever before causing societies to adapt to adopting them, thereby developing new values and norms in order to accommodate these new practices (Bess, 2008).

The reality of the first cloned mammal, Dolly the sheep, in 1997 created quite a stir when parties debated, discussed and lobbied for and against this amazing technology. Questions were raised about how ethical this was and whether mere humans had any business 'playing God' so to speak. Religious groups stated that natural creation was the work of an invisible 'all-powerful Maker' and scientists had no right to mess with creation. But some scientists continued to pursue this and since Dolly, there have been many 'cloned' animals.

Ian Wilmut (as cited in Griffin, 2009, p. 646), credited with creating Dolly the sheep was working on cloning "human embryos as part of his research into the causes of motor neuron disease". This again sparked worldwide debate on the dilemmas of human cloning. Could scientists refashion and redesign a human individual's physical

and mental capabilities? (Bess, 2008). Science fiction and films have already introduced the bionic human (as in *Bionic Woman*, and *Six Million Dollar Man*), clone armies (in *Star Wars*), I (intelligent) robots (in the *Terminator* and *Transformers*) and genetically mutant super humans (in *X-Men*, *The Avengers* and *Fantastic Four*). Thus, how long would it take before these become reality?

Human Cloning

According to bioengineers, genetic manipulation and human cloning is a distance away from being possible. If these happened, there are predicted downsides and upsides. Stem cells could make human cloning a reality. If one were to mass produce clones, it could give rise to rebellions and chaos and the control of real human beings by the clones. However, the world could improve through manipulating with genes as any physical injury could be made to disappear (Docksai, 2010). Children could also be smarter and healthier and people would not need to succumb to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), cancer, diabetes or any other human ailments. The reality of living a long, healthy life can be foreseen. Two major reasons for human cloning would be for therapy and reproduction. Therapeutic cloning could cure illness from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). One may lose a limb in an accident which could be replaced through cloning, allowing the use of a leg or arm again. This type of cloning is also called 'embryo cloning' where human embryos are produced for research purposes such as harvesting stem cells to treat diseases (as in cited in http://www.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human_Genome/elsi/cloning.shtml).

Reproductive cloning gives hope to infertile couples and women with reproductive problems just like already existent forms of assisted reproduction (in vitro fertilization). A childless couple can experience the joy of having their own offspring, proving this type of cloning to be beneficial. Designer babies are one thing then there is the 'saviour sibling' who is conceived to cure a dying sister or brother from a particular disease (Griffin, 2009). Human cloning would permit the replication of a dead or dying child (Jerng, 2008), thereby providing emotional comfort to the parents.