The Transhumanist Declaration

(1) Humanity will be radically changed by technology in the future. We foresee the feasibility of redesigning the human condition, including such parameters as the inevitability of aging, limitations on human and artificial intellects, unchosen psychology, suffering, and our confinement to the planet earth.

(2) Systematic research should be put into understanding these coming developments and their long-term consequences.

(3) Transhumanists think that by being generally open and embracing of new technology we have a better chance of turning it to our advantage than if we try to ban or prohibit it.

(4) Transhumanists advocate the moral right for those who so wish to use technology to extend their mental and physical (including reproductive) capacities and to improve their control over their own lives. We seek personal growth beyond our current biological limitations.

(5) In planning for the future, it is mandatory to take into account the prospect of dramatic progress in technological capabilities. It would be tragic if the potential benefits failed to materialize because of technophobia and unnecessary prohibitions. On the other hand, it would also be tragic if intelligent life went extinct because of some disaster or war involving advanced technologies.

(6) We need to create forums where people can rationally debate what needs to be done, and a social order where responsible decisions can be implemented.

(7) Transhumanism advocates the well- being of all sentience (whether in artificial intellects, humans, posthumans, or non-human animals) and encompasses many principles of modern humanism. Transhumanism does not support any particular party, politician or political platform.

World Transhumanist Association

The WTA was founded in 1998 by philosophers Nick Bostrom Ph.D. and David Pearce. The goal of the World Transhumanist Association is to support discussion and public awareness of emerging technologies; to defend the right of individuals in free and democratic societies to adopt technologies that expand human capacities; and to anticipate and propose solutions for the potential consequences of emerging technologies.

The WTA is growing quickly, and we invite you to join us in this important work. Our 3,000 members worldwide participate in our dozens of discussion lists or join one of our many local WTA chapters, which can be found in countries and languages all over the world. The WTA speakers bureau can provide someone to represent the Transhumanist perspective to the media or to your group. Also, take a look at our e-magazine *Transhumanity*.

You can register as a **basic**, **supporting** or **sustaining** member at transhumanism.org. Basic membership is free with registration and includes a 10% discount on participation in WTA events. Dues for supporting membership are $50US a year for employed people in the developed countries, and US$20US a year for the unemployed, retired, students, and people in developing countries. Sustaining membership is US$250 a year. Supporting and sustaining memberships include voting privileges in WTA elections and decision-making, as well as 20% discounts on WTA events.

Transhumanism in your area

Reproductive Cloning and Transhumanism

Defending our right to use reason and technology to be better than well

http://www.transhumanism.org

Human Reproductive Cloning

With the successful cloning of Dolly the sheep in 1997 the issue of human reproductive cloning (HRC) was thrust from the realm of science fiction into the realm of public debate.

Despite the wild claims of a few disreputable scientists there is no evidence that a human being has ever been successfully cloned. Nor would it currently be ethical to conduct experiments bringing human clones to term. However, many different species of animals are being successfully cloned. Slowly the cloning of primates is also being perfected. It is only a matter of time before HRC is safe for human use.

What does reproductive cloning entail? Just as in the — now perfectly acceptable — medical procedure of in vitro fertilization (IVF), an egg is fertilized outside of the mother, and implanted into her uterus. The chief difference is the way the egg is fertilized.

Rather than being fertilized by sperm from a father, which then combines with the genetic material of the mother's egg, in HRC the egg is given a full set of genetic material from a single adult cell. The resulting embryo shares most of the DNA of the adult donor, although not the non-nuclear DNA in the mitochondria. So a clone would be close to, but not quite as similar, as an identical twin. Just like twins are completely different individuals, a clone would have his or her own personality and rights.

HRC is simply another way for human beings to reproduce, and one that very few people will be likely to use. Couples in which one parent has an unfixable genetic disease might use it, as might single parents or parents with a strong desire for children who resemble a specific person.

Such families would naturally be a little "non-traditional", but no more so than modern families built from multiple divorces and re-marriages. A "brother-son" isn't that much odder than a "step-brother from my mom's second husband".

Many people object to the prospect of HRC out of fear that clones will not be individuals or have the same rights. Evil despots who want armies of compliant soldiers won't turn to cloning when ordinary conscription and indoctrination is much faster and more efficient. All of these scenarios, while entertaining, are not real.

Similarly so long as slavery and murder remain illegal it will be illegal to enslave or murder clones, so clones would not be "harvested" for organs. However some people are alarmed by two related but very different proposals. One is that "therapeutic cloning" could be used to create a genetically identical pre-embryo that could make stem cells for medical treatments. But these clones would never even become embryos much less children. Also some parents select from among their fertilized embryos so that their sick child can have a "savior sibling" who can provide a compatible transfusion. But these transfusions never harm the donor sibling.

Some people also worry that parents of a clone would treat him or her differently or have unrealistic expectations. But a clone would be a child like any other, and its parent(s) would love it like a child born by any other method. Research suggests parents of clones might actually love their kids even *more* precisely since they would be "children of choice," and that IVF kids are as or more psychologically healthy.

When it comes down to it, objections to HRC are based on the "yuck factor" — it just "feels wrong" to some. But our right to control our own reproduction, not to be told by the government what kind of children we should and shouldn't have, is far too important to be determined by other people's vague anxieties. We learned that from the terrible history of eugenic laws. Historically the same people who say that HRC is wrong said the same thing about IVF. Just as society got used to the idea of "test-tube babies" so we will also get used to the idea of cloning.

The only thing keeping us from using cloning to create babies is the difficulty of ensuring that it is safe. Until it can be demonstrated that primates can be cloned safely and effectively, it would be irresponsible to attempt it on human beings.

Once the technology for HRC is safe, however, there's no reason it can't be used to bring happy, healthy babies to thousands of loving families.

Therapeutic vs. Reproductive Cloning

Therapeutic cloning is different from reproductive cloning. Therapeutic cloning is used only to produce cells from which embryonic stem cells can be obtained, which some scientists think could be used in a wide variety of medical applications, and which have the potential to cure such things as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's diabetes, heart disease, and spinal cord injury.

Official WTA Statement on Cloning

"The WTA supports full reproductive rights to the use of cloning and other assistive technologies by competent adults after these have been demonstrated as safe and effective for human use. But we agree with the general scientific opinion and many bioethicists that animal studies have not yet demonstrated that cloning technologies are safe for human use. The use of cloning technology on humans at this stage of its development is highly unethical, and could significantly set back public acceptance of transhuman technologies. However, the WTA fully supports continued research into human 'therapeutic cloning' and animal cloning."

(Adopted February 2002)

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