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Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
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Dear Josh:

Thanks for your note.

First, on a technical point: I would assume that cloning, at least as a social issue, is concerned with the copying of existing individuals, rather than production, by twinning of multiple copies of an unknown product of recombination.

For some years I have personally been opposed to human cloning, primarily because of concern over the moral responsibility of creating unknown psychological problems for an individual by making him or her a copy of an already known individual. The problem could be solved, of course, by preventing clones from knowing that they were clones; but I don't think that this would be generally feasible, because of the general aim of trying to produce somebody very much like the individual being copied.

Under ordinary circumstances I would prefer to adopt the neutral, analytical position that I did in 1970, and discuss the pros and cons without expressing a personal opinion or certainly a prescriptive personal conviction. However, I shifted to a categorical statement on the grounds that you suspected: the heat is too strong. But by this I mean the heat on the scientific community, and not on me. (Of course this could be a rationalization, but I think I've demonstrated more than most my willingness to persist in unpopular positions!) I'm really worried about the widespread fear of where some branches of genetics are taking us. For three years I have been giving a general education course at Harvard College on "Evolution, Genetics and Society", and I am distressed at how many very intelligent students write papers in which it is clear that I've not disabused them of their suspicion of the value of science. If we want to defend the value of developing cloning for agricultural and scientific purposes, or even defend the value of basic research that may be jeopardized because it can be accused of helping to promote cloning, I think it is advisable at this time for scientists in this area to reassure the public about their intentions. In making this strategic concession to public anxiety I recognize, as you do in your paper, that no decisions in such areas are sempiternal; I'm only talking about legislation for the near future, which will last for some unspecified period. I mention<sup>ed</sup> the transitory nature of moral convictions briefly in the ~~enclosed~~ editorial from Nature. 350

Sincerely,

  
Bernard D. Davis

BDD:hrg ENC.