

A DISCOURSE ON IMMANUEL KANT'S CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE AND ITS IMPLICATION ON HUMAN CLONING

ADIDI, Dokpesi Timothy

Department of Philosophy
Veritas University, Abuja
timshow03@gmail.com

&

IRABOR, Benson Peter

Department of Philosophy,
University of Lagos, Lagos.
benpet1@yahoo.com

Abstract

The consequences of cloning are both liberating and enchanting; and, these stare us in the face and may not be easily swept away. The consequences and the implications are not only for the human species; but, matters of human life in general have made several scholars continuously contribute to knowledge in this regard. There are always two sides or multifaceted dimensions to the arguments, but primarily the arguments are usually steeped in utilitarianism which promotes the argument for cloning because it appeals to the fantasies of the highest number; and, also considering the fact that it will make the populace better off rather than worse off. The other perspective usually from a deontologic-ethical background frowns at cloning and articulates that cloning merely see nature as a means to an end and humans may become enslaved by unchecked clones in future times. The crux of the essay, though employing a Kantian perspective to the discourse, goes beyond Immanuel Kant on the subject by pulling arguments from Martin Heidegger to reinstate that cloning diminishes human dignity and testifies to the “standing reserve” which takes the subject out of objects like humans and makes them exists only for their future potential; and, attempts to relegate humanity into the stratosphere of irrelevance. In the end, the paper posits that cloning activities must make central to their research the dignity and worth of life as we engage in qualitative and rational justification of the discourse through the method of critical analysis and interpretation. This paper expresses that Kant's moral reflections may be brought to bear on the extremist tendencies latent in cloning.

Keywords: Human Cloning, Immanuel Kant, Duty, Dignity, Human Life

Introduction

With the current advancements and major breakthroughs recorded in bioengineering, it is not far-fetched to proclaim that humanity is walking towards the edge of immortality with the tool of biological engineering. Cloning has brought about almost everything from 'designer drugs' to 'designer food' to almost the point of replication. In the recent times, cloned synthetic skins; plants that produce human blood proteins; and, bacteria that protects against cavities have been made manifest and clear. However, while this study admits the obvious that cloning as a scientific enterprise has come to stay, it takes a philosophic perspective to the discourse as many scholars have done to present a clearer picture of the matter as it is. It can be said that in the face of the persistent and seemingly endless dilemma on the subject in discourse and considering the legal and medical implications of cloning, this essay looks at the discourse from the Deontological Ethics of Immanuel Kant. As such, to attain this academic discourse for practical guide in the area of ethics and morality, the paper has four parts, the first being his introduction. In the part that follows is a brief exposition of the origin, meaning and nature of cloning. Furthermore, the legal, moral, religious, ontological and scientific implications of cloning are unfolded as divergent positions of scholars are presented for analysis. This consequently x-rays the moral groundwork for the discourse and the third section excurses into the domain of Immanuel Kant to provide the much needed moral framework for the debate over cloning. It implores an analytical exposition of his (Immanuel Kant's) categorical imperative as a rational justification to argue for the devastating consequences of cloning. The fourth and last part of the paper will be the concluding remarks.

Lastly, it should be noted that the paper shall adopt a qualitative research approach as the basis for establishing the morality and meta-ethical framework to justify Immanuel Kant's ethics.

Cloning: A Concise Exposition

Etymologically, the term cloning is a derivative of the Greek “*Klon*” which means to “*bud*” or “*twig*”¹. Therefore, human cloning means generating at least one copy of another individual person. In a literal sense, “identical twins are genetic copies of each other or clones of each other: they physically look alike and their genetic makeup is identical”². Aaron D. Levine in *Cloning: A Beginner's Guide* defines cloning at its most basic level, “reproduction without sex.”³ “Sex” as he used it does not refer to the act of intercourse but to sexual reproduction- joining of genetic material from two parents into embryo if the process of development is achieved; and

¹ Pascal Nwaezeapu, *When does the Human Person Beings? Moral Status of the Embryo and Technology: An Expository Study*, (Rome: LEBERIT S.r.l Press, 2007), p. 112.

² Sherlock and Morrey, op. cit., p. 517.

³ Aaron L. Levine, *Cloning: A Beginner's Guide*, (Oxfordshire: Oneworld Publication, 2007), p. 2.

this invariably gives rise to a new adult organism. Furthermore, he makes a lucid distinction between sexual reproduction and asexual production (cloning), when he avers that:

All humans alive today were born through sexual reproduction; a single sperm from the male joined with an egg from the female, creating an embryo with half its genetic material derived from each parents. This mixing of genetic material introduces an element of chance into production, ensuring that children differ genetically from their parents. In cloning, offspring are genetically identical to their single parent. Such offspring are the products of “asexual” production. Cloning rather than relying on the merging of egg and sperm, uses the genetic material or DNA from a single cell. This cell is joined to an egg from which the DNA has been removed. Next, this construct is coaxed to develop as if it were newly fertilized egg. If development proceeds normally, the resulting organism will be genetically identical to the single donor. In this case, reproduction no longer generates new combinations of genetic material but faithfully duplicates previously existing ones⁴.

For Richard Sherlock and John D. Morrey, “Cloning means making copies of one thing”⁵. In other words, Cloning is an umbrella term used to describe various process of duplicating (biological) materials. According to Pantaleon Iroegbu, “Cloning is the scientific reproduction of a given organism in its DNA molecule.”⁶ It is the production of a clone (another copy) of a given being. It is therefore, a sort of repetition of a being already in existence. The American Medical Association explains it simply as “copying a person”⁷. To clone is therefore to make a person or organism again. It is to make clones of a given person, duplicating him or her once, or twice, or even thrice; and indeed as many times as one deems fit.”⁸

It is to make a carbon copy or more technically to realize a nucleus transplantation of the donor of the cell nuclei. According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, clones are: any group of plants or animals produced artificially from the cells of a

⁴ Ibid., p.2.

⁵ Richard Sherlock and John D. Morrey, *Ethical Issues in Biotechnology*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2006), p. 517.

⁶ Pantaleon Iroegbu, Cloning: “Reality and Morality”, in *Kpim of Morality Ethics*, op cit., p. 636.

⁷ American Medical Association (AMA), *Why We Should Not Clone Humans*, available at:

<http://www.ama-why-we-should-not-clone-humans.htm>, retrieved on 7 March, 2015, P.1.

⁸ Andrew C. Varga, *The Main Issues in Bioethics*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 77.

single ancestor and therefore appears exactly exactly the same as it ⁹ This definition points to, or rather emphasizes the intrinsic meaning of the word “clone” that is, “sameness”, of the products of cloning to another, (that is, organisms cloned from the same source) and to the original ancestor (the cell or organisms cloned were made). However, a closer look at the definition of the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary on cloning omits the fact that cloning can occur naturally without being artificially induced. In the Concise Medical Dictionary, a clone refers to: “a group of cells (can be an organism) genetically identical to each other that have arisen from one cell by an asexual reproduction”. ¹⁰

In an attempt to look at what cloning is, it is equally important to say what it is not. This is in order to preclude any forms of confusion that might arise. In the words of Aaron L. Levine, cloning “is not photocopying; or at best it is like using a slow and blurry photocopier— so slow, that by the time the copy is made, the original has changed” ¹¹. If you cloned your dog today, there would not be an exact replica running around and barking tomorrow, as suggested in the Arnold Schwarzenegger hit, *The Sixth Day*. “Rather, you would create an embryo that could potentially be transferred into the womb of a surrogate mother. Nine weeks later, if all went well, a puppy would be born. This puppy would be genetically identical to your dog but, obviously, much younger” ¹². It might look like its parent had looked as a puppy but it would experience a different environment and, perhaps, mature differently. Movies such as *Multiplicity*, in which an overworked contractor clones himself to help cope with his busy life, ignore the time delay essential to cloning. In this case, the movie's premise on entertaining but the concept and picture of what cloning is not calls to question. The clones rather than helping out at work and around the house, then becomes a burden. They would be infants, not adults as portrayed in the movie, and like any human infants would need nearly constant attention. With the distinction between what cloning is and what cloning is not as clearly illustrated, what then are the moral and social implications of cloning as briefly articulated thus far? Has cloning a bright future for not just humanity but the universe in entirety? Does the entire process of cloning takes cognizance of human dignity in its process and theory? Scholars are divided on the subject and it would be helpful to commence with those who endorse cloning.

Arguments For and Against cloning

The idea of cloning raises a lot of ethical eyebrows, as its agenda is easily greeted with some dose of moral suspicion. This moral suspicion has not yet impeded the

⁹ Albert S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, 6th ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

¹⁰ Jacob C. Handelsman, *The Concise Medical Encyclopedia* (ed.), (Fort Lauderdale: Paradise Press Inc., 1998), p. 90.

¹¹ Aaron L. Levine, *Cloning: A Beginner's Guide*, (Oxfordshire: Oneworld Publications, 2007), p.5.

¹² Ibid.

flow of arguments coming as support or opposing the idea of cloning. Tamara L. Roleff in *Cloning: Opposing Viewpoints* articulates the thoughts of philosophers and ethicists on the issue at stake. Roleff gives the arguments for and against human cloning. He opines: "Those who do not know their opponent's arguments do not completely understand their own".¹³ David Goodnough *The Debate Over Human Cloning: A Pro/Con Issue* traces the debate on human cloning as far back as 1978 when a science writer David Rorvik wrote *In His Image: The Cloning of a man*, in which he claimed that that he had witnessed the cloning of a human being. However, the book was later proven to be a hoax, published appropriately enough the day before April fool's Day.¹⁴ Still on the origin of the debate on human cloning, David Goodnough noted that, though after the cloning of the Sheep Dolly, the debate for the move into human cloning resurfaced again, it got to its climax in November, 2001 when a small scientific medical company in Massachusetts called Advanced Cell Technology (ACT) announced that they have cloned a human embryo. He observes that since the cloning of *Dolly*, lots of ethical issues have been raised, such as: What is cloning, and why do people find it so alarming? What dangers does it pose, and what advantages does it offer? David Goodnough clearly describes the cloning process as he explores the arguments in favour of cloning and those opposed to it, so that readers can make up their minds about cloning.

Since debates on human cloning deal with ethical issues, one obvious fact is that making ethical decisions is becoming more and more challenging in today's complex contemporary culture. Numerous competing ideologies, values, and worldviews are causing some to even question the importance of one being moral at all. In the midst of these cultures of ostensibly wandering in a sea of uncertainty about ethics and morality, Scott Rae in *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics* outlines the distinctive elements of Christian ethics while avoiding dogmatism. The book also introduces other ethical systems and their key historical proponents, including Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and Immanuel Kant. Furthermore, Rantala M. L. and Arthur J. Milgram, in *Cloning: For and Against*, raised the following thoughts provoking questions:

Will we soon face with a million Michael Jordans, a million of Bill Gatesses, a million of Saddam Husseins? Will wealthy individuals be able to create genetic copies of themselves which could give them a kind of immortality? Or will the copies (perhaps produced without heads) be kept in storage to provide replacement organs?¹⁵

¹³ Roleff L. Tarama, *Cloning: Opposing Viewpoints*, (New Jersey: Thomson Gale, 2006), p. 7.

¹⁴ David Goodnough, *The Debate Over Human Cloning: A Pro/Con Issues*, (New Jersey: Enslow Publishers, Inc., 2003), p. 5.

¹⁵ Rantala M. L. and Arthur J. Milgram *Cloning: For and Against*, (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1999), p. 278.

They went further to observe that these dizzying questions have become very real possibilities within our lifetime following the successful cloning of a sheep by Scottish scientists in 1997. Rantala M. L. and Arthur J. Milgram hold that cloning offers obvious advantages for the infertile, homosexuals who want to reproduce, and as one method for multiplying desirable genetic qualities. It also opens up opportunities for increasing scientific knowledge and saving endangered species. More so, they observed that though cloning may be beneficial to humanity, but like any technology, there are possibilities for abuse. Thus, this had led some to voiced objections- ethical, religious, and practical to any form of human cloning. Many religious leaders have now maintained that all cloning of humans should be prohibited permanently. Considering this opinion which appears to be a layman's conclusion, Rantala M. L. and Arthur J. Milgram have meticulously brought out various ideas and viewpoints by scientists, journalists, philosophers, ethicists, religious leaders and legal experts on the subject matter of human cloning and thereby leaving their readers to decide which view to uphold. In *Moral Choices*, Scott Rae, speaking from a Christian and ethical perspective is not against biotechnology or scientific advancements; but rather sees biotechnology as man's assistance to God in the work of creation. He deals with more prominent ethical dilemmas such as Abortion, Reproductive Technologies, Human Cloning, Sexual Ethics, and Legislating Morality. In his words,

The world of biotechnology is here to stay and the moral dilemmas produced by these sophisticated procedures will become more complicated. Medical technology can be seen in general as part of God's provision to human beings in the enabling them to more effectively exercise dominion over creation....¹⁶

In a nutshell, Scott opines that the uses of each specific technology must be carefully weighed, and they cannot be exempted from moral scrutiny. Also, the attitude that suggests that a technology must be used simply because it can be used is very problematic. Like Scott Rae, John Bryant (a biological scientist) and John Searle, the authors of the book titled: *Life in our hands: Christian Perspective on Genetics and Cloning* challenge Christians to keep abreast in biotechnological development and to respond biblically. They outlined some of the issues at stake, and explored how Christians can make balanced ethical decisions. The authors also included several useful chapters at the beginning of the book exploring the state of contemporary bioethics, particularly Christian ethical decision-making, and whether or not the use

¹⁶ Scott B. Rae, *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*, (New York: Zondervan, 1995), p.11.

of biotechnology falls within human beings since they are stewards of God's creation. The biblical concept of man being made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27) is fundamental to the Christian perspective on many of these technologies, as Bryant and Searle points out; they hold that "attempting to clone humans would be to treat humans and in particular; women as experimental objects...using humans in experiments of this type is to deny their dignity as individuals and to use them in a singularly instrumental manner"¹⁷. John Bryant and John Searle's objection to human cloning is not from a philosophical point; their argument stems from the Christian-religious argument that man is made in the image of God. Some scholars argue for human cloning from the Christian-religious angle and from two chapters in the Book of Genesis in which God commanded Adam; "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it" Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 9:7 which says: "Be fruitful and multiply; populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it." They single out two words from the injunction of the God to Adam; "multiply and subdue" and apply it to human cloning. Thus, for them, the questions raised by the opponents of human cloning, such as: if humans can now create new life forms from mixing and matching DNA, how are we different from God? If humans can finally understand the mysteries of what creates life, what place does God have in our lives? They will simply reply: "Multiply and subdue."

Leon R. Kass in a work titled *In vitro fertilization* contends that other assisted reproduction technologies that place the origin of human life in human hands have eroded the respect for the mystery of sexuality and human renewal. Kass believes that unless laws are enacted to prohibit all cloning of humans (including cloning human embryos for medical research), we will soon be faced with a possibility that he views it as absolutely reprehensible or, in his words, "repugnant." Thus, he writes:

Cloning creates serious issues of identity and individuality. The cloned person may experience concerns about his distinctive identity not only because he will be in genotype and appearance identical to another human being, but, in this case, because he may also be twin to the person who is his "father" or "mother"- if one can stay call them that. What would be the psychic burdens of being the "child" or "parent" of your twin? The cloned individual, moreover, will be saddled with genotype that has already lived."¹⁸

¹⁷ John Bryant and John Searle, *Life in our hands: Christian perspective on genetics and cloning*, (New York: Inter-varsity Press, 2004), pp. 155-156.

¹⁸ Leon R. Kass and James Q. Wilson, *The Ethics of Human Cloning*, (Washington, D.C: AEI Press, 1998), p. 17.

On the other hand, the second author, James Q. Wilson offered much more solid argumentation regarding human cloning. Wilson asserts that whether a human life is created naturally or artificially is immaterial as long as the child is raised by loving parents in a two-parent family and is not harmed by the means of its conception. Wilson believes that we must resist making hasty legislative decisions and balance our fears with the potential benefits to society. We must, according to Wilson, consider the potential humanitarian and scientific merit that cloning human embryos holds. For example, cloned human embryonic research, many argue, is a promising means of finding cures for supposedly incurably illnesses and hereditary medical complications. Wilson also argues that the majority of our anxieties concerning human cloning are largely exaggerated. James Q. Wilson, John Harris a staunch supporter of human cloning in *"Goodbye Dolly?" The Ethics Of Human Cloning (1997)*, holds that the ethical implications of human clones have been much alluded to, but have seldom been examined with any rigour. Thus, he examines the possible uses and abuses of human cloning and draws out the principal ethical dimensions, both of what might be done and its meaning.

In response to some of the major public officials and authorities, such as former President Bill Clinton of the US, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the European Parliament, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and others reveal their inadequacies as foundations for a coherent public policy on human cloning. It ends up by defending a conception of reproductive rights of "procreative autonomy" which shows human cloning not to be inconsistent with human rights and dignity.

He asserts:

Cloning does not produce identical copies Of the Same individual person. It can only produce identical Copies of the same genotype. Our Experience of identical twins demonstrates that each is a separate individual with his or her own character, preferences and so on. Although there is some evidence of striking similarities with respect to these factors in twins, there is no question but that each twin is a distinct individual, as independent and as free as is anyone else. To Clone Bill Clinton is not to create multiple Presidents of the United States. Artificial Clones do not raise any difficulties not raised by the phenomenon of "natural" twins. We do not feel apprehensive when natural twins are born, why should we when twins are deliberately created?¹⁹

¹⁹ John Harris, "Goodbye Dolly?" *The Ethics of Human Cloning* in *Journal Of Medical Ethics*, Vol. 23, 1997, p. 353.

In reaction to the claims of James Q. Wilson and John Harris in their support to human cloning, Pantaleon Iroegbu in the book he co-edited with Anthony Echekwube titled: *Kpim of Morality: Ethics General, Special and Professional* strongly objected to human cloning both from philosophical, moralistic, ethical, religious and natural law standpoint. He argues that cloning diminishes the dignity of human beings, strips humans of respect and becomes objects that can be used for experimental material. According to him, argument from human dignity is based on two counts: “the first is that cloning treats human beings as ‘replaceable’. Secondly, cloning ‘instrumentalises’ the human person. Instead of treating the person as ends (Kant), it makes the person a pure utility object.”²⁰ Furthermore, Pantaleon Iroegbu makes a critique on those who favour human cloning on the ground that it will help to solve infertility for couples. He maintains:

When cloners for instance claim that cloning will solve infertility cases, it should be noted that infertility as such is not a disease. Infertility does not threaten life of people. Indeed, we have much more serious problems that could be looked into by medical scientists...However, that cloning can help in treating diseases is welcome.²¹

In *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Cloning*, Jay D. Gralla and Preston Gralla give a comprehensive understanding of biotechnology and cloning in general. The authors bring to our awareness the fact that the technologies that will define our time in the coming generations are: cloning and biotechnology. They hold that the advancement made in the past decades has been tremendous and they are only a taste of what is yet to come. They raise the following pertinent questions: If a person can be cloned from our genes, for example, then what makes each of us a unique individual? Thus, the controversial nature of human cloning; including, political, religious and ethical views confront us anew.

Thus far, we have been able to engage with the divergent positions on the status of cloning for humanity. The legal, religious, and even celestial implications attendant to it has been the onus of the tinkering. It is at this point that one needs to tender the Kantian approach which is the mainstay of this study.

Immanuel Kant's Moral Philosophy and Its Implications of Human Cloning

The aim of this section is to assess the moral underpinning of cloning from the

²⁰ Pantaleon Iroegbu, “Cloning: Reality and Morality” in *Kpim of Morality*, Pantaleon Iroegbu and Anthony Echekwube (ed), (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 2005), p.645.

²¹ Ibid. p.645.

thoughts of Immanuel Kant. It needs to be stated from the outset that this essay is not the first to employ his reflection on the subject. It would therefore be elucidating to ride on the shoulders of this intellectual giant as we assess the moral implications of cloning from Kant's perspective. However, before assessing the subject from this angle, it is not incorrect to explore the place of the other traditional normative theory known as utilitarianism on the subject. Utilitarianism has its root in the philosophies of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). Bentham held to a hedonistic utilitarianism, which maintains that the most moral acts are those that maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Mill developed his approach away from hedonism and more toward a general concept of maximizing the general happiness or the greatest good for the greatest number. Opinions as to how 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number' may be achieved are in two groups. While the first holds that outcomes - if they afford the greatest happiness for the greatest number - are the sole determinant of right and wrong, the other appeals to established rules; yet both divides are fraught with inadequacies as the end does not justify the means.

In critiquing utilitarianism, it is first *teleological* in orientation. In other words, it stresses the end or goal of actions which should be the major purpose. In as much as human cloning would be beneficial to many, it should be encouraged not minding the many embryos that could be lost before achieving the end result- the human person. Hence, Barbara MacKinnon says: It is not sufficient to say we ought to do that which has the best results or consequences because this itself does not tell us which type of consequences are good.”²² Secondly, it is also a *consequentialist* moral theory in which utilitarianism as a consequentialist moral theory holds that it is the consequences or ends of our actions that determined whether particular means to them are justified. Therefore since an ethical normative theory on human cloning cannot be utilitarian, then another normative ethical approach in evaluating human conducts is the Kantian deontological ethics which stresses on the value of human dignity. Recognizing the fact that human cloning attacks the idea of humanity in Kant's moral ethics becomes an indispensable tool in evaluating the rightness or wrongness of human cloning. Kant's moral principle demands that every person must 'act in such a way that you treat humanity whether in your own person or in any other person, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means'²³. This Kantian Categorical Imperative captures a plausible and important moral intuition, that there is something special about persons which makes them deserving of at least some basic moral consideration. In *Basic Writings of Kant*, Allen W. Wood, a moral philosopher specializing in the work of Immanuel Kant and the field of German

²² Barbara MacKinnon, *Ethics Theory and Contemporary Issues*, (Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007), p. 3.

²³ Immanuel, Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment*, Lewis White Beck, (trans.), (New York: The Liberal Arts 1959), p.186.

idealism and with particular interests in ethics and social philosophy, gives a comprehensive summary of Kant's contributions to modern thought and gathers together the most respected translations of Kant's key moral and political writings, while Commenting on the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* he opines:

Kant's little book of 1785 is one of the most significant texts in the history of ethics. It has been a standard of reference—sometimes a model to be developed and expanded on, sometimes a target of criticism for moral philosophers from the German idealist and German Romantic traditions, for Victorians of the utilitarian school such as Mill and Sedgwick, for later British idealists such as Green and Bradley, for the neo-Kantians, for twentieth-century philosophers in both the continental and the Anglophone traditions, and for moral philosophers of all persuasions right down to the present day. From the standpoint of the depth and originality of the ideas it contains, it undoubtedly deserves this influence. But in the development of Kant's own moral thinking, it occupies a place that ought to make us question the wisdom of treating it, the way moral philosophers customarily do, as the definitive statement of Kant's views on ethics²⁴.

Despite the notorious difficulty of Kant's texts, many have found his ethical theory to capture some deeply compelling intuition about the inalienable worth of humanity. The intuitive appeal of humanity formulation has long been recognized as it has its influence on moral issues in medical ethics and other areas of applied ethics. Recent commentators have also become more inclined to regard the humanity formulation as the central normative principle in Kant's ethics.²⁵ Championing the argument of human dignity in the light of Kant Paschal Nwaezeapu, in his work: *Bioethics: Childlessness and Artificial Reproduction* asserts that, “human beings have inherent dignity, and the way we bring a child into existence should conform to this dignity.”²⁶ He went further to argue that the inherent dignity in human beings make some reproductive techniques to have intensively been criticized as being unworthy of human dignity. He further buttressed his claims when he reinstated the Kantian second formulation of the categorical imperative about the intrinsic worth of the human person. According to Immanuel Kant, “Everything has either a price or a

²⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Allen W. Wood (ed.), (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. ix.

²⁵ Dean, Richard, *The Value of Humanity in Kants Moral Theory*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p.3

²⁶ Paschal Nwaezeapu, *Bioethics: Childlessness and Artificial Reproduction*, (Phoenix, Arizona: Leonine Publishers, 2011), p. 192.

dignity. If it has a price, something else can be put in its place as an equivalent; if it is exalted above all price and so admits of no equivalent, then it has dignity”²⁷. For Immanuel Kant, human dignity requires that every person be treated “never merely as means, but always also as an end”²⁸

In the light of the above, one positive feature of the Kantian categorical imperative is its emphasis on the moral “equality of all rational beings”²⁹, which is implied in his view about the nature of moral obligation as universally binding. We should not make exceptions for ourselves but only do what we can for all. Human cloning strips the cloner this sense of equality in that one who is cloned as warrior will be expected to act as such and others inferior or vice versa. Moral obligation and morality itself flow from our nature as persons as rational and autonomous. Morality is grounded in the ways in which we are alike as persons rather than the ways in which we are different as individuals. Not to treat others as equal as a person with equal dignity is, in a way, disrespecting them. Not to be willing to make the same judgment for cases similar to one's own, or not to be willing to have the same rules apply to all could be viewed as a form of hypocrisy. When we criticize these behaviors, we act in the spirit of Immanuel Kant.

Immanuel Kant was a deontologist; this means that he made ethical decisions by considering the nature of the act itself, not its consequences. Kant would not be interested in the benefits of human cloning, but in the sorts of actions that human cloning is involved. By human dignity, Kant means that the human being, which is also the “person” “man” or the “rational being” has an absolute inner worth. Kant understands the human person as an intrinsically free being that is an end in itself. The human being is “endowed with inner freedom.”³⁰ This inner freedom, Kant goes on to say, constitutes the “innate dignity of a human being”³¹ and is the “only original right belonging to every man by virtue of his humanity”³² The human being by virtue of this freedom possesses autonomy.³³ Kant's most often quoted categorical imperative as his paradigm on the absolute inner value of human dignity, which is “to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only.”³⁴

²⁷ Immanuel Kant, “Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals”, Translated H. J. Paton Harper and Row in *Bioethics: Childlessness and Artificial Reproduction*, Paschal Nwaezeapu, (Phoenix, Arizona: Leonine Publishers, 2011), p. 192.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 192.

²⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Kant: Political Writings*, H. S. Reiss (Editor), H. B. Nisbet (Translator), 2nd ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 226.

³⁰ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Part II – Metaphysical first principles of the doctrine of virtue, translated and edited by Mary Gregor, Cambridge University Press 13th edition 2009), p. 174.

³¹ Ibid. p. 175.

³² Ibid. p. 30.

³³ Ibid. pp. 448- 453.

³⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of The Metaphysics of Morals* in “*Basic writings of Kant*” Allen Wood (ed.), (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), p. 186.

The dignity of the human person, Kant then says, finds its basis in its autonomy since “as an end in himself he is destined to be a lawgiver in the realm of ends, and free from all laws of nature and obedient only to those laws which he himself gives.”³⁵ The human being has an absolute worth in and of itself “that has no price.”³⁶ The absoluteness is rooted in human freedom, which finds its expression in the absolute autonomy of the human person. We can therefore legitimately lay claim, Kant says, to respect from every other human being and the state, one should add as the recognition of the dignity of each human being that lies in this absolute inner worth. He calls this “the dignity of humanity in every other human being” that raises human beings above all things³⁷. The absolute worth of the human person makes Immanuel Kant write thus:

In the kingdom of ends everything has either Value or Dignity. Whatever has a value can be replaced by something else as its *equivalent*; on the other hand, whatever is above all value and therefore admits to no equivalent, has dignity.³⁸

Furthermore, he says:

This estimation therefore shows that the worth of such a disposition is dignity, and places it infinitely above all value, with which it cannot for a moment be brought into comparison or competition without as it were violating its sanctity.³⁹

Hence, the act of rational choice (autonomy), of conferring value, is proper to humans alone. Human beings are the sole species that possess the capacity to determine ends, that is, defining goal(s) to which choices would eventually lead. Korsgaard writes:

It is Kant's view throughout his moral philosophy that every action “contains” an end; there is no action done without some end in view. The difference between morally worthy action and morally indifferent action is that in the first case the end is adopted because it is dictated by reason and in the second case the end is adopted in response to an inclination for it. [T]he morally worthy man has adopted this end because it is a duty to have such an end.⁴⁰

³⁵ Ibid. p.192.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 209.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 209

³⁸ Ibid. p.192.

³⁹ Ibid. p.192.

⁴⁰ Korsgaard, C.M., *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 107-108.

Thus, the moral law, according to Kant, forbids any man to be used simply as a means to an end. “This must have influenced Karl Marx's strong protest against the exploitation of man by man.”⁴¹ It is an offence against human dignity to use being simply as an instrument to attain one's end. Collaborating this, Paschal Nwaezeapu writes: ...human beings have an inherent dignity...As a result; some reproductive techniques have come under intense criticism as being unworthy of human dignity.”⁴² Therefore, any artificial reproductive system (example, human cloning) contravenes Kantian second formulation of the categorical imperative about the intrinsic worth of human beings.

In contrast to humans beings, Immanuel Kant would say, animals have value only insofar as they serve human purposes. Human beings though animals, but they are animals with worth, value, dignity and sanctity. So far as low animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals ... are there merely as means to an end; and that end is man. We can therefore use animals in any way we please. We do not even have a “direct duty” to refrain from torturing them. Kant admits that it is, probably wrong to torture them, but the reason is not that they would be hurt; the reason is only that we might suffer indirectly as a result of it. As Kant says; “he who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals.”⁴³ Hence, mere animals, Kant holds have no importance at all but human beings have.

Furthermore, we might ask whether some technologies themselves treat persons as mere means. Such a worry is similar to Heidegger's view that, under modern technology, humanity becomes a “standing reserve” to be exploited, and to Marcuse's claim that such a technological society debases humans by providing a “smooth comfortable unfreedom.” While these critics of technology do not identify themselves as Kantians, the influence of Immanuel Kant's humanistic account of duties has been so deep and broad that it is almost inescapable. He specifies that in order to be a universal law, and thus morally right, one must be able to consistently conceive of an action being appropriate for everyone. Under Immanuel Kant's Universal Law Formation, a person must act in a certain way under certain circumstances in every instance and also contend that it would be appropriate for everyone else to act in the same way under those circumstances. In the case of cloning in some societies, social actors are operating under the maxim: “I will subject clones to nonconsensual organ harvesting whenever doing so helps my family or me persist in our own lives.” The members of such societies must consistently conceive

⁴¹ Omoregbe Joseph, *Ethics A Systematic and Historical*, (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd, 1993), p. 224.

⁴² Paschal Nwaezeapu, *Bioethics: Childlessness and Artificial Reproductive*, (Phoenix Arizona: Leonine Publishers, 2011), p. 192.

⁴³ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, Louis Infield (Translator), (New York: Harper Torch books, 1963), p. 240.

of such a world wherein everyone subjects clones to nonconsensual organ harvesting whenever doing so helps their families or their own ends. While this may be conceivable, and indeed exists for these societies, it fails Kant's Humanity Formation. To treat clones, which we have established as persons, as mere means to an end is morally impermissible⁴⁴. If the clones did not possess personhood, then it would be permissible under Kantian moral theory for them to be used as mere means, since it is only persons who ought to be regarded as ends in and of themselves.

Conclusion

In normative ethics the claim that “human beings have dignity or worth” amounts to a general claim about how we should treat human beings - namely, as value for their own sake, not as mere instruments to other ends or goals, as the categorical imperative and Kant's further elaborated principle of humanity (the formula of the end itself) tells us. “Contemporary neo-Kantians and many bioethicists have endorsed versions of this principle. According to these writers, human beings have intrinsic moral worth because they can act as moral agents.”⁴⁵ The principle of humanity also implies that moral worth is held equally, as it does not make sense to say that someone has greater moral value than someone else does. If this were not the case, it would be no ethical conflict to sacrifice one person of lesser moral worth in order to benefit another person of greater moral worth. Human cloning challenges who we are, and more importantly, who we *can* become. It is this central thesis of Kant's human dignity that is sympathetic to the Catholic and Christian foundation on human dignity that unfolds the eroding and unwholesome consequences of cloning.

References

- American Medical Association (AMA), *Why We Should Not Clone Humans*, available at: <http://www.amawhyweshouldnotclonehumans.htm>. retrieved on 7 March, 2015.
- Bryant, J. Searle, J. *Life in our hands: Christian perspective on genetics and cloning*, (New York: Inter-varsity Press, 2004),
- Dean, R. *The Value of Humanity in Kant's Moral Theory*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press)
- Goodnough, D. *The Debate Over Human Cloning: A Pro/Con Issues*, (New Jersey: Enslow Publishers, Inc., 2003)
- Handelsman, J.C. *The Concise Medical Encyclopedia* (ed.), (Fort Lauderdale: Paradise Press Inc., 1998).

⁴⁴ Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*, (New York: Vintage, 2006), p.81.

⁴⁵ Hill, T., *Dignity and Practical Reason in Kant's Moral Theory*, (New York: Cornell University Press Ithaca, 1992), P. 50.

- Harris, J. "Goodbye Dolly?" The Ethics of Human Cloning" in *Journal Of Medical Ethics*, Vol. 23, 1997
- Hill, T., *Dignity and Practical Reason in Kant's Moral Theory*, (New York: Cornell University Press Ithaca, 1992).
- Hornby, A.S. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, 6th ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).
- Iroegbu, P. "Cloning: Reality and Morality", *Kpim of Morality Ethics*, Pantaleon Iroegbu and Anthony Echekwube (eds.), (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 2006)
- Kanu, Ikechukwu A. (2022). *Greek and Utilitarian Ethics*. Delivered at Veritas University, Department of Philosophy 15th February 2022.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu A. (2022). *Classics in Ethics*. Delivered at Veritas University, Department of Philosophy 30th April 2022.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu A. (2022). *Professional Ethics*. Delivered at Veritas University, Department of Philosophy 2nd April 2022.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu A. (2022). *Ethical Issues in Science and Technology*. Delivered at Veritas University, Department of Philosophy 2nd April 2022.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu A. (2022). *Ethical Theories*. Delivered at Veritas University, Department of Philosophy 14th April 2022.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu A. (2022). *Aesthetic Theory*. Delivered at Veritas University, Department of Philosophy 22nd April 2022.
- Kanu, Ikechukwu A. (2018). African bioethics in the face of globalization. *Oracle of Wisdom Journal of Philosophy and Public Affairs*. Vol. 2. No. 1. pp. 1-6.
- Kant, I. "Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals", Translated H. J. Paton Harper and Row in *Bioethics: Childlessness and Artificial Reproduction*, Paschal Nwaezeapu, (Phoenix, Arizona: Leonine Publishers, 2011).
- Kant, I. *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Part II – Metaphysical first principles of the doctrine of virtue, translated and edited by Mary Gregor, Cambridge University Press 13th edition 2009.
- Kant, I. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Allen W. Wood (ed.), (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002)
- Kant, I. *Kant: Political Writings*, H. S. Reiss (Editor), H. B. Nisbet (Translator), 2nd

- ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- Kant, I. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Herbert James Paton (Translator), (New York, Harper and Row, 1964).
- Kant, I. *Lectures on Ethics*, Louis Infield (Translator), (New York: Harper Torch books, 1963).
- Kant, I. *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment*, Lewis White Beck, (trans.), (New York: The Liberal Arts 1959)
- Kass, L.R., Wilson, J.Q. *The Ethics of Human Cloning*, (Washington, D.C: AEI Press, 1998)
- Kazuo. I. *Never Let Me Go*, (New York: Vintage, 2006).
- Korsgaard, C.M., *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- Levine, A.L. Aaron L. Levine, *Cloning: A Beginner's Guide*, (Oxfordshire: Oneworld Publication, 2007)
- MacKinnon, B. *Ethics Theory and Contemporary Issues*, (Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007).
- Nwaezeapu, P. *Bioethics: Childlessness and Artificial Reproductive*, (Phoenix Arizona: Leonine Publishers, 2011)
- Nwaezeapu, P. *When does the Human Person Beings? Moral Status of the Embryo and Technology: An Expository Study*, (Rome: LEBERIT S.r.l Press, 2007)
- Omoregbe, J. *Ethics A Systematic and Historical*, (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd, 1993).
- Rae, S.B. *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics*, (New York: Zondervan, 1995)
- Rantala M. L. and Arthur J. Milgram *Cloning: For and Against*, (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1999)
- Sherlock, R., Morrry, J.D. *Ethical Issues in Biotechnology*, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2006)
- Tarama, R.L. *Cloning: Opposing Viewpoints*, (New Jersey: Thomson Gale, 2006)
- Varga, A.C. *The Main Issues in Bioethics*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1980)