

Cloning: Its Implications and Limits

IT HAS BEEN ten months since researchers at the Roslin Institute near Edinburgh, Scotland, made public (in *Nature* 2/24/97) the startling news that they had produced a biological replica of a sheep by positioning one cell drawn from its udder next to another sheep's egg cell whose nuclear DNA had been removed but whose cellular machinery necessary to generate an embryo remained intact. When placed in this close proximity and stimulated by a slight electrical current, the two cells fused, the DNA from the udder cell remarkably activating the egg cell's reproductive mechanism as if natural fertilization had taken place. The in vitro egg, now viable and subdividing, was placed in a surrogate sheep and brought to term as a clone or carbon copy of its "parent." But here the parent's progeny is its identical twin!

It is not the human manipulation *per se* involved in creating this animal that is new or unsettling, for laboratory fertilization and genetically altered animals have been produced for some time. In this instance, though, the newborn is not the product of two parents, male and female chromosomes coming from their respective providers. Here no real fertilization takes place because the genetic code is given whole, the donor has submitted a microcosm of its physical totality to be embryonically elaborated into its present equivalent.

Or is it? For animals somatic near equivalence is possible because whole species are defined by their biological congruence and variations in body appearance are minimal, even with two parents. For the group soul, exercising control over its charges from the Desire World, not only conditions



Planet Art

Michelangelo Merisi, called Il Caravaggio (1569-1609)

Narcissus

The fatal vanity of the Greek youth may have a message for those who would choose their clone over God's creation.

behavior as instinct, but also can influence physical structures and physiology through the etheric formative forces.

In the case of humans, however, the situation is significantly different, for each incarnating Ego has free will and is its own "group spirit." This individualization of the species *homo sapiens* produces much greater morphological variation among its members since personality will modulate inherited physical structures and appearance.

Assuming this newly discovered procedure were used to generate human bodies, what might we expect? The body type given by the single-donor (genetic) parent would already have been identified and correlated to the particular needs of the Ego seeking rebirth. Were that "parent" female and able to bear children, she would also be the cell's carrier or mother; that is, assuming that a specialized cell could revert (as in the case of the sheep)

to the primitive, undifferentiated totipotent cell that initiates the natural cycle of embryonic development. Were the genetic provider a male or female unable to bring the cell to term, a surrogate carrier would be found.

These biological concerns would not, in and of themselves, alter the occult process involved in Ego descent into the etheric and dense physical bodies being prepared for it. Historically, spiritual development has required that incoming Egos seek increasingly diversified body types derived from mixing highly disparate parental genes. In body cloning, this process of exogamy would be replaced by an extreme form of endogamy, which historically referred to reproducing within the tribe, clan, or extended family. But single parent “twinning” would constitute ultimate incest—self-begetting. If generation within the same blood lines retained negative clairvoyance, magnified genetic flaws, and weakened genetic vigor, what would be the effect of self-generation?

The eugenic argument labors under the materialistic misapprehension that what is variously called personality, character, or soul, is a function of, even determined by, genotype. Thus, to produce more Einsteins, one need but coddle Einstein’s genetic profile contained in one cell’s DNA and nine months later—presto! another baby genius is born. But the body doesn’t confer genius. The individual incarnating Spirit is the source of all accomplishments and aptitudes that the person’s physical instrument may manifest. The body selected by the Ego will be determined by its evolutionary requirements.

Even on its own terms the new prospect of single parent eugenics—self-twinning—does not take account of the astrological law that distinguishes between so-called identical twins, who, though looking very much alike and showing similar traits and biographies, will be responding to different natal star patterns, the most mutable variable being the ascendant’s degree, which, changing every four minutes, is especially determinative of physical form. Also, such twins are two Egos who have chosen to receive similar stellar baptisms but have free will to use those energies as they see best fit.

An acute, if somewhat tongue-in-cheek observation was made by Robert Wright in a *Time* maga-

zine article (March 10, 1997) on cloning. He wrote: “No one has articulated the most frightening peril posed by human cloning: rampant self-satisfaction.” Those most likely to clone themselves would be “people who think the world could use more of them.” It is nothing short of invidious philanthropy that one would bequeath his “spitting image” to posterity, whose last will and testament is to will himself as inherited property. Fortunately the endowment excludes the transmission of character. Is this not the acme of narcissism? of self-infatuated promiscuity? One looks into the mirror of one’s biological clone to see not an illusory image but a flesh-and-bone facsimile, flesh of one’s flesh.

In the same article, Wright also derides the bland assumption that physical cloning packages the entire person so that the soul is, in effect, xeroxed. But might not those who most desire such bogus self-extension and self-perpetuation (the next best thing to physical immortality) be just those who don’t even acknowledge the existence of soul (certainly not spirit) as an independent and prior element of being, the true seat of consciousness? Their physical self-extension would further immure them in the material perspective.

While genetic structures may have a common source, two twins, whether the same age or generations apart, can never occupy the same space (Siamese twins included) and are thus subject to different environmental influences and choices.

What would be the karma of one who chose to singly reproduce himself? Would his self-fascination be purgatorially multiplied by living among a million identical forms, though now distorted by the exact shape of Desire World vanity until awful tedium and self-loathing set in? And in a subsequent embodiment might one be “stuck with oneself,” become “sick of oneself” in twelfth house confinement until the lessons of humility and charity were learned?

Material geneticists have it backward. Physical form (based on DNA) does not determine experience or character. It is simply the tool or instrument by which the indwelling three-fold Spirit gains experience and shapes its environment, including its dense and etheric bodies, which impacts will modify the genotype for its inheritors. □