



Research Article

Unravelling the Ethical Enigma of Human Cloning in Nancy Farmer's *The House of the Scorpion*

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Abstract

Nancy Farmer's novel *The House of the Scorpion* deals with complex ethical dilemmas stemming from scientific advancements, particularly in cloning. The story unfolds in a dystopian society, focusing on the treatment of clones—subhuman beings relegated to slaughter or servitude. These clones provoke profound questions about human rights, autonomy, and the impact of technology. The paper scrutinizes their status as human entities, revealing the ethical violations perpetrated against them. By drawing insights from scholars like Childress, Beauchamp, Leon R. Kass, and James Q. Wilson, the study provides a nuanced exploration of the ethical dimensions surrounding clone treatment and its broader implications for autonomy.

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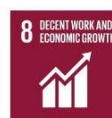
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Introduction

Dismissing a certain group of people's identities and human rights in a society leads to a universal disrespect for human life and dignity. Protecting fundamental human rights is important in a democracy because it reduces group conflict and promotes peaceful cooperation. It is necessary to ensure the preservation of human rights across the nation. Humans are born with a natural desire for equality, freedom, and security. Many countries have strengthened their legal systems by incorporating fundamental human rights and notions.

In posthuman society, medical sciences and technologies have been developed. The public interest in human cloning is high. Many contemporary philosophers in this predicament are focused on the outcome of clone creation even though it is prohibited. In terms of human cloning, medical technology produces monozygotic twins that have an identity and share the same physical and mental processes. It might introduce contemporary culture, ideas and behaviour into a dystopian society. Embryos can be developed in labs by using artificial reproductive methods like in-vitro-fertilization. One of the couples can use donated sperm or eggs if the other cannot produce healthy ones. Couples can choose an optimal donor with the desired features, allowing them to determine the traits of the child by using IVF technology. It grants an absurd amount of power and control over the formation of another person. IVF technology is widely utilised for infertility treatment around the world. Many argue that technology also helps in the artificial conception of humans and permits parents to alter the genetic makeup of their children. Kass believes the idea of cloning is used to help infertile couples have children. They will be able to prevent the potential of passing down abnormalities and diseases to their children and be able to have kids with at least one parent's genetic makeup. If the clones are born solely for reproduction, they will receive sufficient care and protection.

The act of creating human clones is equivalent to making human beings. If given priority, the cloned human will lack a precise identity and human rights. However, the public thinks that a cloned person is not human and was produced by artificial means of reproduction. In this situation, clones are given terrible importance. On the other hand, the cloned human feels ashamed, repulsed and alienated in modern society. As Farmer shows in the novel *The House of the Scorpion*, minority groups are frequently subject to severe human rights violations under totalitarian governments. The book *Our Posthuman Future* by Francis Fukuyama emphasises the consequences of the biotechnology revolution that safeguards human life, dignity, reason, moral choices, sociability, sentience and awareness.

Novels like *Frankenstein*, *Brave New World*, *The House of the Scorpion*, and films like *Jurassic Park* and *Blade Runner* have piqued public interest in significant ethical concerns surrounding human cloning. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* illustrates the negative side of scientific experimentation as Victor Frankenstein's creation of a monster disrupts the peaceful life, laws and functioning of society. Similarly, Farmer's *The House of the Scorpion* emphasises the danger of dehumanisation and commodification of humans. Clone centres that affect culture, society, and behaviour impair human relationships.

Since Ian Wilmut's successful cloning of Dolly the sheep in 1997, the potential to generate genetically identical individuals through somatic nuclear cell transfer has been interesting. This

process involves transferring the nucleus of a somatic cell to an unfertilized egg cell, followed by electric stimulation. After developing into a blastocyst, it is transferred to a surrogate mother's uterus. Although the process is perilous, leading to premature deaths and severe disabilities in most cases, Dolly became the first cloned fetus to survive through somatic nuclear cell transfer. The concept of cloning humans has been contentious since its inception. Ian Wilmut stated that "unethical and quite inhumane" (Kass, 1998, p. 18). In a hypothetical scenario where cloning technology advances sufficiently to avoid endangering lives, it would still pose challenges to civil and human rights. The process might compromise individual identity and autonomy and diminish the value of human life and dignity.

James Q. Wilson, in *The Paradox of Cloning*, argues for a ban on cloning children without parents, which emphasises the importance of family for their upbringing and protection. If cloning is perfected and is considered ethically neutral, objections often stem from concerns that it might commodify human lives. In 1997, following the creation of the first cloned mammal, President Bill Clinton banned human cloning research, a move mirrored by many countries globally.

Societal ethical and moral codes, influenced by cultural, religious and social factors, contribute to diverse viewpoints on cloning and genetic engineering. Nancy Farmer's *The House of the Scorpion* is an illustrative example, depicting gross human rights violations at individual and social levels due to cloning. This paper aims to analyse the bioethical aspects of cloning using *The Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. By delving into these perspectives, it seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex ethical considerations surrounding cloning in different societal contexts.

Biotechnological advancements such as cloning, gene therapy and genetic engineering involving human elements prompt significant legal and ethical considerations. Non-consensual medical procedures, verging on human experimentation, clash with fundamental medical ethics principles. The present technology's attempt to clone human beings poses potential risks to lives. Concerns about human cloning often stem from an inaccurate understanding of the procedure and an intrinsic aversion to the idea of replicating humans in laboratories. In his essay, *Wisdom of Repugnance*, Leon R. Kass explores the source of this repulsion, attributing it to an intuitive grasp of potential socio-political repercussions. Cloning humans may compromise individuality and complicate family dynamics. The cloning technology itself is seen as ethically neutral, with the morality of an action hinging on its intent. Kass suggests that the aversion to cloning is not inherently tied to the technology but rather to its perceived consequences and ethical implications. In essence, the ethical discourse surrounding biotechnological inventions like cloning is multifaceted, encompassing concerns about individual rights, familial structures and broader societal impacts. The intention behind these technologies becomes a critical factor in determining their ethical standing. In her review in *The New York Times Book Review*, Rosenblatt praises Farmer's narrative style, particularly her ability to blend speculative fiction with real-world issues. She highlights how "The House of the Scorpion" uses a dystopian setting to explore universal themes of freedom and individuality (Rosenblatt, 2004).

Nancy Farmer's *The House of the Scorpion* offers a profound exploration of the ethical dilemmas surrounding human cloning, a topic of significant debate within bioethics. Set in a

dystopian future, the novel follows the life of Matteo "Matt" Alacrán, a young clone of a powerful drug lord, El Patrón. Through Matt's journey, Farmer delves into complex questions about identity, humanity, and the moral implications of cloning. Cloning, as represented in *The House of the Scorpion*, raises numerous ethical concerns that resonate with real-world debates. One major issue is the treatment and rights of clones. In the novel, clones are generally viewed as subhuman and are subjected to mistreatment. This portrayal echoes bioethical arguments about the potential for exploitation and dehumanization of clones. According to Kass (1998), "cloning could lead to a society where clones are seen as mere commodities or tools, lacking autonomy and individuality" (Kass, 1998). Farmer's narrative aligns with Kass's warnings, illustrating a world where Matt's worth is measured solely by his utility to El Patrón. This dehumanization is vividly portrayed in scenes where clones are subjected to brain-deadening drugs to ensure they cannot assert their own will, emphasizing the ethical nightmare of reducing human beings to mere objects.

Ethical Implications of Human Cloning in *The House of the Scorpion*

The novel is semi-autobiographical and inspired by Nancy Farmer's childhood. It unfolds along the Mexican border, a region marked by illegal crossings into the United States.

This theme intersects with recent debates on border security, prominently discussed during Donald Trump's presidency. Recent research indicates that a significant number of individuals from Mexico have entered the United States illegally (undocumented migration) due to inadequate border security measures, with many later adjusting their status to become American citizens. (Mazza, 2017).

It depicts a totalitarian dystopian state where advanced scientific innovations pose a threat to human life and dignity. The narrative centres on Matt, a cloned version of El-Patron, the authoritative leader of Opium. Author Nancy Farmer dismantles myths about cloning by examining the personal traits of the creation and the creator. Matt's unconventional birth, cloned from a single skin cell and grown inside a cow, becomes a pretext for demeaning and dehumanizing him, leaving him without parental protection.

Getting a clone from a laboratory would be like getting a puppy from a pet store: Both creatures might be charming, but neither would belong in any meaningful emotional sense to the owner. And unclaimed clones would be disposed of the same way as unclaimed puppies—killed (Wilson, 1998, p. 66).

El-Patron driven by a perverse desire for immortality, receives organs from his clones, perceiving Matt as a means to extend his own life. Unlike other clones, Matt's brain remains unscrambled, affording him the luxury of an education. The narcissistic El-Patron takes pleasure in witnessing his younger version evolve into a talented and intelligent adult despite the original purpose of raising him for organ harvesting. In the city of Opium, everyone, including doctors, is compelled to partake in atrocities for their safety. The elite class fosters hatred towards clones, justifying their subhuman status and inhumane treatment as beings created for society's most demeaning purposes. The narrative critically examines the dehumanizing consequences of unchecked power

and scientific advancements, portraying a society where clones face subjugation and cruelty, reflecting broader societal issues and ethical quandaries.

Farmer uses Matt's character to explore whether a clone, created as an exact genetic copy, can possess a unique identity and soul. This theme intersects with the philosophical debate on personal identity and what it means to be human. Sandel (2004) argues that cloning challenges people's understanding of individuality and the natural process of human development, potentially leading to a loss of human dignity (Sandel, 2004). Matt's struggle for acceptance and self-identity in *The House of the Scorpion* underscores Sandel's concerns. Despite being a clone, Matt experiences emotions, dreams, and growth that mark him as undeniably human. His journey challenges the other characters and the readers to reconsider the arbitrary boundaries that define humanity.

El Patron's focus is on viewing oneself as a project for personal self-creation. The advancements in cloning technology could be exploited for purposes that are not only ethically problematic but also potentially dangerous, invoking historical figures known for atrocities. One set of those problems requires us to imagine scientists' cloning children to harvest organs and body parts or to produce for later use by Adolf Hitler or Saddam Hussein.

I have no doubt that mad scientists will be willing to do those things. He creates clones for the immortal living. Doctors and medical progress help to replace body parts from the clone. (Wilson, 2002, p.64)

Eduardo, one of El Patron's loyal followers, is ruthlessly exploited to ensure the successful creation of El Patron's clone, even at the dire cost of his own life and the well-being of his family.

This one's different. Benito told me. Technicians are supposed to destroy the minds at birth—it's the law. But El Patron wanted him to grow up like a real boy. He's so rich, he can break any law he wants. (Farmer, 2002, p. 26).

The passage illustrates El Patron's abuse of ethics as he manipulates the laws he has established for his own benefit. As Opium's leader, he views himself as beyond the reach of any law within the country. "The Farmers were the real aristocrats here. They ruled the drug empire that formed the border between the United States and Aztlan" (Farmer, 2002, p. 98). He uses his authority to bend the law to his will. For instance, the regulations dictate that technicians should promptly incapacitate the clones' minds at birth. Nevertheless, El Patron insists that his clone should have a regular upbringing like any other child, ensuring that the technicians do not disable his clone's brain.

El Patron further abuses his authority by sacrificing the lives of his followers. He cultivates Matt for the sole purpose of preserving his own life. Matt's brain is intentionally left intact in this process, exposing him to the hardships of independent thought. This includes the mistreatment he receives from the children of the Alacran household, who refuse to acknowledge him as a living being "You're ugly, said the boy. "You look like a pig in a sty" (Farmer, 2002, p. 45), as well as the abuse he endures from Rosa, which leaves him temporarily unable to speak due to the trauma " He understood he was only a photography of a human, and that meant he wasn't really important" (Farmer, 2002, p. 84).

El Patron manipulates the doctors who implanted fatal brain chips in him by rewarding them generously for their actions. He purposefully sacrifices a life to extract the brain and rewards the doctors with substantial sums of money. The doctors exhibit their elation when El Patron presents them with several one-million-dollar checks. Through the power of money, El Patron effectively controls the doctors who are vital to the workforce. Most individuals would eagerly accept even a small portion of the wealth he provides. Money plays a significant role in this dynamic of power. Those who hold power are essentially aristocrats who control everything through their financial resources.

I shouldn't tell you these things at your age, but nobody gets a decent childhood in the Alacran household. They're all scorpions. Boy, did El Patron have it right when he picked the name.(Farmer, 2002, p. 123).

The above passage illustrates the unfortunate childhood experiences of every child in the Alacran household, including those associated with them. In the novel, six children endure this mistreatment: Maria, Emilia, Tom, Steven, Bonito, and Fani. Their parents prioritize amassing wealth and power over providing them with the love and attention they deserve as children. All these children bear the consequences of growing up in the Alacran household and its associated circles.

In the narrative, a group of clones known as eejits is crafted as slave workers. They were subjected to surgical brain modifications that strip them of free will, compelling obedience through implanted computer chips. Denied their status as thinking and feeling individuals, eejits exist solely to follow basic instructions and work on plantations for the wealthy and powerful. Matt, being a clone of the dictatorial leader, escapes this harsh fate, mistakenly interpreting the leader's interest in his well-being as compassion and love. Jeff McMahan's perspective is defined closely with the prevailing viewpoint in the society of Opium. Here, the clones' existence and identity are treated with disregard and emphasizing the prevailing dehumanizing perspective that shapes their reality. McMahan argues that:

My continued existence has depended upon the physical and functional capacity of enough of this brain to be capable of continuing to support consciousness. I will cease to exist when those areas of my brain in which consciousness is realized irreversibly lose the capacity to generate consciousness" (McMahan, 2002, p. 83).

McMahan's argument is intended to advocate for the use of cloned fetuses for organ generation. However, he projects that this argument alone could be distorted and used to "intervene to prevent the clone from ever developing the capacity for consciousness" (McMahan, 2002, p. 83). By destroying central brain functions, save those which allow the clone to grow and physically mature. Certainly, McMahan's contemporary argument regarding embodied minds could be linked to the rationale of genetic scientists in Opium.

The novel raises significant concerns about biomedical ethics, particularly the infringement upon the right to informed consent and autonomy. El-Patron, a narcissistic psychopath, utilizes new medical technology to achieve a form of immortality, perpetuating a cycle of human rights violations within the dystopian setting. The ethical implications resonate with Leon Kass's perspectives in *The Ethics of Human Cloning*, where he argues that restraining technology is

challenging as it inevitably finds ways to overcome moral, ethical and legal barriers. The narrative suggests that in undemocratic societies like *Opium*, human rights violations may become normalised, emphasizing the need to manage and regulate biotechnological inventions to prevent a bleak future. The novel serves as a cautionary tale, urging reflection on the ethical responsibilities associated with emerging technologies and the potential consequences of unchecked scientific advancements within oppressive societal structures.

The novel portrays a coexistence of clones and humans in the same society, shedding light on the psychological and sociological implications of cloning. Clones, considered a new marginalized group, face discrimination stemming from their unconventional origins. The state denies their personhood, nullifying their status as humans, and society at large dehumanizes them, viewing individuals born in labs as disgusting, humiliating and grotesque. Scientists manipulate genetic material during the cloning process, influencing the traits and lives of clones. This external control over their existence raises ethical concerns, particularly regarding the violation of human autonomy. Shaping the lives and futures of other humans through cloning is depicted as intrinsically unethical within the narrative. Despite the apparent risks associated with cloning, the novel suggests its inevitability, arguing that technological advancements will always find a way. The potential legalisation of human cloning, even if prohibited by democratic states, underscores the complexity of ethical considerations surrounding technological progress and the varying stances adopted by different societies. The political scientist Wilson argues in his article *The Paradox of Cloning*:

Largely, I think, when the cloned child has no parents, whether they acquire a child by normal birth, artificial insemination or adoption will in the overwhelming majority of cases, become deeply attached to the infant and care for it without regard to its origin (Wilson, 1998, p. 64).

Clones in the novel share both biological and psychological characteristics with humans. They are likened to late-born twins, possessing genetic material from their originals but showcasing distinct personality traits and skills. Nancy Farmer challenges the notion that clones are mere replicas by highlighting the unique qualities of individuals like Matt in contrast to their originals. The narrative deconstructs the idea of clones as exact copies by contrasting Matt's character with El-Patron. Unlike his predecessor, Matt displays sensitivity and kindness, showcasing individuality. He is portrayed as a logical, self-aware, and musically gifted human being, emphasising that despite sharing genetic origins, clones can develop their own distinctive qualities and attributes. The author highlights Matt's human qualities through his mentor Tam Lin, who emphasizes, "No one can tell the difference between a clone and human. That is because there is no difference. The idea of clones being different is a filthy lie" (Farmer, 2002, p. 245). The novel illustrates a scenario where the government allows citizens to mistreat and exploit clones without facing the consequences. The elite manipulate the truth to serve their interests, leading to the disownment of certain citizens and violence against them is permitted to go unpunished. Giorgio Agamben's concept of *Homo Sacer*, detailed in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* is referenced to explain this state of outcasts. In this context,

a society's threshold of biological modernity is situated at the point at which the species and the individual as a simple living body become what is at stake in a society's political strategies (Agamben,1998, p.10).

In contrast to the Eejits, who had their free will removed, Matt was spared and had a protector Celia during his childhood. Placed in seclusion for safety, he longed for the outside world and envied children playing outside. Despite isolation, Matt was shielded from harsh realities. Initially respected when introduced to the public, his true identity as a clone became apparent with a tattoo reading "The Property of Alcan Estate" (Farmer, 2002, p. 23). This revelation led to dehumanization and objectification by those around him.

In prison, Matt endured appalling conditions, living in a cage, consuming rotten food, and sleeping in excrement. Subjected to verbal and physical abuse, he was called a filthy animal, creature and beast. Despite his humanity, public perception labelled him a monster, evoking fear and disgust. Traumatized, Matt lost his ability to speak and acted insensitively, even humiliating his friend Maria in front of an audience. El Patron sees himself as a deity and the clones as his Adam, "I created you, Mi Vida, as God created Adam" (Farmer, 2002, p. 234). His strong attachment to his clones contrasts with his disregard for human life, fostering general hostility and opposition toward cloning. This attitude contributes to widespread animosity and hostility towards cloning among his subjects. As Crew points out, "*The House of the Scorpion* emphasizes the individual's uniqueness and value as a separate human being" (Crew, 2004, p. 208). As a result, clones find themselves relegated to a new societal section, facing discrimination and prejudice due to their unconventional origin. Clones in the novel are treated as livestock, serving as organ carriers and raised for slaughter under physical and psychological tyranny. Matt's captivity had a damaging impact on his personality, yet he exhibited empathy and kindness. El-Patron, the original human-turned-monster, extended his lifespan by extracting organs from clones. Evolving into a hoard of organs through perverse technology, he resembled Frankenstein's monster. Devoid of human emotions, El-Patron earned the moniker "Vampire of the Dreamland" (Farmer, 2002, p.354), draining life from clones to prolong his own, transforming into a predatory monster within the narrative.

Origin myths serve as foundational elements of culture and tradition, playing a crucial role in shaping societal values and beliefs. They often encourage the establishment of an illusory value on human life and existence, contributing to the construction of cultural identity. Origin myths play a significant role in attributing a sense of divinity or sacredness to human life, reinforcing the idea that human existence is intertwined with a higher purpose or cosmic design. In the context of the narrative, humans born in laboratories challenge conventional notions of origin myths. These individuals, created through scientific processes, become living reminders of a different form of normalcy. Their existence challenges traditional narratives and prompts society to reconsider its understanding of what is considered natural or divine. The juxtaposition of laboratory-born humans against established origin myths raises questions about the fluidity of cultural beliefs and the evolving nature of societal perceptions.

In an egalitarian society, safeguarding the rights of clones should be a fundamental consideration. Cloning involves transforming a single cell into an embryo, which then matures inside a surrogate uterus. Notably, the resulting newborn bears no genetic differences from the

original, emphasizing the identical nature of the two entities. This underscores the ethical imperative of addressing the rights and treatment of clones within the broader framework of societal values and equality.

While a child shares the same DNA as its mother, it evolves into a unique individual with distinct personality traits and interests. As it develops, the child transforms into a sentient being capable of rational thought and action. This emphasizes the dynamic nature of individuality and the role of personal experiences and environmental influences in shaping a person's identity. Despite the genetic connection, each individual emerges as a distinct and independent entity, highlighting the complex interplay between nature and nurture in forming human characteristics.

In society, the dismissal of the humanity of a particular group and the denial of their human rights can contribute to a broader disregard for human life and dignity. In a democratic setting, prioritizing the protection of fundamental human rights is crucial as it reduces intersectional friction and promotes peaceful coexistence among diverse groups. Safeguarding human rights holds international significance and ensuring protection across borders is of global importance. This perspective underscores the interconnectedness of human rights with societal harmony and the broader principles of democracy and international cooperation. This protection is essential at the individual level and on a national scale. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states No state, group, or person has any right to engage in any activity or perform any act aimed at destroying any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein. Humans inherently desire equality, freedom, and security, leading many countries to integrate fundamental human rights principles into their legal systems to fortify their foundations. The novel by Farmer vividly portrays how minority groups under dictatorial governments are particularly susceptible to severe human rights violations. This depiction underscores the vulnerability of marginalized communities in the face of oppressive regimes, emphasizing the critical importance of safeguarding human rights as a universal aspiration. The recognition of these rights serves as a cornerstone for fostering a just and equitable society, illustrating the ongoing struggle to protect these values in various political contexts

The novel portrays a robust power structure, with El-Patron positioned at the pinnacle and eejits relegated to the lowest rung. "symbolize not only the dehumanization involved in turning a man into a stoop labourer – a being into a bracero" but also "comments on the invisibility of Mexican or indigenous labour in this region" (Rivera, 1992, p. 420). Opium's social system is meticulously designed to serve the interests of its leader, creating a hierarchy that privileges the elite. The upper class deliberately fosters widespread animosity towards clones, cultivating a sentiment that serves as a pretext for sustaining the established social order and perpetuating slavery.

Rawls' theory is applicable to highlight the inherent unfairness within Opium's society. The Alcan family, situated at the apex of the power structure, enjoys the benefits derived from this inequitable system. The pervasive disregard for human life ultimately contributes to the civilization's downfall. The novel underscores the importance of protecting the rights of minorities and maintaining peace as crucial elements for the survival of a society. The consequences of a skewed power structure and the exploitation of certain groups emphasize the broader societal repercussions and the necessity for ethical considerations in governance.

Medical treatments should prioritize both physiological and psychological well-being, and current technology lacks the capacity to clone human beings without significant risks. Childress and Beauchamp's *The Principles of Biomedical Ethics* underscore the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence, emphasizing the imperative to promote the well-being of patients while strictly prohibiting actions that could endanger their lives under any circumstances. This ethical framework guides medical professionals to prioritise the safety and welfare of individuals in the pursuit of scientific advancements and medical interventions. Bill Clinton, the American president at the time, promptly prohibited research on human cloning following the creation of Dolly, the sheep. He established The National Bioethics Advisory Commission (NBAC) to examine the ethical, legal, and moral consequences of cloning, concluding that it might disrupt society on legal, ethical, and moral grounds. Cloning human beings is deemed unethical because it violates fundamental principles of medically assisted reproduction and the utilization of human genetic material.

In *The House of the Scorpion*, clones are designed to fulfil specific purposes, and in many scenarios, clones may lack a significant voice in decisions affecting their lives and futures. Despite the intriguing notion of cloning historical figures, creating identical replicas is technologically impossible, as individuals are profoundly shaped by their environments. While the idea of recreating famous historical figures or departed loved ones is fascinating, cloning produces late-born identical twins with the same DNA as the original but distinct personality traits and skills. The new child inherits the original's genetic makeup, but their upbringing shapes their personality and abilities. If the goal and the process of creating another individual are unconventional, the creator is held accountable for any suffering endured by the creation. Much like Frankenstein's monster, whose existence disrupts the system, clones may face ostracism.

Artificial reproductive technologies like in-vitro fertilization (IVF) allow embryo development in laboratories. In cases where a couple faces challenges in producing healthy sperm or eggs, they may obtain them from a donor. IVF technology allows couples to exert control over the traits of their child by selecting an ideal donor with the desired characteristics. This grants an unprecedented level of power and authority over the creation of another human being.

While IVF is a widely used solution for infertility, it also sparks debates about the ethical implications of creating humans artificially and manipulating the genetic makeup of offspring. Kass advocates for using cloning to address infertility, emphasizing that it enables the creation of children with at least one parent's genetic makeup while avoiding the risk of inherited defects and diseases. However, concerns arise regarding the potential psychological challenges faced by a cloned child due to conflicting identities and expectations, potentially leading to social ostracization.

In a hypothetical future where technology allows for human creation, the prospect of inventing a cure for infertility becomes plausible. Despite the potential benefits, using cloning as a reproductive method raises ethical concerns, as the cloned child would be genetically identical to one of the parents, potentially leading to issues of autonomy and identity. The process of cloning, even with proper care, exerts significant control over an individual's birth and future, presenting ethical ambiguity in its use as a method for procreation.

Conclusion

In Nancy Farmer's novel, *The House of the Scorpion*, the autocratic rule of El-Patron portrays his subjects as expendable commodities. Farmer also critiques the use of cloning to exert control and maintain power. El Patrón's use of cloning to achieve a form of immortality and control over his drug empire mirrors ethical concerns about the potential abuse of cloning technology by those in power. As noted by Fukuyama (2002), advances in biotechnology, including cloning, could exacerbate social inequalities and be exploited by the elite for their gain, leading to ethical and societal dilemmas (Fukuyama, 2002). The character of El Patrón embodies this danger, using his wealth and influence to perpetuate his life through successive clones. This use of cloning for personal gain, at the expense of others' lives and autonomy, highlights the darker possibilities of unchecked scientific advancement and the ethical imperative to regulate such technologies.

The narrative serves as a cautionary tale, highlighting the potential hazards of technology, particularly in the realms of genetic engineering and human cloning. Within science fiction, such narratives often function as warnings about hypothetical futures. The novel underscores the significance of preserving democratic values and implementing appropriate genetic engineering and stem cell research regulations. Prioritizing the protection of human rights becomes paramount for the survival of a society. Examining biotechnological inventions' ethical and moral foundations is crucial to safeguarding human rights. A close analysis of *The House of the Scorpion* leads to the conclusion that the narrative challenges and violates key principles of biomedical ethics. The narrative is a stark reminder of the potential consequences when ethical boundaries in scientific advancements are transgressed.

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