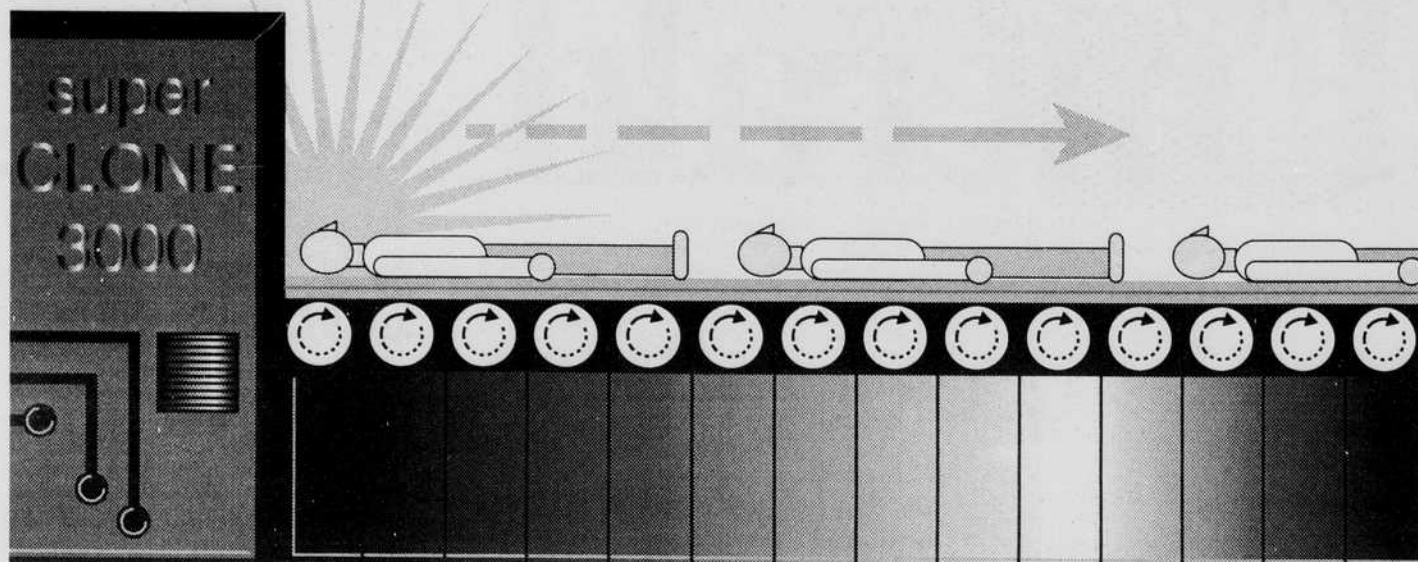


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# OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

## The Cloning Debate

**OUR OPINION:** The possibility of cloning humans raises both questions and misconceptions about the purpose of cloning

The history of human evolution has shown time and time again that science moves faster than ethics. Scientists make new discoveries years before people are ready to accept their ethical consequences.

The world was reminded of this Feb. 22 when Scottish scientist Ian Wilmut made his now-famous announcement that he had successfully cloned a sheep. Suddenly the world was forced to deal with the reality that cloning is no longer a dream out of a science fiction movie. It is a reality.

The actualization of cloning has opened the way to some weird possibilities. Obviously, the one most people are concerned with is the possibility that scientists will try to clone a human being. While the technology is currently not available to clone a human being, it seems to be nearby. In Oregon, researchers just announced they were able to clone two rhesus monkeys. It is almost inevitable that one day scientists will have the technology to clone a human.

Whether cloning is limited to animals or expanded to humans, the possibility of cloning people has already brought its share

of apprehensions. The thought of thousands of human clones wandering the earth like robots terrifies the human imagination. It is impossible to even talk about cloning without considering the ethical integrity of duplicating another living thing.

At the root of the problem is the question: What is a clone and why would someone clone a person? In looking at these questions, it is clear that many people have misconceptions about what cloning really is about.

John Robertson, a law professor at the University of Texas, puts forth one possible benefit to cloning a human being. He suggests that if parents have a child with a terminal disease, they could create an exact clone of the dying child as a replacement.

This idea illuminates one of the main misconceptions regarding cloning. Cloning a human only creates a genetically identical replica of that person. It does not mean the clone is actually the same person.

In the case of the dying child, creating a clone would not spare the life of the child. It would only create another child with the same DNA. The dying child would still die. In this sense, if the parents wanted to replace the child, they could just as easily have another child.

Another misconception is that clones would be mindless robots or zombies. Some people have the notion that cloning would

lead to armies of mindless clones serving their creator's every wish, almost like a modern day Frankenstein. While that may be what cloning means in the movies, in real life it just doesn't work that way. A clone of a human, if created, would be just as much an individual as the original.

Clones should be seen in the same way we view identical twins. They are two people who look the same but have unique experiences and memories. They are, in essence, two different people.

This is not to say that there are no ethical problems with cloning human beings, or even animals for that matter. There certainly are. For instance, what possible benefits could come from cloning a human? What benefits could come from cloning animals in general? And, most important, how do these benefits weigh against the possible ethical and even scientific problems cloning could lead to?

These are questions that must be cleared up before scientists move forward and advance cloning technology. There is no reason to mess with nature just because we can. If, however, there are clear benefits to cloning, we should not let our misconceptions interfere with potential scientific progress.

*This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.*

### LETTERS

#### Just cartoons

Thank your columnist Laura Daniel for the enlightening multicultural approach to watching Warner Brothers cartoons (*ODE*, Feb. 26). In projecting her anger toward the huge and insensitive Warner Bros. Corporation, she only made an ass out of herself.

Daniel gave several examples suggesting that Bugs Bunny cartoons stereotyped and ridiculed American Indians. She claimed the cartoons were insensitive and degrading to minorities and wrongly praised the U.S. imperialist conquering of North America. She then used trite arguments to tie these disgraceful cartoons to ignorance and intolerance, and she closed the article with near worship of Native American culture and ridicule of modern capitalism.

Memo to staff — *lighten up!* Those cartoons never singled out Native Americans as looking stupid. Bugs made just about everyone look dumb. I thought that was the point. I never realized that Elmer Fudd and Yosemite Sam were good examples of white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant men. Should I as a white man feel insulted? How should Hispanic mice feel, anyhow?

Please don't try to lay cartoon guilt on American culture. If anyone should feel guilty for the stereotypes of WB cartoons it's SETA.

Jonathan Collegio  
Economics

#### Leave toons alone

How gratifying to open the *Emerald* Wednesday (*ODE*, Feb. 26) and read Laura Daniel's editorial on Warner Brothers cartoons. The piece contained such staggering realizations as, "in the past people have been racist," and even "sometimes an artist's prejudices appear in their work."

Wow. Deep. According to Daniel, by depicting Native and African-Americans in a less than flattering light, Looney Tunes has shown their prejudices. Well why stop there?

I can easily find ample proof that the animators of Warner Brothers' *Termite Terrace* were also prejudiced against cowboys, hunters, puddy tats, tweety birds, movie stars and starlets, directors, studio cops, Euclidean geometry, academy awards, Tasmanian devils, turtles, wabbits, ducks, gangsters, roosters, politicians, gravity, Edgar Allen Poe, dogs boxers, insects, ad infinitum.

Yes, I feel a bit embarrassed when I see a stereotypical depiction of an Indian chief, but that's my fault. If I was mature enough to be capable of dealing with all races equally I wouldn't need to feel shamed by obvious racism. Until then, I'll just keep trying to do better.

Looney Tunes is one of the few uniquely American things left to us by older generations. Their quality of animation has only on a few occasions been equaled. It will be a tragedy if we shelter kids from them rather than encourage them to watch and then discuss the racial and political biases of the time.

Ultimately, you have to decide whether you're a big enough person to forgive the prejudices of the past and focus, instead, on the prejudices of the present.

Jason Fahrion  
Physics

### READER VOICES

What is your opinion of the new advances in cloning?



"It's going to require a lot of thought about it before you can apply it to anything."

Geoff Caylor  
Senior  
Computer  
Science/Math



"In the long run, it's not good for the human race. I think it's something that could possibly lead to disastrous results."

John Hurt  
Eugene



"It's exciting that we have the potential for such great advancements, but it also raises a lot of ethical questions."

Katie Kellogg  
Freshman  
Political Science



"I wasn't surprised because it's something they've been working on since DNA was discovered."

Stephen Baybutt  
Graduate Student  
Exercise Physiology



"I thought it was pretty neat, but it doesn't really affect me right now."

Jessica Kallus  
Graduate Student  
Exercise Physiology



"It's rather scary. Now that they can clone a sheep, how long until they're cloning humans?"

Margaret Dillner  
Freshman  
Undeclared

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