MAKATI MEDICAL CENTER
BIOETHICS EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE

BIOETHICS BITS

CASE STUDY 36

DOUBLE'S TROUBLES

CASE

A 37-year old male arrived at the Emergency Department in cardio-pulmonary arrest. Immediate intubation and CPR followed, and patient revived. An hour later he suffered another CP arrest and again revived. A neurologist was called offered a poor prognosis with possible brain death. The patient's wife requested the doctors to freeze some of the patient's tissues, given the possibility of cloning now in sight. She wants her husband back.

QUESTION

What are some points to evaluate from the clone's perspective?

POSSIBLE SOLUTION

The question considers how the resulting clone (i.e., the copy or double) might feel about himself. One best way to imagine this is to ask how you would feel if you were the patient's clone. People will surely refer to you not as you, but as the patient's clone. The constant point of reference will be the original, and you will tend to lose your identity. Psychological (or psychiatric?) programs might be needed to teach clones to accept themselves as they are.

You as the clone will not be the patient himself, but the patient's twin, born 38 years later. The patient's wife is your sister-in-law, but she might still want to consider you as her husband. QUESTION: will you accept this much older woman, who brought you into existence for herself, as your wife?

Or how will you feel as a dictator's clone? Your neighbors will often come to your house, not to visit you but to see the Dictator grow up. Children will fear you, and stories about the Dictator (that is, you) will circulate all over the country.

And if you're Albert Einstein's clone? You will feel compelled to become a genius; if you don't, you will be the school's laughing stock: a defective Einstein, a stupid Einstein. People will pressure you to imitate him. Whether you give in to this pressure or not will depend on you; but in any case, you will surely rather have none of this at all.

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IDEA ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK & WORKSHEET

SCAN HERE

HELP DESK EMAIL ADD: bioethicscommittee@gmail.com

Fr. Gregory Ramon D. Gaston, SThD, DComm
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