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Princeton University DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION
PAUL RAMSEY, *Christian Ethics*
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September 15, 1970

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Genetics Department
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Dear Dr. Lederberg,

Thank you for your note about my Fabricated Man, and especially for sending me copies of some of your more recent writings. The Nobel Symposium chapter is quite interesting, and of course relevant to our discussion. I would hope that you have occasion (and are willing) to write an extended review of my book.

I regret if I have misinterpreted you. The paragraph on p. 63-4 was intended to bracket the entire ensuing discussion. Here I acknowledge the difference while affirming close connection in a scientific age between advocacy and predictive analysis. Perhaps this was not enough. Perhaps I misread you, because of the fact that you listed reasons favoring cloning, or making it likely, none or few against.

I certainly do not mean to ascribe to you lack of concern for the moral problems simply because you do not place these in the center of your discussion. Indeed, some reluctance on your part to undertake such discussion is to be admired--in contrast to one or two distinguished scientists I know who seem to believe that they are competent to deliver ethical verdicts with far less "homeowrk" on the methods and logic of ethics than an ethicist has to do even to locate the decisional questions arising in the new biology.

Still I do not feel the force of your reply that since you took such pains to point out the technical difficulties it was incredible to believe you were advocating "utopian eugenicism" (in this case, I suppose you mean clonal reproduction). Overcoming the technical difficulties was likely so soon as to become an insignificant factor.

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Nor do I find the articles I treated compatible with the statement in your Nobel Symposium chapter, that value pluralism undermines "the utility of any comprehensive long-term eugenic schemes beyond the minimization of undoubted defects" (p. 13).

I was in Palo Alto this summer (visiting a daughter whose husband works at the VA Hospital in Menlo Park, mobility training of the blind). I thought once of calling on you, but family matters interfered.

Sincerely yours,


Paul Ramsey

PR:dn

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