

Path to cloning is now wide open

This week, the journal *Science* reported the successful cloning of human embryos by a university medical group in South Korea (Page 1A, Feb. 12). The immediate intent of the research is to provide material for stem cell extraction directed toward the treatment of diseases like Parkinson's, but the path to realizing a complete human clone is now open, and someone, somewhere will surely travel it.

Over my own long career as a scientist and as a student of science history, I have learned a core lesson: If scientists believe the laws of Nature allow them to make something, they'll invariably attempt to make it. To try to legislate or moralize against this basic instinct to harvest all the fruit hanging from the biblical Tree of Knowledge is ultimately futile.

Far more important than the cloning of human individuals, and also a more appropriate venue for the application of moral values, are the decisions society must make regarding the ends to which such "bites from the apple" shall be put.

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