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Mastering the Perfect Human

What if parents were given the chance to create the perfect baby? This concept is not just a possibility. With the help of genetic scientists, parents now have a very real way to manufacture a child free from disease. Genetic engineering began simply as a way to modify plants to be healthier ("Genetic Engineering"). Scientists soon found that this process could help humans to avoid hereditary diseases or even to make a super human species. Although critics argue that these scientists are "playing God," supporters find it difficult to see the downside in making life more fulfilling. Therefore, parents should be allowed to use genetic engineering to select traits for their unborn child.

To begin with, many genetic scientists have found the presence of a smart gene. Those scientists at Princeton University have named it NR2B. This gene is closely connected to the process of memory in humans and other animals. After studying this gene meticulously, scientists may be able to better understand the workings of the brain. If they are successful, this could lead to advances in learning disabilities and Alzheimer's disease (Guynap). On a larger scale, these advances could even lead to making individuals even smarter. This NR2B gene could allow scientists to give adults "the learning skills of youngsters" (Guynap). All in all, with the help of genetic engineering the human race could make better use of their memories or become more intelligent.

The basic idea behind genetic engineering relies on replacing weak strands of DNA with strong ones. As a result of this process, scientists could have the potential to eliminate hereditary illness like diabetes and cancer from being passed on to later generations. In *The Giver*, this process has already been achieved. The community has little to no deadly diseases. The Giver implies that this was a result of genetic engineering (Lowry). Presently, genetic engineers have the power to work towards this state of perfection. Because of genetic engineering, parents can test to see if their child will inherit diseases. Already, "embryos can be selected by sex and checked for certain disease-bearing genes" (Steere). If the genes linked to these diseases are present, then these strands of DNA can be replaced with healthy strands, instead (Steere). Thus, with research in genetics, our world could make hereditary diseases obsolete.

Even with all the benefits, there are some who worry about the negative effects of this kind of research. Critics argue that there are not enough laws restricting incorrect use of science for cosmetic purposes. In other words, there is nothing to stop a parent from using this practice as a way to choose eye color or hair color. Something this powerful can easily be placed in the wrong hands and used in a negative way. However, this was not the case in Jonas' community which followed very strict rules for their entire way of life. They managed in the novel to avoid this problem of misuse by enforcing harsh laws under penalty of death (Lowry). Just because these laws have not been perfectly created, yet, does not mean they cannot be put into place. For example, India has already enforced certain laws restricting the use of advertisements for gender preference products (Steere). According to Hayes, of the Center of the Genetics Society, the best way to avoid misuse of this power is by opening up discussion to everyone and not just scientists (Steere). With more knowledge about the treatments, governments can better know how to manage their use.

In conclusion, genetic engineering has the power to change the quality of life for future generations. Not only have scientists discovered ways that they can improve memory and learning, but they can further eliminate hereditary illnesses by replacing unhealthy strands of DNA before birth. Still, with all these benefits, many worry that this kind of power could lead to misuse. However, many governments have already shown how better understanding of the process can lead to better laws for its usage. Therefore, parents should be given the opportunity to screen their unborn children to improve weak DNA.

Work Cited

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