



Babies being designed: does our future really have to look like this?

Have you ever dreamed of having blue eyes, unlimited musical talent, and being insanely smart? Well, your next generation might be able to have exactly that. If you have enough money, credibility, and power, you are able to use genetic modification to achieve having a super baby if you will. Congratulations on having a narcissistic and aggressive child who will terrifyingly so thrive in this society.

Imagine being the only parent not able to afford a genetically modified (GM) baby, but all your friends are wealthy enough to do so. They bond over how much this procedure costs, over how clever they want their child to be, and how they all selected their child to have blond hair since it's totally in fashion. You, with your brown hair, might think, well at least my child is going to be special. But instead of them being special, your friends and their children want to be an exclusive GM community. Your children's brown hair seems to disturb group photos and since your child doesn't exceed in athletic ability they can't make the track team and are stuck with the group called „The Naturals“ at school. Other children are in groups called „GM Barbies“ or „GM Kens“ since that's what they are, the ideals of society. They are cruel, aggressive and so into their looks, they embody the typical high school bullies - just in a premeditated, smart, and (even more) dangerous version.

Is that what the future generations have to face? Social exclusion based on whether you are natural or GM? Being valued higher and gaining the GM privilege? I mean they are beautiful, immune to diseases, and smart, what other privileges could you have?

Social exclusion will be reality, this is almost guaranteed. Some thrive from their DNA and others suffer. The concept of Social Darwinism becomes more and more tangible and seeing how Social Darwinism was misused in the Second World War, it could have dangerous consequences. Designer babies could facilitate parents with the intention to make profit or to spread a certain ideology.

Society will split into GM and naturals. Especially because genetically modified to be immune to diseases could have lower health costs and therefore be more predestined to be more financially stable, especially in countries with high health care costs like the USA. Moreover, the procedures needed to „produce“ a GM baby are unbelievably expensive and they don't guarantee you a feasible embryo or the perfect child. It could take more tries than one, which is something a lot of people are simply not able to afford. Thus, the gap between rich and poor will widen and will separate society even further.

Moreover, radicals like „Anti-GM“ and „Pro-GM“ will form. These radicals could potentially be fostering a wall of hatred against each other. Seeing as this seems to be a common thing humans tend to do, looking at - for example - the vaccine debate or the ever-lasting debate of abortion.

Apart from this method facilitating social exclusion, it is also a highly coincidental method. Scientists have barely been able to use or research into the method's

consequences. It might affect your children's or your own genes which might lead to genetic diseases. The methods used are unsafe and lead to a decrease in genetic variety. Thus, it could also happen that your child can be more prone to develop diseases even though they are immune to some. Once genes are removed or altered, it is uncertain whether they are crucial for the further development and growth of an embryo. The debate of abortion is also a focal point in the debate of genetic modification because in order to select the most successful embryo with the best DNA one has to develop more than one embryo in order to compare them. However, the embryos that are not used will be discarded. Therefore, the debate whether it is ethical to just discard potential lives will go on.

Furthermore, it could be a violation of the children's rights since you, as a parent, chose to alter the DNA without their consent and therefore alter the course of their lives. The process of GM babies also seems to go against all values of parenthood. Parenthood is defined by loving your child despite the way they look, act, and live. But by using this method you will make raising a successful child easy for you but potentially dangerous for the world.

In addition, this process being unethical seems to be up for debate as well. It seems highly hypocritical taking our society into account. The movements in a society are fluid and will always change but through the years more diverse representation and acceptance have followed suit of famous role models. Therefore, there is a lot of hypocrisy in praising the values of diversity but then acting despite of it.

Specifically looking at the future, this method presents a lot of risks. Research suggests that genetically modified people could be more prone to anger and narcissistic tendencies, but because they are smart and have admirable artificial traits, it is possible that they could end up being the leader of their country. Imagine having an aggressive narcissist as your president - does that sound like a diplomatic and peaceful future?

In conclusion, one can acknowledge the huge progress being made in eugenics and the achievements of scientists. However, in no way should anyone try to glorify and romanticize the process of picking their children and raising potential threats to humanity. To all future parents: be aware and choose wisely!

Viktoria Lapsien (Q2 LK Englisch)

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Designer babies: a science that must stay fictional!

As Paul Knoepfler already pointed out in his TEDtalk, there are a lot of potential risks that come with designer babies and CRISPR. Especially ethical and moral concerns arise from this topic because embryos are modified and even killed in the process of applying CRISPR.

Starting off, we have the obvious advantages to designer babies, like them having a higher intelligence and being more beautiful through facial features and body structure. But what if you were a parent and the doctor who makes your designer baby has failed? Would you be sad? I for sure can say that it is immoral to think that you can give your sperm and egg to a doctor so he can create a forest of embryos

and pick out the bad apples. We would need massive amounts of regulations and rules for these situations. When does an embryo count as a human? Who should be responsible if the procedure failed?

Another reason why people should probably riot against designer babies is a potential split in society. Imagine if your friend had a kid that was more intelligent, more beautiful, and healthier whilst your non-designer kid runs around with a stuffy nose and gets bad grades. The result would be another form of segregation: no shared schools, no shared jobs, no shared rights and laws, no shared traits by which to respect each other.

Such a genetically modified society would be filled with narcissism and a whole lot of other social issues too, because they feel like they are the best and that they are in charge. The government will directly or indirectly give benefits to GM people as they are the "superhumans" that make the country more efficient and better overall. All whilst the non-modified humans have to suffer from the fact that they were not born a certain way.

Moreover, only the rich could afford such babies and greedy companies would keep it that way. This means that the gap between rich and poor will widen and take away even more equality between people.

Because of the aforementioned arguments against designer babies, I think it would be dehumanising to let designer babies become a staple of society. It is not only immoral but also comes with technical issues that are hard to solve. If scientists were to introduce designer babies as a result of CRISPR, they would most likely unleash hell on earth. That is why designer babies should most definitely stay fictional.

Steven Illenseer (Q2 LK Englisch)

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The Dark Side of Designer Babies: A Recipe for Societal Division and Ethical Quandaries

In a world contemplating the potential of designer babies, it is vital to pause and scrutinize the many troubling aspects that this practice might entail. While proponents argue for its benefits, let's delve into the negative dimensions of this controversial topic.

Firstly, the emergence of designer babies might inadvertently create a rift in society, dividing individuals into "technophobes" and those who embrace genetic modification. As a result, those who consciously choose not to have designer babies could face societal scorn and judgment for their decision, further exacerbating societal divisions.

Moreover, the ability to create designer babies comes at a significant cost, potentially deepening existing disparities. Consequently, only the affluent could afford these procedures, thus intensifying the chasm between the wealthy and the rest of society. This, in turn, could lead to a future where the genetic elite hold an advantage, further entrenching inequality.

Additionally, the pursuit of designer babies may not always be motivated by noble intentions. For instance, profit-driven motives or ideological agendas could creep into the picture, leading to a resurgence of troubling notions like social Darwinism or eugenics. This scenario raises the specter of encouraging the creation of a genetically homogenous "ideal" human race, casting aside diversity and individuality.

Furthermore, governments might see designer babies as an opportunity to lower healthcare costs by promoting the genetic modification of citizens. This, in turn, raises ethical concerns about the potential manipulation of public perception and policy to encourage the adoption of GM babies, infringing on personal freedom and autonomy.

Notably, the creation of designer babies could be driven by superficial trends, where parents treat their children as genetic "costumes." However, what if these modified children do not meet their parents' expectations in terms of appearance, intelligence, or other traits? This could lead to disillusionment and emotional repercussions.

Equally important is the fact that genetic modifications can have unforeseen consequences, both for the individual and society at large. As a result, children of designer babies will inherit their modified genetic code, potentially leading to unpredictable and possibly harmful outcomes that we are ill-prepared to address.

Lastly, the existence of designer babies could lead to a society where "naturals" are constantly compared to their genetically modified counterparts, magnifying the flaws perceived in the latter and perpetuating discrimination based on genetic makeup.

In conclusion, taking all these factors into account, as we explore the concept of designer babies, it becomes evident that it raises profound ethical and societal concerns. Therefore, the potential for division, inequality, and unforeseen consequences casts a shadow over this practice, urging us to proceed with caution and thoughtful consideration of its long-term implications.

"SUPER HUMANS" = SUPER WORLD?

For years now, genetic engineering has been part of our common vocabulary.

Science has taken us so far that we can genetically modify our crops to ensure a luxurious harvest. But what if, in 10 years time, we will not only have GM plants but GM humans? What would this do to our society?

CRISPR-Cas9 is the scientific method of selecting, slicing up and separating parts of the human genome to modify them. A pair of gene-scissors so to say. However, if we are not careful these scissors will soon not only cut our genes but divide our society.

When "superhumans", who we only know from comics and sci-fi films, live among us "naturals", it is unmistakable that the two groups will be treated differently. Parents who decide not to have GM babies may be called technophobes or conservative for wanting to let their child be created naturally. Additionally, having GM babies could easily become a sign of status as only the wealthy families will be able to afford this procedure.

And what about the children? GM children will have to undergo special education due to their abnormal intelligence and may consequently never be able to form friendships with children who do not have modified genes. A split society. Only because you tried erasing the "unhappy" genes from your child's DNA does not mean they cannot develop mental health issues due to society's pressure on them.

Furthermore, as naturally as some human's DNA, politicians and the economy will want to profit from this invention. A race for the highest income from CRISPR-Cas9 will start and high quality science will be banned in the shadows of capitalism. Is this morally justifiable?

We should also keep in mind that this is not just a new trend that gains popularity and will be forgotten again in 5-10 years. Once we have "superhumans" on this planet, their DNA will be inherited by their children. And grand-children. And great-grand children. Now imagine a mistake appears in the ever-so-glorified technology? It would be devastating. A technological advance like this demands strict regulations to prevent this.

Now, as much as I stand with modern sciences, I want people to not forget how many risks there are coming along with genetically modified humans. We seem to forget how fragile our society is and how huge the impact of this scientific is.

To draw a conclusion, genetic engineering on humans would be a breakthrough in science but also a potential break through moral borders. We as a society need to be careful and rational paired with clear regulations to take this technology further ; step by step.

Mal Moews (Q2 LK Englisch)