Commentary: Who am I? Why am I? (The Anguish of a Clone)

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Who am I? Why am I?
(The Anguish of a Clone)

by
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“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” [Gen. 1:27 KJV]

“I can guarantee to a 99 percent certainty that I will not give birth to any monsters.”
[Dr. Sererino Antinori, on his project to create the first human clone.]

I was an experiment – the first of my kind. Am I supposed to be happy about this? To revel in the glory of being the first? Others, who gave no apparent thought to me, believed that it was important for me to be created. Who and what gave them this right, I will never know. Their scientific curiosity, their self-righteousness, their vanity and their unbridled arrogance were my genesis. Their foolish notion that the creation of Man by Man was a good or noble thing, an inevitability; that persons such as I should be created simply because it was possible – this is what brought me here. What did they really know? No one thought of me – not in the least. I did not ask to be born – not in this way. Neither did I choose to look this way. “Imperfections,” they called it. After all, I was the first. Am I supposed to be grateful that I was not more hideously deformed?

My donor “parent,” my paternal source [my father? twin? duplicate?] – I am told I look somewhat like him. I never knew him, but they told me that I act like him, talk like him and that I possess the same keen intellect. My father/twin/donor – what was he like, really? What was I to him? Was he proud of me? Did he love me? Did he care for me at all?

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Or did he view me merely as a thing produced by technology? Did he agonize one moment over me, or worry what sort of life I, his creation, would have? Was love involved in the process in any way? My mother/donor/twin—who was she? They never told me. She loaned them an egg and the egg was filled with my father/twin/donor’s DNA. And here am I—living proof that Man can duplicate life and tempt God. Love did not create me—Science did. And this leaves me with an imponderable that I wrestle with every day: Who am I? Why am I?

Did they ever think of this? Did they ever look past their blasphemous, selfish, thoughtless desire to play God and create life for the sake of creating it? Did they once think of me—these scientists, these father/mother donor units? They could not have. How was I supposed to relate to the world, interact with the world? Long after they all died, and the experiment that was me continued to live in the world, how was I—the duplicate of lives already lived—supposed to think, and act, and survive? Did they once consider how I would view myself? How I would live without roots? Did they even remotely consider the torment they would inflict upon me?

My parent/twin/donors were lucky. They had roots. They had parents who loved each other and produced their own kids through the act of love. Love played a part in that process; so did God. My parent/twin/donors, they lived original lives with all the possibilities that life offered and that their original DNA allowed. They did not live a duplicate life, as I do, here in this place. I am limited by this space to which they confine me. I live less than a life. I live lives already lived. There is nothing original about me—except for the fact that I was the first of my kind. This is no comfort. What they did all seems so sterile, so ignoble, so passionless. It shakes me to the core. My creators cheated me, limited me, and destined me to live with limits, imperfections and torturous questions that haunt me every day. Imponderables race around in my head until I rage. However, they died early in my life. My parent/twin/donors and the scientists who created me are all gone. Now it is just me and these four walls.

They give me books to read. They have kept me here all my life—here at the institute where I was manufactured. There were no laws to prevent them from doing this. I have no real parents except my donors and I do not even know what I was to them or they to me, really. I was raised here in this place, by my creators. They study me, and they care for me—as one would a valued possession, or an artifact. As things did not exactly go as planned, they keep me here in this prison that passes as a room. I am well aware of my surroundings—at least in my lucid moments. They say I am a genius. I read every thing I can. I was highly educated by them. But things are not exactly right with me. This I know full well. I sleep sometimes, and it is welcome. Sometimes I never want to wake up. Mostly,
I rage at my existence and wrestle with the imponderables they left me with. I am a duplicate, a freak, “unstable” they say. They do not let me out. I am a danger to the public they say. I am an embarrassment. I was not supposed to develop in the way that I did. It is easier to keep me here; there are fewer questions that way.

I have read about this Frankenstein. I can relate to him. I understand him. They are my “roots,” such as they are. I hate them all because they cannot answer the imponderables. Why should they care? They were born; they lead original lives. Someone wanted them to be born. They are not curiosities. It is a strange life I lead – and not one of my choosing, or God’s either I think. I think of God often. I read about Him – in one my books. The words comfort me and I want to believe them. They give me hope. What does He think of me? He did not create me as the others were created. Does He nevertheless love me as other men who were born into original lives? Do I have a soul like those into whom He breathed the Breath of Life? I hope so. I cannot wait to go to a better place.

Where was the human race when my creators first openly boasted about creating life? Where was the moral outrage? Was no one concerned about this affront to God the Creator? Where was the revulsion? Where was the fear that God would simply point His finger at the world and say: “You have gone too far!” and decimate all of Creation by a simple wave of His hand? Did no one speak out? Did no one fear God’s wrath in the least? Was humanity so indifferent to this that no one lifted a finger to stop it? Did not one voice cry out, “Stop”? I have never stopped paying for a sin that I did not even commit; I am sure that humanity has not even begun to pay for it. Who am I? Why am I?