

RED SHTICK MAGAZINE



IRREVERENT VIEWS & SATIRICAL NEWS

Stem Cells: The Root of All Evil

Date: Friday, March 07 @ 06:03:07 CST

Topic: Blinded by Science

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Life, like breakfast, is best when it begins with an egg. The egg is one of the most common reproductive formats. Even complex mammalian organisms such as humans have eggs somewhere, so I'm told. These mammalian eggs are only one part of the elegantly mysterious equation describing the circle of life, which, in our world, inevitably results in babies – plump, tender, delicious babies.

Babies, according to Wikipedia, come from mommies and daddies. These parental entities created us, and our brothers and sisters, in some ritual learned through years of difficult homework and chores, which eventually led to a trip to the hospital. Without going too far into the mechanics of this ritual, with which I am wholly unfamiliar, there is a singular effect of reproduction that is of some interest to science, and is, therefore, the subject of this article: life – specifically, one of the fundamental particles of human life: the stem cell.

Conception follows copulation, unless contraception captures the chromosomal carriers, contradicting the circumstances most conducive to creating the commonly celebrated “bun in the oven.” The climbing ratio of buns to ovens, and the overwhelming increase in unwed teenage ovens, has influenced government to get involved in the standardization of oven maintenance and care. The stem cell is the yeast that makes the buns rise in these ovens, and some time ago, our elected officials found that this yeast can also be used to make beer – cold, powerful beer.

Stem cell research is a field founded by Ernest McCulloch and James Till in the 1960s, a time during which the biological sciences were considered “trippy” and “out there.” Stem cells can be found in adult cells and in blastocysts, which are more commonly known in *Star Trek* lore as the troublesome *Tribbles*. McCulloch and Till retain plausible deniability of foreknowledge of the trouble with Tribbles due to the fact that they are Canadian. Though they may not have known it, during their march towards truth, these clumsy scientists stepped on a crack that continues to break mothers' backs to this day.

Stem cells represent a state of life that is a potential. Embryonic stem cells even more so, because not only do these cells have the potential to become any kind of human cell, they have the potential to be American cells. Politicians know that American cells can eventually become votes.

The embryonic stem cell has taken root in the ripe soil of American social hypocrisy. This stem is growing into the trunk of a tree that I think it would be fun to hang a tire swing from, so real kids can play on it and possibly hurt themselves, because we constantly neglect them and focus on politics.

The ethical and political problem with embryonic stem cells is their source. To even think of gathering these living cells is truly an abhorrent use of the mind. It forces us to remember that the source exists. So, due to the detestable nature of the source and its offense to our souls, we ignore its utility to our bodies, the vessels of our so-often-offended souls.

Whatever your views on the subject of embryonic stem cell research, that part is not funny. The distinct unfunniness of this conundrum results in people getting really mad at each other and doing a lot of preaching, sometimes in the form of jaded attempts at satire.

So here we are again, science on one side, religion on the other. The politicians are our athletes and champions in the new spectator sport of ethics and morality, life and death, gross and yucky. We cheer and boo at the arena, and then go home and live our lives. Daughters get pregnant: some become good mothers, some poor; some have abortions, some miscarry. Not funny.

It is all so intensely not funny that we can, at the same time, forgive nearly anything and forgive so very little. However, most of us just cheer and boo harder, and our politicians make laws for us so they can keep their jobs. Some of those laws protect life; most of those laws protect power. Central to all this turmoil and unfunniness is a marginally funny fact: The political debate over stem cells boils down to babies, who cannot vote.

Rigorous scientific testing and analysis proves that babies eventually turn into us, and that we were, at one time, babies. We are not babies now, and babies are clearly not us, so it is our responsibility to see to it that they become us, or we may disappear, like Marty McFly fading from a causality-defying photograph from the future.

Babies have always been a problem in society due to their inherent cuteness and our irrational desire to protect and care for them at any cost. In prehistory, we paid the price for their safety in environmental risk, physical suffering, and mortal peril. Today we pay the price to protect babies by hard work, difficult choices, and occasionally sacrificing our reason in favor of the specter of setting a good spiritual example.

If we accept the utility of embryonic stem cells, then we accept or tolerate the acts that lead to their most heinous sources, but we already do that. So what do we do? We take care of babies so that, one day, they can deal with these ugly choices and not us, because thanks to generations of material success and assumed moral authority, we are irresponsible and unprepared. Let's just hope that, unlike us, our babies eventually get tired of shiny toys and turn their minds towards more profound thoughts about life. Mmmmm, babies.

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This article was originally posted on March 07, 2008

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