

cloning is not banned by law. As he observes, “what about the slippery slope if it is [banned]? Will the criminalization of cloning lead to the criminalization of other forms of therapeutic and reproductive procedures?” And, he points out, cloned individuals would in essence be no more a duplicate of their nuclear donor than an identical twin. He might well have added that it is only in very primitive societies that twins were regarded with suspicion, even to the extent that in some cases one of them would be killed.

So how does the golem legend help mankind to “navigate in the biotec century”? Very simply, Sherwin says, by reminding scientists, politicians and all mankind that while it is permissible and even desirable for men to alter life forms and create life in novel ways in order, as Golem was created, to combat its enemies (whether these be innate stupidity, disease, or any kind of undesirable genetic mutation), this is a dangerous undertaking that can have unwanted results, and must be entered into only with due caution. This is perhaps rather a thin link to the legend of the golem, which does not really give us any detailed guidance as to how the benefits accruing from advances in scientific knowledge should best be applied, but at least it has caused Byron L. Sherwin to produce an impassioned call for further stem cell research, and for him to recommend that we not turn our backs on the real opportunities for the conquest of genetic disease and other innate handicaps to which progress in the biological sciences is now opening the door.

Ian McNish

Council for Social and Economic Studies

Reproducing Jews:

A Cultural Account of Assisted Conception in Israel

Susan Martha Kahn

Duke University Press, 2000

This is an important book that did not attract the attention that it deserved when it originally appeared – largely because it was put out by a university press which does not have distribution muscle.

While written on a popular level, this is a revealing book on Israel's pronatalist policies. At the time the research was done –

during the mid 1990s – there were more fertility clinics per capita in Israel than in any other country in the world (four times the number per capita in the United States). Every Israeli is eligible for unlimited rounds of in-vitro fertilization treatment free of charge, up to the birth of two live children. The costs of such treatment can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. By contrast, contraceptives are not generally part of the basic basket of medical services covered by Israeli health insurance, and abortion, though legal, is subsidized only if the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest, if it threatens the woman's life, or if the fetus is suspected to be malformed physically or mentally (197).

Since the majority of Israeli Jews are atheists, it is not surprising that the traditional stigma associated with out-of-wedlock births has lost much of its negative force. Thus many of the women receiving aid in conceiving are unmarried. Most of those interviewed were upper-class Ashkenazis with college or even graduate school training. In cases where the husband's sperm is not viable, donors are often medical students (36), and they fill out extensive health histories. The State supplies the sperm, which is screened for Tay-Sachs. Women over thirty-five routinely consent to amniocentesis tests and abort if genetic defects are discovered. Thus, the government is actively pursuing eugenics, although the chief motivation appears to be as least as much quantitative as qualitative.

Surrogacy was legalized in 1996 (140), but only for married women, and is also paid for by the State. Jewish religious law does not delegitimize the children of unmarried women, thus making it possible to combine Jewish legal principles with modern legal practices. Persons conceived as a result of adulterous sexual unions are not considered marriageable in the Halakhically normative sense for ten generations; they are called *mamzers* and the Orthodox rabbinate even maintains a blacklist. But children born to unmarried Jewish women are not Halakhically considered "illegitimate," since only a married woman can commit adultery. Nevertheless, religious opinion is not entirely unanimous, and thus IVF and embryo transfer are preferred by some rabbis as a form of fertility treatment that does not violate the literal Halakhic precepts against adultery (74).

Curiously, some rabbis favor the use of non-Jewish sperm,

since masturbation by non-Jews is not of explicit rabbinic concern 104), and also because Jewishness is passed exclusively through the mother. Children born to different Jewish mothers using the same sperm donor may even marry, since "they share no substance." Other rabbis, however, consider the use of non-Jewish sperm an abomination 106). As for Israeli Arabs, they end up using many Jewish donors, even though it is against their religion 109).

John Glad
University of Maryland

True Nature: A Theory of Sexual Attraction

Michael R. Kauth

Kluwer Academic, New York, 2000

In spite of the title, this seems to be primarily a book aiming at explaining why some people are attracted to those of the same sex and others to those of the opposite sex.

Most of the book is devoted to a competently done review of the various theories that have been offered to explain homosexuality and Lesbianism. The defects in the various theories are pointed out. Most of the major papers on the origins of homosexuality seem to have been covered. Many professionals will find this summary of the literature useful.

After rejecting previous theories as being at least incomplete, the author offers his own interactional theory which attempts to combine elements from various other theories. A major novelty is an attempt to argue that same-sex erotic attraction has evolved as a way of facilitating same sex alliances. It is claimed that early humans lived in sex-segregated societies. No real justification for this claim is offered. Deducing early human living patterns from campsite remains and similar evidence is obviously very difficult. Kauth then argues that women who could form strong same sex alliances were better able to raise children and find mates. Likewise, men who could form strong same sex bonds would have an advantage in hunting and in finding and protecting mates. Kauth argues that same-sex erotic attraction is an adaptation for forming such bonds.

There is little doubt that same sex bands are an advantage

Copyright of Mankind Quarterly is the property of Council for Social & Economic Studies and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.