

Global Watch Weekly Report

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BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

The Nightmares Caused By A Genetic Engineering Revolution Out of Control!



Global Watch Weekly Report



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Global Watch Weekly Report

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In recent years, astonishing technological developments have pushed the frontiers of humanity toward far-reaching morphological transformation that promises in the very near future to redefine what it means to be human. What science has already done with genetically modifying plants and animals will soon apply to Homo sapiens.

An international, intellectual, and fast-growing cultural movement known as transhumanism supports this vision, as does a flourishing list of U.S. military advisors, bioethicists, law professors, and academics, which intend the use of genetics, robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology and synthetic biology (Grins technologies) as tools that will radically redesign our minds, our memories, our physiology, our offspring, and even perhaps—as Joel Garreau, in his bestselling book *Radical Evolution*, claims—our very souls.

Much of this is driven by the biggest challenges facing the pharmaceutical industry in the cost, time and resources involved in trying to move developing drugs through the clinical trial process to the stage where the drug is approved for licensing. Once drugs enter the market they then have a short shelf life to enjoy before competitors can then start copying and rebranding the same active ingredients that make up the drug.

Pharmaceutical companies also face the risk that the licensing could be delayed or at worst declined based on how the regulatory bodies assess the clinical trial results in assessing the viability and risk of the product going onto the market. There is a significant cost of receiving approval for drugs to moved through the different stages of clinical trials especially into phase II trials where unproven drugs are then introduced to test human populations.

However if pharmaceutical companies could test their drugs in animals which have been injected with human DNA and create a human animal chimera, then they could get a work around in testing their unproven drugs to see how the human element of the chimera or transgenic animal responds without having to receive the same level of regulatory approval as for phase II clinical trials.

In this edition of the Global Watch Weekly we take a look at how an exhibition which took place a few years ago stirred up a significant debate on the issue of what it means to be fully human and how this ties into the whole arena of human - animal genetic engineering.

Enjoy.

Rema Marketing

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FAIRY TALES, MONSTERS AND THE REST

Several years ago a controversial exhibition took place in Canada called *"Fairy Tales, Monsters and the Genetic Imagination"*



This exhibition included contemporary artworks inspired by fantastic stories in which the boundaries between human and animal are blurred. Whether in mythology, fairy tales, or science fiction, these stories and their characters are often thought of as children's entertainment.

But as the artists in this exhibition demonstrated, while the novelty of invented creatures makes them delightful or frightening, they also have a serious dimension; they can cause us to reconsider our notions of what it means to be human. This takes on a new immediacy today, when scientists are able to conceive new species by mixing and matching existing genetic material.

For the artists in this exhibition, the hybrid body—whether imagined or potentially real—expresses hidden desires, ancient fears, the intrigue of transformation, and the wonderful irrationality of life's paradoxes.

In the official gallery guide it stated regarding

"Other artists consider the wondrous possibilities opened up by science's capacity to fashion chimeras, a word derived from a hybrid monster in Greek mythology that had the body of a goat, head of a lion, and tail of a serpent, but which today refers to biologically engineered organisms. Research into cloning, stem cells, intelligent prostheses, the transplantation of animal organs and cells into humans, and varying degrees of genetic modifications have made the bodily metamorphosis that was once only imagined into a present and future reality.

Suzanne Anker and Aziz + Cucher consider potential directions for human life in its most elemental aspect. Named for a nineteenth-century evolutionary parable called "Water Babies," Anker's photographs show fetuses in various stages of development. For her, these roughly formed specimens represent life as a cycle from birth to death that always holds the possibility of transformation into new forms. Aziz + Cucher's Chimera series shows abstracted figures sheathed in human skin and hair, but with no other feature that might identify them as human; no sexual characteristics, faces, arms, or legs. These mammalian amoeboids suggest the exciting potential of raw, organic matter that has been cultured in the bio-lab, which might become anything we can imagine.

Images of mutated or hybrid beings by Janaina Tschäpe and Saya Woolfalk also offer optimistic alternatives to natural biology as a force shaping what life may yet become. Tschäpe's Polaroids show wonderful new species that resemble nineteenth-century fairy pictures, which portrayed the supernatural little creatures as mergers of human and insect. Inspired by the abundant flora and fauna of the Brazilian rain forest, Woolfalk has created an entire world of new life-forms that are governed by a radically inverted set of natural laws.

A more cautionary note is struck by Patricia Piccinini, who warns not of a Pandora's Box of unleashed genetic horrors, but of our own unpreparedness in dealing ethically and humanely with the results of our scientific adventurism. In works such as *The Long Awaited* (2008, cover), Piccinini places play and nurture over fear and rejection, suggesting that our own future creations might ask the same questions that haunt Frankenstein's monster: Why was I made? Who will love me? What is my destiny? These mysteries, of course, mimic our own. We can only wonder and speculate, or perhaps ask God for answers and receive silence; in the future, how will we answer our own creations as they move from fiction into reality?"



Piccinini states

"This work returns to one of my favourite themes, which is question of our responsibility to the creatures we create. My work rarely attempts to present the viewer with a definite answer to the great questions of our day. I believe it is up

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to the community to discuss and resolve these issues. However, I do have very clear views about some things. I strongly believe that we have a responsibility to anything that we might create, regardless of whether we judge it to be useful or successful or otherwise. I am also convinced of the intrinsic value of diversity. As far as I'm concerned, the more different creatures there are in the world the better it is."



Piccinini's sculptures have drawn criticism over the years although with the criticism has also come respect and almost an inability of critics to actually come to a conclusion about this enigma and thus convey a love-hate relationship with her work. Once critic stated on her blog

"She creates sculptures, and also short films, drawings and photographs, that have a special effect like level of realism (most reminiscent of Ron Mueck's experiments with scale) even as they represent impossible mutations between human figures and pigs, reptiles or apes. It sounds awful (and I mean 'bad', not simply repellent), but the figures manage to avoid being beautifully executed freakshow exhibits. Once inside this feels a long way away from vogueish shlock and I found myself moving through deep felt and often contradictory responses. A typically moving piece is 'The Long Awaited', on a bench a boy seems to fall asleep with the head of a wrinkled, grey haired, naked sea creature cradled in his lap. It is achingly affecting, the creature with her wrinkled dugs might be Tiresias or an ancient mermaid, but she also exudes an immense weight that might be resignation or peace. The boy too is ambiguous, his features hint at Down's Syndrome but the most striking figure is the way his tiny hand cradles the creature's immense head. 'The Long Awaited' speaks eloquently of acceptance and benediction, there is something wrenching in its grace."

There is one statement by this blogger which within itself is profound. This is when she states

"even as they represent impossible mutations". This statement is a reflection of the general public at large which is based firstly on the fact that such mutations people associate with mythology rather than reality such as the

Medusa in Clash of the Titans or the Centaur in "Narnia".

Yet over the last few years there is evidence that Patricia Piccinini's sculptures are within themselves, a self fulfilling prophecy and nasty surprise for many of us who believe that technology and medicine is simply at the level of what we are familiar with and aware of.

THE AGE OF GENE MANIPULATION

Recently Chinese scientists have created genetically-engineered, extra-muscular dogs, after editing the genes of the animals for the first time.

The scientists create beagles that have double the amount of muscle mass by deleting a certain gene, reports the *MIT Technology Review*. The mutant dogs have "*more muscles and are expected to have stronger running ability, which is good for hunting, police (military) applications*", Liangxue Lai, one of the researchers on the project, told the magazine.



Now the team hope to go on to create other modified dogs, including those that are engineered to have human diseases like muscular dystrophy or Parkinson's. Since dogs' anatomy is similar to those of humans', intentionally creating dogs with certain human genetic traits could allow scientists to further understand how they occur.

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The beagles, who will be kept at the Guangzhou General Pharmaceutical Research Institute, are from the first dogs to be seen with the genetic quirk. Losing the myostatin gene happens naturally in whippets, and leads to the creation of double-muscled “bully whippets” who are much more strong than standard animals.

The change can also happen very rarely for humans. Doctors reported around ten years ago that a child had been born with extra muscles and unusually strong, as a result of being born without the gene.

This Chinese insight is one of many emerging gene-editing technology initiatives that are primed to turn the scientific community into an army of Victor Franksteins.

A three-year-old technique called CRISPR has experts in genetics and genomics saying the world is on the precipice of revolution.

“We’re basically able to have a molecular scalpel for genomes,” biologist Jennifer Doudna told Tech Insider. *“All the technologies in the past were sort of like sledgehammers. ... This just gives scientists the capability do something that is incredibly powerful.”*

Doudna is credited with being one of the co-discoverers of CRISPR, or “clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats.”

“Most of the public does not appreciate what is coming,” Doudna told *MIT Technology Review* in March this year.

Wired magazine warned of the ethical problems posed by CRISPR.



“The technique is revolutionary, and like all revolutions, it’s perilous,” writer Amy Maxmen said. “It could at last allow genetics researchers to conjure everything anyone has ever worried they would – designer babies, invasive mutants, species-specific bioweapons, and a dozen other apocalyptic sci-fi tropes. It brings with it all-new rules for the practice

of research in the life sciences. But no one knows what the

rules are – or who will be the first to break them.”

The technique has already been used to stop certain cancer cells from multiplying, protect plants from fungi and mildew, and reversed mutations that cause blindness, the magazine reported.

Dustin Rubinstein, the head of a lab working with CRISPR at the *University of Wisconsin–Madison*, told *Tech Insider* the applications for gene-editing are endless. Other experts told the website that labs could probably alter a species’ DNA for less than \$2,000.

“You’re only limited by your imagination,” Rubinstein said. *“We live in a much more disrupted world, things aren’t top down. What’s going to stop the next Bill Gates from tinkering in his garage?”*

THE CREATURE FROM PARAGUAY

Recently the corpse of an unidentified figure with human-like hands has been found floating in a stream in Latin America. Locals on the continent believe the creature to have been the mythical vampire-like chupacabra.



The body was discovered in the town of Carmen del Parana in southern Paraguay by the locals, who filmed it floating face down in the water.

The lifeless creature appeared to be the size of an average dog, and seemingly had fair skin with no fur, and four limbs with human-like fingers and a long tail.

Rescue services and experts were called to the scene to fish out the body and determine its origins.

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Local news have been broadcasting the finding with superstitious locals claiming that they have finally discovered the legendary chupacabra. The predator has been terrifying the continent since the middle of the 20th century, and is believed to be responsible for the deaths of goats and other farm animals by sucking their blood (its name literally translates as "goat sucker.")

Unfortunately, the discovery was made a little too late to prove or deny the existence of the animal vampire; the body was badly decomposed. Some believe the animal could be a mutation result of a genetic experiment gone wrong.

THE UK CONTROVERSY

Up until 2011 the question over animal and human cloning had been an issue that was relatively isolated to the scientific community, political realm and human rights and animal welfare groups across various countries. This was until July 2011 when a report surfaced in the UK which totally thrust the issue of animal and human genetic cloning into the global media spotlight.



In July 2011 a report emerged in that one hundred and fifty animal-human hybrid embryos had been produced by scientists in the UK, with full government approval, under the *2008 Human Fertilization Embryology Act* Three laboratories in the UK were granted government licenses to create these human animal embryos: *King's College London, Newcastle University and Warwick University.*

The UK's *Daily Mail* newspaper reported that a committee of scientists blew the whistle on the operation and expressed alarm over the possibility of the experiments going "too far" and resulting in a real Planet of the Apes scenario, where animals escape from the lab and begin

reproducing in the wild.

What the scientists created were animal eggs fertilized with human sperm, and cybrids - animal cells that are injected with human cell nuclei. They also created chimeras, a mixture of human cells and animal cells, much like what happened in the sci-fi Planet of the Apes depiction of science gone wrong.

It has not yet been revealed which animals were used in the chimera and cybrids, but it's almost certain that they were mammals. Furthermore, the closer the genetic code of the animals to humans, the more likely the embryos would be viable, so it seems likely that these scientists would have been using eggs from monkeys or apes combined with humans.

None of these embryos were allowed to grow into foetuses as UK law had required them to be destroyed after 14 days.

British politician, Lord Alton stated,

'I argued in Parliament against the creation of human-animal hybrids as a matter of principle. None of the scientists who appeared before us could give us any justification in terms of treatment. 'Ethically it can never be justifiable - it discredits us as a country. It is dabbling in the grotesque. 'At every stage the justification from scientists has been: if only you allow us to do this, we will find cures for every illness known to mankind. This is emotional blackmail. 'Of the 80 treatments and cures which have come about from stem cells, all have come from adult stem cells - not embryonic ones. "On moral and ethical grounds this fails; and on scientific and medical ones too."

Josephine Quintavalle, of pro-life group *Comment on Reproductive Ethics*, said:

"I am aghast that this is going on and we didn't know anything about it. 'Why have they kept this a secret? If they are proud of what they are doing, why do we need to ask Parliamentary questions for this to come to light? The problem with many scientists is that they want to do things because they want to experiment. That is not a good enough rationale."

Robin Lovell-Badge, from the Medical Research Council's *National Institute for Medical Research*, said the scientists were not overly concerned about human animal hybrid embryos because by law these have to be destroyed within 14 days.

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FAST FORWARD TO TODAY

Since 2011 and the controversial UK genetic hybrid experiments the man playing God revolution has continued unabated.

In Minnesota last year researchers at the Mayo Clinic created pigs with human blood flowing through their bodies.

And at Stanford University in California an experiment was performed which created mice with human brain cells.

Scientists feel that, the more humanlike the animal, the better research model it makes for testing drugs or possibly growing "spare parts," such as livers, to transplant into humans.

Watching how human cells mature and interact in a living creature may also lead to the discoveries of new medical treatments.

But creating human-animal chimeras—named after a monster in Greek mythology that had a lion's head, goat's body, and serpent's tail—has raised troubling questions: What new subhuman combination should be produced and for what purpose? At what point would it be considered human? And what rights, if any, should it have?

There are currently no U.S. federal laws that address these issues which is why The National Academy of Sciences, which advises the U.S. government, has been studying the issue.

A chimera is a mixture of two or more species in one body although researchers state this has been happening for years.

For example, faulty human heart valves are routinely replaced with ones taken from cows and pigs. The surgery—which makes the recipient a human-animal chimera—is widely accepted. And for years scientists have added human genes to bacteria and farm animals.

What's caused the uproar is the mixing of human stem cells with embryonic animals to create new species.

Biotechnology activist Jeremy Rifkin is opposed to crossing species boundaries, because he believes animals have the right to exist without being tampered with or crossed with another species.

He concedes that these studies would lead to some medical breakthroughs. Still, they should not be done.

"There are other ways to advance medicine and human health besides going out into the strange, brave new world of chimeric animals," Rifkin said, adding that sophisticated computer models can substitute for experimentation on live animals.

"One doesn't have to be religious or into animal rights to think this doesn't make sense," he continued. "It's the scientists who want to do this. They've now gone over the edge into the pathological domain."

David Magnus, director of the Stanford Center for *Biomedical Ethics at Stanford University*, believes the real worry is whether or not chimeras will be put to uses that are problematic, risky, or dangerous.

For example, an experiment that would raise concerns, he said, is genetically engineering mice to produce human sperm and eggs, then doing in vitro fertilization to produce a child whose parents are a pair of mice.

"Most people would find that problematic, but those uses are bizarre and not, to the best of my knowledge, anything that anybody is remotely contemplating. Most uses of chimeras are actually much more relevant to practical concerns."

Last year Canada passed the *Assisted Human Reproduction Act*, which bans chimeras. Specifically, it prohibits transferring a nonhuman cell into a human embryo and putting human cells into a nonhuman embryo.

Cynthia Cohen is a member of Canada's *Stem Cell Oversight Committee*, which oversees research protocols to ensure they are in accordance with the new guidelines. She believes a ban should also be put into place in the U.S.

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Creating chimeras, she said, by mixing human and animal gametes (sperms and eggs) or transferring reproductive cells, diminishes human dignity.

"It would deny that there is something distinctive and valuable about human beings that ought to be honored and protected," said Cohen, who is also the senior research fellow at Georgetown University's Kennedy Institute of Ethics in Washington, D.C.

But, she noted, the wording on such a ban needs to be developed carefully. It shouldn't outlaw ethical and legitimate experiments—such as transferring a limited number of adult human stem cells into animal embryos in order to learn how they proliferate and grow during the prenatal period.

Irv Weissman, director of Stanford University's *Institute of Cancer/Stem Cell Biology and Medicine* in California, is against a ban in the United States.

"Anybody who puts their own moral guidance in the way of this biomedical science, where they want to impose their will—not just be part of an argument—if that leads to a ban or moratorium. ... they are stopping research that would save human lives,"

Weissman has already created mice with brains that are about one percent human. Later this year he may conduct another experiment where the mice have 100 percent human brains. This would be done, he said, by injecting human neurons into the brains of embryonic mice.

Before being born, the mice would be killed and dissected to see if the architecture of a human brain had formed. If it did, he'd look for traces of human cognitive behavior.

Weissman said he's not a mad scientist trying to create a human in an animal body. He hopes the experiment leads to a better understanding of how the brain works, which would be useful in treating diseases like Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease.

William Cheshire, associate professor of neurology at the *Mayo Clinic's* Jacksonville, Florida, branch, feels that combining human and animal neurons is problematic.

"This is unexplored biologic territory...Whatever moral threshold of human neural development we might choose to set as the limit for such an experiment, there would be a considerable risk of exceeding that limit before it could be recognized."

Cheshire supports research that combines human and animal cells to study cellular function. As an undergraduate he participated in research that fused human and mouse cells.

But where he draws the ethical line is on research that would destroy a human embryo to obtain cells, or research that would create an organism that is partly human and partly animal.

"We must be cautious not to violate the integrity of humanity or of animal life over which we have a stewardship responsibility. Research projects that create human-animal chimeras risk disturbing fragile ecosystems, endanger health, and affront species integrity."



CONCLUSION

There are several issues to consider, but probably the most troubling is whether the entity produced should fall under human or animal legislation. Several questions follow this, such as "What percentage of the being needs to be human to fall under human legislation? What if the human/animal entity began as 30% human and 70% animal, but the human cells grew faster and the entity ended up being 70% human and 30% animal?" Some researchers have stated a preference for erring on the side of caution and giving the entity the protection and dignity entitled to a human being, however this is only a protective declaration and does not solve the

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myriad of legal issues surrounding the creation of this new entity.

For instance the *Birckbeck Law School* in the United Kingdom is one of the world's best law schools on earth for crime scene analysis and the training of crime scene investigators (CSI). They put out a press release in 2010 in which they stated that they would need to design future classes for crime scene analysis in which the crime has been committed by something which is own partly human. They said everything we know about profiling and forensics might not apply if you tracking down a serial rapist that is part wolf because the way the individual might think and its rationale, mindset, instinct and decision making might be totally different to that expected for a normal human being.

However the most important aspect of this debate is the spiritual one.

Do these procedures violate the sanctity of human life? Several thoughts:

Humans are created in God's image (Genesis 1:26); and it is our DNA which reflects the image of God

We were created separately (Genesis 1:25, 26). We were created differently than the animals ("Let the earth bring forth living creatures..." Genesis 1:24; "then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature" Genesis 2:7);

We humans were given dominion over the animals (Genesis 1:29, 30). Therefore, these procedures do seem to violate the sanctity of human life as revealed in Scripture.

Are scientists attempting to bridge the gap in created kinds?

God directly created animals according to their kind, and it is implied in the flood account that He intended for them to reproduce according to their kind (Genesis 1:21; Genesis 8:17).

The Bible indicates that man has dignity and worth. If we try to create a being that might be less-than human by combining it with animal cells

or gametes, this would diminish such God-given qualities. It is from a naturalistic perspective that people believe animals are better than man because they seem to be stronger, faster, or heartier. This is not the Biblical perspective.

Do these procedures have something in common with bestiality? One could argue that the creation of human/animal hybrids may constitute an instance of bestiality. Biblically, bestiality is a type of fornication with animals; it is a type of intimacy that perverts the real intimacy that God designed between a husband and wife. I find bestiality to be a particularly distasteful subject, and perhaps we get an indication of God's distaste for this since it is a sin that was punishable by death (Exodus. 22:19; Leviticus. 18:23; Leviticus. 20:15, 16; Deuteronomy. 27:21).

Procreation and consummation are not distinctly separate in the Bible. It is only through modern technology that procreation can occur in the laboratory apart from consummation. I think an argument could be made that procreation with human and animal gametes is a connection with animals that man was not meant to experience.

REVELATION 6: A WARNING

"I looked, and behold, a pale horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the **wild beasts of the earth.**" Revelation 6:7-8.

There were various times and events in the Bible that incurred God's wrath against His people, and/or against the people of various nations. But, are there some things that could incur God's wrath against the entire world? Does genetic engineering gone crazy fall into this category. Could the reference to "wild beasts of the earth" provide a some indication of the genetic and medical horrors to face the human race as the boundaries between human and animal are violated more and more? After all, secular science believes that humans are simply just a more advanced form of evolutionary animal.

For a much more detailed insight see

<http://www.more-than-human.com>