Some religious perspectives and current federal funding policy oppose human embryonic stem cell research that uses unwanted frozen embryos or somatic cell nuclear transfer. Recent advances in direct nuclear programming appear to resolve concerns about deriving stem cells from human blastocysts, and opponents to cloning technology appear to welcome these achievements. However, these breakthroughs raise profound questions about early human life. Perhaps the most significant contribution of this astounding new science is to provide an imaginative paradigm for clarifying the meaning of early human life – and thereby expanding the time-frame for ethical scientific intervention.

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