

Ethical Concerns & Human Cloning: A Bioconservative Study of Mandanna's *The Lost Girl*

Faiqa Ahmad¹
Shazia Rose²

Abstract

This research article, using the lens of Bioconservatism, critically analyses the ethical concerns raised by Sangu Mandanna's novel The Lost Girl involving human cloning. This study delves into the complex ethical concerns surrounding cloning technology and considers its effects on identity, parent-child relationship, societal acceptance, and right to existence through a detailed analysis of the story of the novel, its characters, and themes. The aim of this article is to elicit critical debates on the moral dilemmas that emerge when science and ethics collide.

Keywords: Bioconservatism, ethical concerns, human cloning, society, identity

1. Introduction

This research article critically analyses the ethical concerns raised by Sangu Mandanna in her novel *The Lost Girl* involving human cloning. This is done using the lens of Bioconservatism. The focus of this study is the complex ethical concerns surrounding cloning technology and how they affect the characters in the novel. These characters are faced with issues of identity, parent-child relationship, societal acceptance, and right to existence which are caused due to cloning. This leads to important questions such as what ethical concerns regarding human cloning are identified and highlighted in novel *The Lost Girl*? And in what ways does the novel reflect a bio-conservatist stance toward human cloning? Through a detailed analysis of the story of *The Lost Girl*, its characters, and themes this paper aims to explore, identify and highlight the ethical dilemma that emerges when science and ethics collide with each other.

The Lost Girl, being a 21st century novel, introduces the modern day readers to a setting where genetic copies of people are made because biotechnology has achieved advancements in cloning technology. It is a

¹MPhil Scholar, Department of English, NUML, Islamabad

²Assistant Professor, Department of English, NUML, Islamabad

story of a clone (echo as it is termed in the novel) named Eva. Eva is the echo of a girl named Amarra. Eva is created so that she may replace Amarra if she dies. The story of the novel is not as simple as it seems, it rather presents a thought provoking argument which draws attention towards how ethical or unethical it is to make human clones. This novel not only addresses the human issues that arise due to cloning, but it also points out the issues faced by the human clones. These ethical issues are analysed by employing a bioconservative lens.

Bioconservatives question the extent to which science and technology should interfere with the natural process. They do not look favourably upon radical technological developments that seek to enhance, transform or modify the human condition they wish to conserve humanity as it is (Browne & Clarke, 2019). Bioconservatives generally advocate caution and ethical considerations in the application of biotechnologies, especially those related to human enhancement, genetic engineering, and reproductive technologies. Some key points often emphasized by bioconservatives include are related to ethical concerns, human dignity, unintended consequences and social inequalities.

They voice concerns that deal with ethical implications of manipulating human biology, lay stress on the importance of respecting natural processes and the innate value of human life. Furthermore the bioconservatives also argue for the preservation of human dignity by suggesting that some interventions or enhancements in human biology may undermine the intrinsic worth of individuals. This leads the potential unintended consequences of genetic engineering and other biotechnological interventions, emphasizing the need for careful consideration and long-term assessment of the impacts on individuals and society. Bioconservatives also voice their concerns regarding the exacerbation of social inequalities through access to and use of biotechnologies. They think that these technological advancements may only be accessible to those few who have access to resources. Thus this may be the cause of creating disparities in society.

1.1 Thesis Statement

Human cloning raises questions of ethical nature not just for the humans but for the human clones as well. A Bioconservative study of Mandanna's *The Lost Girl* offers insight into the potential implications of cloning technology by highlighting and examining the ethical issues and concerns

such as identity and individuality, family relations, societal acceptance, the right to existence and choice of the clones and the cloned.

1.2. Significance of the Study

This research is of significance as it carries out a bioconservative study of *The Lost Girl* and highlights the ethical and societal concerns regarding human cloning. By doing so this research promotes greater awareness and consideration of the ethical implications of cloning technology. It urges readers to critically scrutinize the ethical repercussions of technological breakthroughs by analyzing the novel's presentation of human cloning and its repercussions.

2. Literature Review

Adrienne N. Cash (*Attack of the Clones: Legislative Approaches to Human Cloning in the United States*, 2005) holds the view that legal issues about the usage of cloning technology by humans must be of great importance because the area of human enhancement is exceptionally complex. Cloning could possibly have countless benefits or dreadful effects. Legislators must have been vigilant to make sure that the law approved is comprehensive and useful for instruction in the constantly changing field of cloning. The researcher is certain that the battle to develop cloning law has been challenging. Cash assumes that it is possible when the United States passes federal law, the lawmaking authorities will ban human reproductive cloning but allow therapeutic cloning. Cash's take on cloning is of interest for this research because it provides a pathway to the discussion on how cloning has been received by the different sections of society.

Jennifer L. Kehoe (*Cloning in Young Adult Fiction*, 2010), has explored the issues raised about human cloning in young adult fiction. The researcher has highlighted some prominent issues related to human cloning such as abnormalities or deformities, she also points out that due to cloning technology men would no longer be required for reproduction. Another research on young adult fiction by Hannah Andrews (*We Were Not Designed to Ask Questions: The Owned Female Body in Posthuman Young Adult Literature*, 2018), has explored the "subjective agency" of female characters and how it is affected by the awareness that they are possessed by someone else. The researcher looks at the ways that these young, dominated women use performativity, escape, and other kinds of resistance to express their subjugated bodies. Hannah also implies that the

oppression of these young women suggests an entirely new type of exploitation in which the right to autonomy and individuality is denied. The focus of her research is on the patriarchal system of power in society, but it fails to address the ethical issues and societal concerns from a bioconservative lens which is undertaken in this study.

Furthermore, a utopian idea of life extension made possible by the ability to transfer one's mind to new, cloned bodies in the case of illness, injury, or old age is explored by Aline Ferreira (*New Identities? The Negotiation of Cloning Technologies in Young Adult Fiction.*, 2019). Recent literary and film adaptations of this idea demonstrate the intensity of this fantastical scenario. Ferreira holds the view that speculative bioethics should start to consider the complex ethical questions that this scenario might bring forth. A surprising number of books dealing with this subject as well as the connected idea of clones intentionally created to replace a loved one, with a corresponding variety of additional ethical dilemmas, have lately appeared in young adult literature. Taking insight from Ferreira this study looks at these and related issues in *The Lost Girl* via the lens of science fiction and current theoretical research on potential biotechnological futures.

Furthermore, Patra & Das (*Reference to the Brazil Boys and Spain Beggars: Human Genetic Engineering and Cloning*, 2020) (*Reference to the Brazil Boys and Spain Beggars: Human Genetic Engineering and Cloning*, 2020) have explored the terrible dreams of cloning and human hereditary design discussed in selected science fiction. *The Boys from Brazil* highlights the intense worries associated with regenerative cloning. This novel criticizes human cloning by illustrating its ability to immortalize a cunning human being like Hitler. Meanwhile, *Beggars in Spain* portrays the devastating social and political outcomes arising out of genetic advancement. The researchers address the mysterious parts of these revolutions which propose improvement and endanger mankind completely. The researchers determined that science fiction has always talked about the darkest features of cloning and genetic engineering in humans.

Si Xiao (*A Study on Never Let Me Go from the Perspective of Ethical Criticism*, 2021), has scrutinized the terrible fate of the post-humans in-depth, discloses the ethical problem they face, and encourages readers to consider the ethical distinctions between post-humans and humans. Xiao

comes to the conclusion that the post-human society depicted in the novel has stopped discussing the moral implications of human cloning, and since then, it has entirely turned into a resource and commodity. Xiao believes that human cloning will bring about a number of issues as the post-human period approaches.

Review of the existing scholarship on cloning and the representation of cloning and its related issues in literature has been helpful in informing this study about the area which has already been explored and allows for identifying the gap which this study has endeavoured to fill. Through this review it has become evident that *The Lost Girl* has not been much researched on, and second, that it has not been examined through the bioconservative lense to study the ethical concerns attached to human cloning. Therefore, the present study examines *The Lost Girl* from a bioconservative perspective, probing into the ethical concerns raised by the characters and incidents in the novel which have serious implications for human society in the real world as well. This aspect to the best of our knowledge is as yet unexplored and is thus identified as the research gap.

3. Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This study is qualitative in nature. A textual analysis of *The Lost Girl* using the theoretical lens of bioconservatism is carried out to explore and highlight the ethical concerns related to human cloning. For the textual analysis of the novel the text is probed to explore those incidents which give an insight into the problems related to human cloning. Once such incidents in the text are identified and highlighted then the selected excerpts from the novel will be analyzed by giving it a bioconservative reading.

This study employs the theoretical underpinnings of Dale Carrico and Gilbert Meilaender. Bioconservatism talks about the perils of biotechnological innovations, mostly about human enhancement, genetic engineering, and reproductive technologies. Dale Carrico (Technoproggressivism Beyond Technophilia and Technophobia, 2004) introduced the term “bioconservative” and defined it as “a strong opposition to the genetic, prosthetic or cognitive modification of human beings in particular”. The core idea behind the bio-conservative stance is that technological breakthroughs have the potential to have significant negative effects on people, society, and the environment. Bioconservatives

often highlight the significance of sustaining the natural order of life, conventional values, and human nature.

Being a bioconservative, Meilaender denounces human cloning by saying, “[child] is a gift and not a product” made by man (Cloning in Protestant Perspective , 1998, p. 707). He holds the belief that cloning would act as a threat to identity and individuality. He insists that with cloning, “we would willfully give rise to relationships that we hardly know how to name—when, for example, a woman’s “daughter” is, in some sense, also her twin “sister.”” (Cloning in Protestant Perspective , 1998, pp. 708-9). Thus cloning seems to act as a threat to individuality and creates confusion about identity.

Furthermore, Meilaender debates that cloning will create “a world in which human equality will be threatened” (Cloning in Protestant Perspective , 1998, p. 713). He insists that cloning might create social inequalities because of its accessibility only to certain individuals or groups due to technological or economic reasons; it could reinforce disparities between those who can afford cloning technologies and those who cannot. This could lead to a stratified society with unequal access to opportunities and resources.

Meilaender's ethical concepts on human cloning offer a vigorous theoretical framework for critically examining Mandanna's *The Lost Girl* because they provide a nuanced and comprehensive perspective on the moral implications of cloning, aligning well with the complex themes and dilemmas presented in her novel. His ethical concepts contribute to a refined methodological view by offering a structured and systematic approach to exploring ethical concerns. Furthermore, Meilaender's notions provide a relevant and applicable foundation for examining the ethical and societal issues in a way that bridges the identified gap in existing research.

4. Bioconservatism & Human Cloning

A bioconservative reading of the novel leads to identifying and highlighting how human cloning has raised issues and concerns of ethical nature. This section examines the novel in the light of the research questions and aims to identify the ethical concerns arising from the practice of human cloning intended to replace deceased individuals. The arguments are rooted in Meilaender's philosophical concepts, specifically

addressing issues that deal with human identity, family dynamics, and the ethical implications of human cloning.

4.1 Identity and Individuality

Meilaender sees human cloning as "very problematic morally" because it lessens each person's individuality and poses concerns regarding their identity and inherent value (Begetting and Cloning, 1997). His claim is supported by Leon Kass because, according to him, cloning is a threat to "human identity" and "Individuality" (The Ethics of Human Cloning, 1998). In Mandanna's novel, the subject of identity and individuality acts as a dominant and intriguing component that raises substantial ethical concerns on the topic of cloning technology. The novel addresses the multifaceted and nuanced nature of the development of identity in Eva, the echo of Amarra, and draws attention to moral consequences of cloning. Throughout the novel, Eva faces challenges related to her sense of self and identity. Eva has no identity of her own. She is given an identity by her creators, the Weavers, who have branded "a small letter e. E for echo" (Mandanna, 2012, p. 15) on her skin at the time of her creation. Branding a sign of echo on her skin ensures that Eva knows she has no life of her own because she is created to live as Amarra's replacement in the event of Amarra's death.

Eva's life depends on Amarra who is her original, and she is not allowed to do anything of her own choice because echoes are the exact replicas of their originals and thus must follow the experiences of their originals. Eva of her own accord cannot even like someone, whom Amarra hates,

"I learn to love or dislike people the way she does" (Mandanna, 2012, p. 12).

This line clearly shows Eva's lack of identity and individuality which is the direct result of the cloning technology. For her creators she is just a clone who must be and behave as an exact replica of Amarra. From a bioconservative perspective it implies that biotechnology in human cloning is responsible for Eva's identity crisis. She does not hold any agency over her own self because she is a product and a commodity. Although Eva is alive but she is not considered a human because she is an echo, not a real natural human who has their individual likes and dislikes, the right to choose, and to be who she wants to be as is in the case of Amarra. Eva is made to learn everything about Amarra's life and her routine activities because she has to be an exact copy of Amarra. Eva's

days and nights are occupied by the activities through which she can learn about Amarra's life. These incidents visibly present Eva's lack of personal identity and individuality which is a harrowing thought and definitely a cause of concern. But this is not the only aspect of identity and individuality being violated. Taking into account Amarra's case it is evident that she too suffers identity issue and violation of individuality. It is seen that in the hopes that Eva would be an exact replica of Amarra, all of Amarra's personal details are shared with the Weavers who are responsible for the training of Eva to be like her.

They send Erik school reports, descriptions of events and birthdays, and photos, all the tiny details about my other's everyday life that I must know if I am to be as much her as she is (The Lost Girl, 2012, p. 12).

This excerpt indicates that Amarra's parents provide Eva's guardian, Erik, with extensive information and resources related to their daughter's everyday life. This continuous series of updates about Amarra from her parents is intended to make Eva an exact duplicate of her. The expectation that Eva should represent Amarra limits her ability to choose her own identity and fate. This raises questions regarding how society views and treats clones, potentially depriving them of the chance to forge their own identities and experiences and at the same time the humans are robbed off of their individual identity, private and public, which they must share so that their clones or echoes may be able to function flawlessly as them when the time comes. The novel presents a discourse which is equally sympathetic towards the clones and the cloned, and debunks such technoenthusiasts who do not bring into consideration such crucial concerns that adversely affect identity and individuality.

Yet another incident that depicts violation and lack of control over one's identity and individuality in the novel is that the echoes are supposed to look exactly like their originals. This is why when Amarra gets a tattoo, Eva too has to get one, no matter how much she hates the idea of getting a tattoo. For Eva the tattoo "will always remind [her] of what [she is] and what [she] can never be." (The Lost Girl, 2012, p. 14). Eva claims to always hate the tattoo. Through this incident Mandana shows that Eva's profound feelings of disapproval and resistance towards the role she is required to play are reflected in her powerful emotional reaction to the tattoo in the above-mentioned excerpt. The tattoo serves as a physical reminder of her lack of autonomy and control of the Weavers in her life.

Her hatred for the tattoo also serves as a metaphor for her battle against being defined simply by her genetic composition and her desire to be seen as someone with a distinct identity.

On the one hand, Eva is physically similar to her original, Amarra, since she has her genetic composition while on the other hand, her personality is dissimilar to Amarra's because she is a separate individual who does not want to act or behave like her. While describing her differences from Amarra, Eva says, "I don't think I am much like her (Amarra). When I was seven, I begged Mina Ma to take me to a movie in town even though I knew my other hadn't seen it" (*The Lost Girl*, 2012, p. 9). From this excerpt, it can be clearly seen that Eva takes into account her distinctive qualities and differences from her original. She acknowledges that despite being a clone, she has her own distinct personality, hobbies, and experiences that distinguish her from Amarra.

My name is Amarra. Like my other. It means "immortal one." I have always wanted to choose a name of my own. I hate it when my guardians call me Amarra (*The Lost Girl*, 2012, p. 16).

This quote shows Eva's desire to make decisions for herself, just like any other person, and not have her name decided for her. Eva objects to her guardians calling her Amarra. She longs to be accepted for who she really is and be given the freedom to choose a name that expresses who she is. She wants to be named "Draupadi" because she too was "born differently, even abnormally" (*The Lost Girl*, 2012, p. 17). Eva relates with Draupadi because her creation process is different as she is created through technology rather than being born naturally.

Eva begins to realize that her hobbies, tastes, and aspirations are different from Amarra's as she makes her way through life. She enjoys making bird sculptures while Amarra likes to polish dusty antiquities. Eva tells Erik that she wants to "study art" rather than "study archaeology" like Amarra (*The Lost Girl*, 2012, p. 29). All such differences of Eva with Amarra strengthen her sense of identity and individuality.

Through Eva's character Mandanna also explores the idea that DNA does not mold personality, it is formed by individual experiences, decisions, and relationships. Eva may have Amarra's DNA, but her life experiences and the relationships she develops with people are all her own.

"I don't want him," I say. "I want you."

"That's punishable."

"I don't care about the laws" (The Lost Girl, 2012, p. 71).

In this excerpt, Eva confesses affection for her guardian Sean, despite being made to take Amarra's place and continue a relationship with her boyfriend Ray. It is visible through this quote that Eva asserts her individuality and is determined to build her own relationships in spite of the limitations imposed on her because she is a clone. Mandana in this novel shows that clones are not allowed to build relationships with the people of their choice because it is considered a forbidden and punishable act. This also depicts Eva's efforts to distinguish herself from the role she is designed to play and to become her own person with her own feelings and choices. Instead of being restricted by a predestined fate, Eva wants to control her own destiny and make decisions that are consistent with who she truly is and what she is worth.

Through the theme of identity and individuality, it becomes evident that clones are not just copies of their genetic predecessors; they have the capacity to be unique individuals as seen by Eva's attempts to create her own identity and sense of self. The issue of identity raises an ethical concern that clones should be treated as valuable individuals with their personalities and individualities rather than being treated as just copies or substitutes for their originals. This issue also raises concerns regarding society's ethical obligation to respect and acknowledge the identity and individuality of clones as individuals. Mandanna's bioconservative approach towards cloning technologies becomes evident through the depiction of the problems of individuality and identity of Eva and Amarra's characters.

4.2. Parent-Child Relationship

Meilaender shows his concerns about family dynamics in the context of human cloning. He believes human cloning has "threaten[ed]" the bond between the parents and children (Cloning in Protestant Perspective, 1998, p. 708). He is certain of the fact that cloning will give rise to relationships that we hardly know to take care of and deal with. Murray says, "Cloning a child to be a reincarnation of someone else is a grotesque, fun-house mirror distortion of parental expectations" (Even If It Worked, Cloning Won't Bring Her Back, 2001).

The bond or relationship between Amarra's parents—Neil and Alisha—and Eva, their daughter's clone, is an integral and intricate theme in *The Lost Girl*. Eva who is made as an echo of Amarra is supposed to be a flawless genetic duplicate in the event of Amarra's death. When Amarra tragically dies in an accident, her parents have an alternate in the form of Eva. This choice raises several ethical concerns regarding Eva's existence and her role in the family.

Neil and Alisha love their children to the extent that even the thought of losing them is unimaginable for the couple. In order to avoid pain and suffering in case of their children's death, they make the decision to have their echoes made. This decision demonstrates their immense love for their children. Erik once told Eva, "About how ordinary people, who can't bear the idea of losing somebody they love, can ask the Weavers to make an echo" (*The Lost Girl*, 2012, p. 12) Amarra dies in a tragic accident and the day comes for which Eva is made.

"You're all your familiars have left now," Erik reminds me. "They want nothing more than to have her back. They're grieving. They need you."... "You have to understand that all they have is hope. They're hoping you *will* be perfect.... "You've been Eva too long. It's time to be Amarra" (*The Lost Girl*, 2012, p. 74).

This excerpt mirrors Amarra's parents' intense love for their daughter and their distressed attempts to come to terms with the loss of their daughter. After Amarra's death, they look to Eva, the echo made in the likeness of Amarra, for comfort since their loss is so overwhelming. They hang onto the belief that through Eva, they can somehow sense Amarra's presence once again since they regard Eva as their only link to their deceased daughter. Eva has to live Amarra's life with her family, who are always trying to look for Amarra in her, but are unable to fully accept Eva as Amarra.

She reached for me, then stopped. Her eyes swept across my face, drinking in every detail. She stared into my eyes for the longest time, until I couldn't stand to see the agony, the grief, the wild, desperate hope... " (The Lost Girl, 2012, p. 90).

Alisha's emotional journey as she first encounters Eva is poignantly captured in the above-mentioned excerpt. From sadness and suffering to hope and acceptance, the quote captures the range of feelings that Alisha goes through. When Alisha reaches out for Eva, it is clear that she is in

pain and loss. However, she stops short of fully accepting the fact of her daughter's death and the presence of Eva as her echo. The words “wild, desperate hope” highlight Alisha's wish to recognize traces of Amarra in Eva. Despite her initial reluctance, the thought that Eva could indeed be an echo of Amarra gives her hope that she might be able to reconnect with her daughter once more, but in a different way. On the other hand, Neil shows a different reaction when meets Eva for the first time because he sees things logically rather than passionately.

“Hello,” he said, deliberately avoiding the use of my name. “Hi,” I said... He scanned my face, much like Alisha had done, but I could see that there was no hope in his. He might have hoped once, but he must have known the moment he set eyes on me that it had been in vain (The Lost Girl, 2012, p. 93).

This quotation shows how Neil “deliberately” avoids taking Eva’s name because he is unable to accept her as his daughter. Neil's grief and pain over losing Amarra is what prevents him from accepting Eva. He may have had some initial hopes for Eva because of her similarity to Amarra, but after meeting her, he comes to the realization that she cannot replace his beloved daughter as she is just an echo.

Neil can only see Amarra’s face in Eva and not her because he believes dead ones cannot be brought back to life, no matter how much advancements science makes. For this reason, he does not look “satisfied” when Eva tells him that she is Amarra, and he wants her to accept she is “an echo of Amarra” (The Lost Girl, 2012, p. 95). He is unable to love and care for Eva the same way he used to love and care for Amarra because she is “still so real to” him that he does not truly think that his daughter can replace her echo (The Lost Girl, 2012, p. 165).

“She’s not here anymore, is she?”

I shake my head. Then Alisha begins to weep, and I know that, for her, the pretending is over (The Lost Girl, 2012, p. 152).

Through this quote, it is visible that Alisha is experiencing a moment of emotional realization and acceptance over the death of her daughter, Amarra. Alisha wants Eva to confirm that Amarra has actually gone. Alisha's query reveals the lingering denial or hopes that her daughter could possibly still exist in some form in Eva. The false hope that Eva is in some way Amarra is put to an end. Alisha's sobbing shows that she has come to

terms with Amarra's death and understands that Eva can never fully be able to take Amarra's position.

Through the theme of the parent-child relationship, it can be established that Neil and Alisha, as Amarra's parents, cannot fully accept Eva as their daughter because she is an echo. The main ethical concern raised is that clones can never take the place of a deceased person or the family of the deceased person can never fully accept clones as replacements for their loved ones, no matter how much similar they look, because the reality of death always lingers on their minds.

4.3. Societal Acceptance

Mandanna's novel explores the challenges clones face in being accepted by society, as they might be viewed as less than or stigmatized due to their origins. Mandanna uses Eva's experiences to highlight the challenges faced by artificially generated beings.

... echoes are illegal in India. And you understand that if the police discovered that your familiars have you, they would go to prison." ... "What you may not know is if the police do find out, they will also take you into custody. They could choose to destroy you themselves" (The Lost Girl, 2012, p. 74).

Erik warns Eva about the risks associated with her illegal status in India. The government of India has banned production and existence of clones because of ethical, moral, and practical reasons. The quote also highlights the possible legal consequences for Amarra's parents who asked the Weavers to have Eva made. They risk being imprisoned if the police find out they are keeping an echo. This threat puts Eva in a precarious and vulnerable situation; underscoring the dangers she faces by being in a culture that considers her entire presence to be unlawful. Eva has to keep her identity a secret while also fulfilling her purpose of being Amarra's replacement.

"...I don't know how you can stand to be what you are. Doesn't it make you sick, stepping in and stealing her life? Or do you not feel things like that because you're not actually a person?" ... "You're not even supposed to exist anymore!" (The Lost Girl, 2012, p. 130).

This quotation shows how the fact that Eva is not born via the natural process of birthing, but is produced artificially offends some of Amarra's friends and classmates who see her as an unnatural being. They view echoes as inferior or nothing more than replicas of the original person.

Ray's remark that Eva is "not even supposed to exist anymore" denotes a belief that echoes should never have been created. Eva feels alienated and marginalized as a result of their criticism of her feelings and her right to exist as an echo. This excerpt also exemplifies society's unfavorable opinions or moral concerns about the presence of clones or other artificially made beings. Through the theme of societal acceptance, this can be deduced that the use of cloning technology raises serious concerns regarding the status, and rights of the clones, as well as whether or not they can be treated with the same respect and dignity as other people.

4.4. Right to Existence

Meilaender (*Shall We Clone?*, 1998) is concerned that human cloning would result in the commodification of human life. He pens Peters' similar views on the dangers of human cloning particularly for children. Ted Peters thinks as a result of cloning "We may learn to think of (children) as commodities. Over these commodities we may feel the need to exercise quality control" (Meilaender, *Shall We Clone?*, 1998).

Mandanna skillfully explores the ethical concerns and challenges linked with Eva's existence, questioning whether she has the right to exist as a unique being.

I know you don't like hearing it," says Erik, "but this is what your existence means. You are her. You must be her. Or all of this will fall to pieces." His face softens. "It won't help to fret. Put it out of your mind until it's time" (*The Lost Girl*, 2012, p. 14).

This excerpt conveys the idea that Eva's existence depends on playing the part of Amarra's duplicate and that this is the only reason for her existence. Erik warns Eva that if she fails to be a good replacement, terrible things might happen, and the equilibrium of the world she lives in would be upset. Eva's life is under the extreme control of the Weavers, especially her creator, Matthew. The dependency of artificially created beings like Eva on their creators highlights the power dynamics between the creator and the creation. Eva knows the fact that Matthew is "a man who could end my existence with a word" (*The Lost Girl*, 2012, p. 87). This feeling of vulnerability highlights the ethical concerns surrounding the creator's accountability and authority over echoes.

The Weavers have made strict laws for the echoes. Those echoes who do not fulfill their purpose of creation or try to run away and lead their life in their own way are mostly “unstitched” or unmade by their creators,

I envision a pair of hands...pulling at a lock of my hair, pulling and pulling because it doesn't stop sliding out, it's a thread, unraveling my head and my lips and my body and my feet, until I am lost, gone, unpicked and unstitched, unwoven from the strands that made me. It's the cost of trampling on the Weavers' laws (The Lost Girl, 2012, p. 69).

This quotation perfectly captures Eva's worry and concern about the repercussions of disobeying the rules set down by the Weavers. The theme of the right to existence raises an ethical concern: Is it okay to end the life of a living being (Eva) who fails to fulfill the purpose of her creation? Is it ok that Eva is not given a chance to lead life in her own way if the purpose of her creation no longer exists?

5. Conclusion

The Lost Girl by Sangu Mandanna presents a provocative examination of the ethical concerns raised by human cloning. In the setting of cloning technology, the novel challenges readers to consider the implications of identity and individuality, parent-child relationship, societal acceptance, and right to existence. This research highlights the significance of bioconservatist take on human cloning and informed ethical conversations and sensible decision-making to traverse cloning as we advance scientifically. Such discussions are the only way through which the society can attempt to find a balance between advancing science and preserving the rights and worth of every individual, regardless of origin.

References

- Adrirne, C. (2005). Attack of the Clones: Legislative Approaches to Human Cloning in the United States. *Duke Law & Technology Review*, 1-15.
- Andrews, H. (2018, November 14). We Were Not Designed to Ask Questions: The Owned Female Body in Posthuman Young Adult Literature. doi:<https://doi.org/10.25949/19441508.v1>
- Carrico, D. (2004, December 22). Technoproggressivism Beyond Technophilia and Technophobia. Retrieved from

<https://technoprogressive.blogspot.com/2006/08/technoprogressivism-beyond.html>

- Ferreira, A. (2019, November 28). New Identities? The Negotiation of Cloning Technologies in Young Adult Fiction. *NanoEthics*, 245-254. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11569-019-00353-4>
- Kass, L. (1998). *The Ethics of Human Cloning*. Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press.
- Kehoe, J. (2010). Cloning in Young Adult Fiction. *Graduate Research Papers*. Retrieved June 30, 2023, from <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1049&context=grp>
- Mandanna, S. (2012). *The Lost Girl*. London: HarperCollins.
- Meilaender, G. (1997, June). Begetting and Cloning. *First Things*. Retrieved July 10, 2023, from <https://www.firstthings.com/article/1997/06/005-begetting-and-cloning>
- Meilaender, G. (1998). Cloning in Protestant Perspective . *ValpoScholar*, 707-713.
- Meilaender, G. (1998). Shall We Clone? *First Things*. Retrieved July 2023, from <https://www.firstthings.com/article/1998/10/006-shall-we-clone>
- Murray, T. (2001). Even If It Worked, Cloning Won't Bring Her Back. *The Washington Post*.
- Patra, B. e. (2020). Reference to the Brazil Boys and Spain Beggars: Human Genetic Engineering and Cloning . *International Journal of Research in Engineering and Science*, 82-86.
- Xiao, S. (2021). A Study on Never Let Me Go from the Perspective of Ethical Criticism. *Open Access Library Journal*, 1-12. doi:10.4236/oalib.1107327