

research) for medical applications, but prohibit its use for heritable genetic modification and reproductive human cloning.

In the face of this consensus, Green blithely announces his confidence that humanity “can and will” incorporate heritable genetic enhancement into the “ongoing human adventure.”

Well, it’s certainly possible. Our desires for good looks, good brains, wealth and long lives, for ourselves and for our children, are strong and enduring. If the gene-tech entrepreneurs are able to convince us that we can satisfy these desires by buying into genetic modification, perhaps we’ll bite. Green certainly seems eager to encourage us to do so.

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But he would be wise to listen to what medical students, the great majority of Americans, and the international community appear to be saying: We want all these things, yes, and genetic technology might help us attain them, but we don’t want to run the huge risks to the human community and the human future that would come with altering the genetic basis of our common human nature.

¹**Tay-Sachs** A progressive disorder that destroys nerve neurons in the brain and spinal cord. [Editors’ note.]

Topics for Critical Thinking and Writing

1. Do you believe that in his first paragraph, Richard Hayes fairly summarizes Green’s essay? If your answer is no, what are your objections?
2. Does the prospect raised in paragraph 6 frighten you? Why, or why not?
3. In his final paragraph, Hayes speaks of “huge risks.” What are these risks? Are you willing to take them? Why, or why not?