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United Nations Simulation Conference 2020
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organisation
Background Guide



Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation! As the chair of the UNESCO, we are proud to be a part of the United Nations Simulation Conference 2020. We believe that this conference will help you realize that no one is too small to make a change and no voice can ever go unheard.

The agendas that we have selected are ones that need to be addressed on a global scale; the first being protection of journalists and their rights in areas of conflicts. Journalism plays a tremendous role in the lawful functioning of society. The protection of journalists should be of the utmost importance, especially in regions of conflict, but several events have proven to be on the contrary. The second agenda at hand is the ethical dilemma of genetic engineering. With changing times and advancements in technology arise ethical and moral consequences. One of the most concerning cases is that of gene editing, where the fundamentals of life are altered. This causes serious ethical repercussions as nearly every aspect of a human could be changed to one's liking.

The UNESCO depends on the cooperation and goodwill of its Member States, as each state has unique interests and concerns, it is challenging to write, negotiate, and pass resolutions. As the representatives of these member states, you are expected to come together with relevant solutions to the situation at hand. This would require confidence, cooperation, creativity, the ability to express opinions, and diplomacy skills. We hope to see effective resolutions and ideas come up in the committee.

This background guide serves to give you some brief ideas on which you can elaborate your research. Always keep in mind that the background guide is just to give you a brief explanation of the agendas at hand which are to be addressed. We strongly urge you to utilize outside sources in addition to the background guide in order to build a strong foundation for your argument. We look forward to meeting each and every one of you and hope that this session serves as a platform to nourish the inner diplomat in you.

All the very best!

Sincerely ,

Chairs of UNESCO

Rakshitha Senthil & Shreedhar Jagtap

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)¹ was established in 1945, in order to contribute to peace and security by building up international collaboration through reforms concerning education, science and culture and to reinforce universal respect for justice, the rule of law and human rights, along with fundamental freedom declared in the United Nations Charter.

The Organization has wide-reaching specific powers:

UNESCO's role is to support and promote comprehensive actions focusing both on safeguarding the access to quality and inclusive education and to a culturally enriched environment, where heritage connects people and generations, and on protecting the freedom of expression, strengthening in the same time democracy, and the right to diversity, human dignity, as well as the right to benefit from scientific breakthroughs and general development.

In doing so, the Organization takes the advice of the international, regional and national professional organizations concerned and of the National Commissions.

The Organization's mandate is formally defined in Article 1, paragraph 3 of the Charter of the United Nations, and Article 1 of the UNESCO Constitution² (1945).

¹ "Unesco." <https://en.unesco.org/>.

² "Constitution | United Nations Educational, Scientific ... - Unesco." <http://www.unesco.org/new/unesco/about-us/who-we-are/history/constitution/>.

“The Protection of Journalists and their rights in areas of Conflict”

War reporting is inherently dangerous. Indeed, it could arguably be one of the most dangerous occupations in the world. Still, out of a sense of professional duty, many journalists and media professional(s) make the courageous choice to go to conflict zones, so as to tell the world about the stories of armed conflicts and the human cost they entail. Amidst the so-called ‘fog of war’, they play a vital role in keeping the world informed and ensuring that our responses are based on the facts and truths unfolding on the ground.

This statement accurately illustrates that in times of armed conflict, be it international or national, the media’s surveillance role and their importance in informing the population are enhanced. This is mainly due to the fact that during war, a functioning civil society that critically monitors the behaviour of the government and military is often absent. The media is the main, if not the sole, transmitter of information on breaches of international security and the primary medium through which people gain a clear picture of a (distant) situation. This essential role makes the media one of the most powerful tools in waging war. As NewsWatch Canada’s Co-Director Robert A. Hackett stated, ‘in war time, media are not mere observers but simultaneously a source of intelligence, a combatant, a weapon, target, and a battlefield’.

Around the globe, conflict is pervasive. The world has exhibited conflicts in all segments of society and cultures. The conflicts include terrorism, genocide, and various other crimes against humanity. Journalism to capture the conflicted areas is vital to spread awareness and create an environment for cooperation. Over the past few decades, an extensive number of journalists have been killed or wounded in armed conflicts. Journalists play an indispensable role in the cognizance of the human right to information of citizens all over the world, they play a quintessential role in exposing the truth in these conflicted areas.

Article 79 of Additional Protocol I of Geneva Conventions has affirmed the status of journalists in conflicted areas. There is no distinction between Independent journalists and war journalists that arrive in conflicted areas. They are constantly exposed to human rights violations which include targeted killings, arbitrary detention or kidnapping, governmental prosecutions based on rigorous laws on the media or anti-terrorism laws, etc. Since 1992, 519 journalists have been executed during war coverage and 259 journalists are detained in those conflicted areas. Detained Journalists have the Journalism in conflicted areas is not secure, a dangerous prospect for the media outlets. Under international law, journalism demands assurance for them to do their jobs.

Keywords

Safety: The condition of being safe from undergoing or causing hurt, injury, or loss.

Journalists: A journalist is a person who collects, writes, photographs, processes, edits or comments on news or other topical information to the public.

Areas of conflicts: Conflict-Affected Areas are areas where Conflict is prevalent. The area may be a region, a country, an area within a country, or an area that crosses one or more country boundaries.

Non-state actors: In international relations, non-state actors are individuals or groups that hold influence and which are wholly or partly independent of a sovereign state or state.

War journalism: War journalism is journalism about conflict that has a value bias towards violence and violent groups.

History

War reporting is a distinct type of journalism that has gained popularity over the past decades, while drastically changing its form and purpose to align with the rapidly shifting nature of wars worldwide. While journalists have covered wars as early as the Crimean War and American Civil War, their engagement has increasingly professionalised, seeing a rise in the use of audio and visual means (World Wars I and II and the Vietnam War), (real-time) TV reporting (Persian Gulf and Yugoslav wars) and most recently, 24/7 news and cyber journalism (Afghanistan and Iraq wars), as well as the involvement of local citizens in journalistic activities (Arab uprisings). The role of the journalist, from an observer to an actual ‘member’ of the conflict, and the involvement of the general population in journalistic activities has changed drastically. This is enhanced by the fact that wars are, today, not solely fought by means of war machinery but also by (dis)information and the control thereof – the phenomenon of information warfare. In relation to the greater proximity of journalists to the armed conflict, their increased exposure and the (sporadic) involvement of local citizens, it is important to distinguish between two types of occupational journalism: independent journalists and war correspondents.

War correspondents are defined as ‘specialized journalists who are present, with the authorization and under the protection of the armed forces of a belligerent, on the theatre of operations and whose mission is to provide information on events relating to ongoing hostilities’ by the *Dictionnaire de droit international public*. This definition is similar to that adopted in the United Nations Security Council’s UNSC Resolution 1738 and also mentioned in the Green Book of the British Armed Forces, specifically emphasising the need for accreditation. This distinguishes them from independent journalists who are not officially authorised by their government and accredited by the military.

A distinct type of war correspondents are those that are ‘embedded’ with the military, a term that has gained popularity since the beginning of the Iraq war in 2003 but that was already used during World War I.

Timeline

Date	Event
9th December 1975	The United Nations draft convention declares “...any correspondent, reporter, photographer, and their technical film, radio and television assistants who are ordinarily engaged in any of these activities as their principal occupation...”.
8th June 1977	The Geneva Convention with Additional Protocols I and II to the Geneva Conventions declares “Journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians and they shall be protected as such under the Conventions and this Protocol, provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians”.
November 1999:	The British Defence Doctrine makes the same assertion, as does the report presented by Volker Krönig to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.
March 2003	The British media were attacked by certain ministers and members of Parliament who accused them of playing into the hands of the Iraqi propaganda machine.

27th May 2015	The United Nations Security Council in its 7450th meeting adopted Resolution 2222 on the protection of media professionals in conflict zones.
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Major Concerns

Reporting on wars and natural disasters is inherently dangerous, but the spread of insurgent and criminal groups globally poses an unprecedented risk to journalists. Since the videotaped killings of James Foley and Steven Sotloff in 2014, public awareness of the risks has increased exponentially, but the dangers persist.

The risks include kidnapping for ransom or political gain, and murder by insurgents who see journalists as surrogates of an enemy too powerful to attack directly. Journalists are caught in crossfire or targeted by drug cartels as a warning to other unwelcome reporters. While technological changes enable more people to engage in acts of journalism, those same changes bring new risks, such as surveillance and tracking. In response, big news outlets and some international correspondents have taken steps to increase safety, but freelancers and local journalists often do not have the resources, including safety equipment and training in physical and digital security, to do so.

Individuals and small outlets lack funds for insurance and security practices, and some journalists accuse news outlets and colleagues of engaging in reckless behavior that puts themselves and others at risk. Post-traumatic stress disorder goes unrecognized or untreated. Even as new threats to the media emerge, the longstanding threat of government repression persists. Authorities abuse their own laws to censor and imprison those who criticize or seek to investigate wrongdoing.

Repression and impunity endanger the lives and liberty of reporters and foster a climate of fear and self-censorship among journalists and opinion leaders, suppressing news of public interest. This has consequences for all freedoms far beyond freedom of expression. A healthy democracy depends on the free flow of news and opinion to and from the governed. Journalists play a vital role in ensuring that flow and in holding the powerful to account.

Against this backdrop of brutality and intimidation, traditional methods of advocacy are not enough. Journalists must strive to educate themselves about the threats and work in solidarity to combat violence and impunity. Press freedom groups who have relied on direct financial help to

at-risk journalists and advocacy with governments must adopt a more holistic approach incorporating physical, digital, and psychological aid.

Major Parties Involved

Party- controlled media silences independent journalists and muckrakers trying to expose the truth about government corruption. The most censored country in the world is **North Korea**, where there are no independent journalists, radio, newspapers or television shows. Everything broadcasted or printed requires state approval.

Libya similarly lacks independent broadcast of print media. Countries such as **Uzbekistan, Eritrea, Guinea, Belarus, and Cuba** take a zero tolerance stance on negative media, and have severely cracked down against journalists that voice opposing opinions of the government. Since many of its members are fractured over this issue, there is no official stance from the Non-Aligned Movement.

China: Media laws outlining journalists' rights and responsibilities are ambiguous and not clearly defined. This leaves the interpretation of media laws to the discretion of the government. Journalists accused of spreading anti government opinions are jailed and forced to accept their sentence or pay a fine to go on probation, the terms of which are that they are not allowed to continue their work. In the United Nations, China assiduously protects its own sovereignty over its internal affairs and works to defend the principle of state sovereignty from anything that could weaken it. Consequently it usually opposes human rights initiatives that would challenge the authority of the state.

The European Union (EU) is a global leader on freedom of journalists, EU states usually elevate the rights of journalists above the power of states. Some EU Member States act under a dual sovereignty doctrine, acknowledging the sovereignty of the state, but also the sovereignty of the individual, including journalists. The EU accepts the principle that a free journalist is essential to good governance.

Balkan member states such as Serbia and Bulgaria have been improving their protection of journalists threatened in their line of work. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is the UN's largest voting bloc, but it is divided on this issue. Many NAM Member States, especially those in

Africa and Latin America strongly believe in the value of freedom of information and the importance of journalists.

There are some exceptions such as **Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela**. Asian Member States are more cautious. Several, especially in Central Asia, are not friends of an uncontrolled press, and prefer to permit mechanisms that allow states to assure their control over the flow of information.

The United States of America has advocated for press freedom protection in the UN for years. However, since Edward Snowden leaked information to the public about worldwide government surveillance, the greatest concern is how accessible government records are to the public and protecting sensitive sources of information.

Past Attempts to Solve the Issue

There have been various resolutions and international laws passed over the years to curb the prevailing situation at hand. The UN along with the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) has been active in safeguarding the journalists. According to the Geneva Convention with Additional Protocols, I and II to the Geneva Conventions declare “Journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians and they shall be protected as such under the Conventions and this Protocol, provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians”. The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols contain only two explicit references to media personnel (Article 4 A (4) of the Third Geneva Convention and Article 79 of Additional Protocol I). However, if one reads these provisions in connection with other humanitarian laws, it is clear that the stability under current law is quite extensive. Most importantly, Article 79 of Additional Protocol I provides that journalists are qualified to all rights and protections granted to civilians in international armed conflicts. The same clutches in non-international armed conflicts under a customary worldwide organization.

Focusing Questions

1. How can Member States effectively implement the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity?
2. How can Member States and media institutions work together to promote freedom of expression, press freedom, and the safety of journalists?
3. How could UNESCO and Member States ensure policies remain up-to-date in regards to technological advancements and its relation to fostering the freedom of expression, press freedom, and ensuring safety of journalists?
4. How does the status of the media in your country and its relationship with both your country's government and its public affect your country's policy on this topic and its ability to enforce protections for journalists?

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“The Ethical dilemma of Genetical engineering”

Genetic engineering is the artificial manipulation, modification, and recombination of DNA or other nucleic acid molecules in order to modify an organism or population of organisms. This may mean changing one base pair (A-T or C-G), deleting a whole region of DNA, or introducing an additional copy of a gene. It may also mean extracting DNA from another organism’s genome and combining it with the DNA of that individual.

Because gene therapy involves making changes to the body’s set of basic instructions, it raises many unique ethical concerns. Some wonder if it's right to tinker with human DNA. Currently, treatments are focused on somatic cells, that is, cells in the body. Any alterations are not passed on to later generations, because DNA in the germ cells-eggs and sperm-is unaffected. But so-called germ line gene therapy is certainly possible. It could cure diseases before they happened, but might cause other unexpected problems that would persist in later generations.

Developments in genetics and genomics offer exciting new modalities for medicine, but they also raise a host of ethical, legal, and social considerations that include adverse diagnosis and genetic counseling, do-it-yourself (DIY) genetic testing, gene patenting, biobanking, the prospects of big data and their application for personalized or precision medicine, as well as concerns regarding privacy and data security and the potential for genetic discrimination. Furthermore, evolving technological innovations in genetic interventions such as the development of CRISPR continue to demonstrate the importance of moral considerations and societal discourse regarding the proper limits of these technologies, particularly within the realm of human germline interventions.

Keywords

1. **Genetic Engineering:** Genetic engineering, also called genetic modification or genetic manipulation, is the direct manipulation of an organism's genes using biotechnology.
2. **CRISPR:** a simple yet powerful tool for editing genomes. It allows researchers to easily alter DNA sequences and modify gene function.
3. **Somatic gene therapy:** a type of gene therapy where DNA is transferred into body tissues. It specifically targets cells in the body which are not passed on to the person’s children.

4. **Germline gene therapy:** a type of gene therapy where DNA is transferred into the cells that produce reproductive cells, eggs or sperm, in the body. This type of therapy allows for the correction of disease-causing gene variants that are certain to be passed down from generation to generation.
5. **Biobanking:** Biobanking refers to the process by which samples of bodily fluid or tissue are collected for research use to improve our understanding of health and disease.
6. **Gene Patent:** A gene patent is a patent on a specific isolated gene sequence, a natural sequence that has been altered, the processes and methods for obtaining or using it, or a combination of any of these.
7. **Genetic Testing:** Genetic testing is a type of medical test that identifies changes in chromosomes, genes, or proteins.
8. **Ethics:** moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity.
9. **Consent:** to give permission for an action.

Timeline

DATE	EVENT
2000	Craig Venter sequences the human genome.
2001	The sequence of the human genome is published in Science and Nature, making it possible for researchers all over the world to begin developing treatments.
2002	The banteng, an endangered species, is cloned for the first time.
2003	China grants the world's first regulatory approval of a gene therapy product, Gendicine (Shenzhen SiBiono GenTech), which delivers the p53 gene as a therapy for squamous cell head and neck cancer. The Human Genome Project completes sequencing of the human genome.
2008	Chemists in Japan create the first DNA molecule made almost entirely of artificial parts.
2010	Craig Venter announces completion of "synthetic life" by transplanting synthetic genomes capable of self-replication into a recipient bacterial

	cell.
2011	Advances in 3-D printing technology leads to “skin-printing.”
2012	Researchers at the University of Washington in Seattle announce the successful sequencing of a complete fetal genome using nothing more than snippets of DNA floating in its mother’s blood.
2013	Two research teams announce a fast and precise new method for editing snippets of the genetic code. The so-called CRISPR system takes advantage of a defense strategy used by bacteria. Researchers in Japan develop functional human liver tissue from reprogrammed skin cells.
2015	scientists hit a number of breakthroughs using the gene-editing technology CRISPR. Researchers in China report modifying the DNA of a nonviable human embryo, a controversial move. Researchers at Harvard University insert genes from a long-extinct woolly mammoth into the living cells — in a petri dish — of a modern elephant. Elsewhere, scientists report using CRISPR to potentially modify pig organs for human transplant and modify mosquitoes to eradicate malaria. Using cells from human donors, doctors, for the first time, built a set of vocal cords from scratch.
2016	CRISPR, the revolutionary gene-editing tool that promises to cure illnesses and solve environmental calamities, takes a major step forward this year when a team of Chinese scientists use it to treat a human patient for the very first time. For the first time, bioengineers create a completely 3D-printed ‘heart on a chip.’
2017	Sequencing of the green alga genome provides a blueprint to advance clean energy bioproducts. Blood stem cells grown in the lab for the first time. Researchers at Sahlgrenska Academy – part of the University of Gothenburg, Sweden –generate cartilage tissue by printing stem cells using a 3D-bioprinter. Two-way communication in brain-machine interface achieved for the first time. Fine-tuning ‘dosage’ of mutant genes unleashes long-trapped yield potential in tomato plants.

	Scientists engineer disease-resistant rice without sacrificing yield.
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Past Attempts to solve the issue

As genetic engineering on humans is still in its infancy, not many countries have regulations with regards to its ethical aspect. However, the majority of countries and organisations are staying away from germline therapy until more is understood about its use and potential effects.

Many European countries legally prohibit any intervention in the germline. Other countries have advisory guidelines. The United States has a complicated regulatory scheme that would make it very difficult to perform any germline modification. There are also funding restrictions on embryo research that might have a very strong effect on the underlying basic science needed to even get to the point of regulatory approval. And many countries have simply not considered the possibility.

There are international instruments that have been written at various levels to address aspects of genetics. For example, the Council of Europe's Oviedo Convention says that predictive genetic tests should be used only for medical purposes. It specifically calls for a prohibition on the use of genetic engineering of the germline or changing the makeup of later generations. It builds on earlier European conventions. But like many international instruments, it is not ratified by every member country and, even when ratified, has not necessarily been implemented with concrete legislation. It has great normative value and can occasionally have enforcement-level value, but it is often lacking in the latter.

An international summit on human gene editing took place in 2015 in Washington DC. Several prominent scientists and biotech industry leaders attending the summit have made their skepticism about germline gene editing explicit. Eric Lander, who has spent his career working to develop genomic medicine, gave a detailed talk demonstrating that the overwhelming majority of people at risk of passing on a genetic disease can have healthy and genetically related children without it. Several biotech companies developing gene editing treatments for a range of diseases have also announced that they will have nothing to do with germline gene editing.

Major Concerns

There are a few ethical dilemmas that cause people concern. Being able to actually procure the information that lies in the DNA's structure could result in people being discriminated against for a job or insurance coverage. Another issue that causes controversy is the prospect of selection of fetuses during pregnancy. This causes a huge commotion with pro-lifers. The idea of creating the "perfect" child is also disturbing. The other side of the coin is that we would be making advances in medical science that are unrivaled at this time, such as cures for hereditary diseases.

These are three of the main ethical issues plaguing genetic engineering research and development:

- **Justice and Equity**

As with many new technologies, there is concern that genome editing will only be accessible to the wealthy and will increase existing disparities in access to health care and other interventions. Some worry that taken to its extreme, germline editing could create classes of individuals defined by the quality of their engineered genome.

- **Informed Consent**

Some people worry that it is impossible to obtain informed consent for germline therapy because the patients affected by the edits are the embryo and future generations. The counterargument is that parents already make many decisions that affect their future children, including similarly complicated decisions such as PGD with IVF. Researchers and bioethicists also worry about the possibility of obtaining truly informed consent from prospective parents as long as the risks of germline therapy are unknown.

- **Safety**

Researchers and ethicists who have written and spoken about genome editing, such as those present at the International Summit on Human Gene Editing, generally agree that until germline genome editing is deemed safe through research, it should not be used for clinical reproductive purposes; the risk cannot be justified by the potential benefit. Some researchers argue that there may never be a time when genome editing in embryos will offer a benefit greater than that of existing technologies, such as preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) and in-vitro fertilization (IVF). However, scientists and bioethicists acknowledge that in some cases, germline editing can address needs not met by PGD.

Some researchers and bioethicists are concerned that any genome editing, even for therapeutic uses, will start us on a slippery slope to using it for non-therapeutic and enhancement purposes, which many view as controversial. Others argue that genome editing, once proved safe and effective, should be allowed to cure genetic disease (and indeed, that it is a moral imperative). They believe that concerns about enhancement should be managed through policy and regulation.

Major Parties Involved

China

China actively supports and encourages biotechnology and genomics-related industries. In 1998 the Ministry of Science & Technology established both Chinese National Human Genome Centres (CNHGC) in Shanghai and Beijing as the national-level genome research centres to specialize in genome sequencing and analysis. Therefore, China has played a significant role in the sequencing by characterizing 1% of the human genome.

In addition, China has developed advanced ways to collect and analyse complex genetic codes to support further genome-sequencing research.

China supports collaboration with foreign researchers, but recognizes the need to protect Chinese genetic resources from exploitation and bio piracy (WHO, 2005). China is keen to ensure that some of the benefits of international genetic research, based on Chinese genetic samples, flow back to the Chinese society. The director of the Chinese Division of Health Technology has stated that all cooperative international projects based in China and working with Chinese genetic resources should follow the principles of equality, mutual benefit and joint participation.

Arab states

In states where Islam is predominant, bioethics is practiced in a context different from that of the West. These states have not experienced the process of secularization that had a great impact on the West for centuries. Many of the Arab states have a homogeneous view with regard to their beliefs and are less inclined to legislate in a profile with which they are unfamiliar and where universal values conflict with the values of their different religious communities. Despite this, in 2005, almost all Arab states approved the universal values of bioethics and human rights proclaimed in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights. The majority of the Arab population is not comfortable with the bioethics in the West and want

bioethical principles to conform to Islamic convictions. Muslim authors underline often that ethics needs to be compatible with religion. Hence, in the region, bioethical thought is often expressed at the level of religious dignitaries. The First International Conference of Medicine held in Kuwait in 1981 ended with the publication of the “Islamic Code of Medical Ethics”. Furthermore, the first Congress of Islamic Sciences held in Cairo in 1985 and the positions upheld afterwards at the annual sessions of the Councils of the Fiqh Academy, as well as numerous fatwas (a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority) issues by religions Islamic authorities (UNESCO, 2011), fully support the above.

WHO

The World Health Organisation believes that genetic engineering can ensure that the health of individuals, families and entire communities can greatly improve. Therefore, governments should encourage research in the field of genetics. In addition, it is very important that there is an international collaboration, allowing data to be shared and the technique is still to develop. Although genetics can provide an enormous improvement of human health, it is extremely important that ethical issues are properly analysed. Genetic engineering must fit within the four fundamental ethical values (autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice) and strict control is necessary in order to achieve that. Furthermore, it is of great importance that genetics never results in the detriment of the privacy of people.

Questions to consider

1. How can “good” and “bad” uses of gene therapy be distinguished?
2. Who decides which traits are normal and which constitute a disability or disorder?
3. Will the high costs of gene therapy make it available only to the wealthy?
4. Could the widespread use of gene therapy make society less accepting of people who are different?
5. Should people be allowed to use gene therapy to enhance basic human traits such as height, intelligence, or athletic ability?
6. Is it ethical to experiment on fetuses in the context of consent?

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