**Title**

Do zygotes have a future like ours?

**Author**

Bruce P. Blackshaw

**Abstract**

Don Marquis’ well-known ‘future like ours’ argument is widely acknowledged to be a plausible defense of the immorality of abortion. It is predicated on the claim that killing an adult human is wrong because this deprives the victim of the valuable future they would otherwise have had—and abortion similarly deprives a fetus of its future, a future like ours. A caveat of Marquis’ reasoning is that the fetus must remain the same individual during development, and given the potential for twinning in the first fourteen days after conception, Marquis suggests zygotes and very early embryos may not have a future like ours. He argues that this entails future like ours reasoning does not support an objection to human embryonic stem cell research. Contra Marquis, I argue that a persuasive case can be made that the same biological individual exists from conception, and that consequently, future like ours reasoning holds for zygotes and very early embryos as well as fetuses. As a result, destructive embryonic stem cell research and other embryo experimentation is immoral. This also has implications for our treatment of frozen embryos.

**Keywords:**  future like ours, Marquis, embryo, zygote, abortion

**Author biography**

Bruce P. Blackshaw is a philosophy PhD student at the University of Birmingham with interests in bioethics, philosophy of science and information ethics. He is also a software entrepreneur specialising in encryption technologies.

**Contact details**

[bblackshaw@gmail.com](mailto:bblackshaw@gmail.com)