The Discussion

The first bus with clones came down the road and Michael directed his cameraman to film it while he prepared himself for the small report which would start to air in a few minutes. Because it was live, he tried to focus on the text he had prepared, but the small crowd around him was very loud. He once again looked up and watched the activists as they greeted the bus with cheers. Not that anyone would really hear it. The clones should be isolated. Therefore, they had decided to establish a security zone. In other words, activists and reporters had to watch everything from a distance of 500 meters and at a corner, where it was very hard to see them from down there. One guardian, as they called themselves, was already walking up to them to end this noise. “60 seconds left,” said a man behind him. Michael nodded and turned to the cameraman. The man next to the camera counted down the last seconds and then gave the signal to start. He heard the voice of the anchor through his headphones: “Right now we have Michael Costa at the new school. Michael, what’s the situation there like?” Since they had already prepared the exchange it wasn´t difficult for him to answer. “Well, John, most of the people here are excited. They have been fighting for this for years and now they have finally succeeded here. A better place for the clones to spend their childhood. A few minutes ago, the first bus arrived, bringing 35 students, as they will be called here. The guardians are already waiting to bring them into their new homes.” He stopped as the man next to the camera gave him a signal. John took over again: “What will the first days look like?” “The organization told us that they aren´t planning anything special. All they are going to do is treat them like normal children and get them used to the normal life they hopefully will have there. However, scientists are very excited about this opportunity, so there will always be a small group of them watching the arrivals. What their behavior is like. What personality they might develop. In general, what effect this special treatment will have.” “In the beginning the organization didn´t want scientist to be there, right?” asked John. This was not exactly according to plan, but Michael was well prepared, so it was no problem for him. “Um, yes, the organization had at first planned that there should be only one doctor, who could see every clone once a week, but the scientific community appealed to the government and they said it would be a good idea to watch them more closely, at least in the beginning.”

“Thank you very much Michael, if something happens, we´ll be right back,” said John. Michael nodded and the live broadcast ended. “Next, we have one of the leaders of the organization, Miss Emily here, as well as Anthony Eden member of parliament and representative of the district where Hailsham is situated.” Everyone nodded and smiled while being introduced. “Let´s start with you, Miss Emily. What are your feelings when you think about the beginning and future of Hailsham?” “Well, we are of course excited and relieved that it finally opened. It took a while, but we think that it is absolutely worth fighting for it. However, this is of course only the first step. The aim is still to modernize and change the other institutions in order to reach the level of Hailsham to secure the children can lead a good live.” John smiled briefly and then turned to Eden. “Mr. Eden, how do you feel about the plans to build more facilities like the one in your district?” “I think from a human perspective it is a good idea to give them lives that are acceptable, but we still have to learn how the clones will evolve in this new kind of institution. As long as we don´t have enough scientific studies we should slow down our efforts and think carefully about our next step.” “What do you think could go wrong at an institution like Hailsham? Just because there are no longer hundreds of them in one room, they´ll have more problems? I seriously doubt that,” Emily interrupted Eden. The host jumped right in. “I agree with Ms. Emily here. What should go wrong?” Eden seemed a little bit shocked that the host took Emily’s side. “We don´t know what could go wrong that´s my point here. We´re moving into completely new territory. And I don´t know if teaching the kids how to draw or play soccer is worth the risk and the money.” “You mention a very good point here. Ms. Emily, this institution will cost more than ten times as much as others. Is this fundable?” the host asked Emily, who was the one to look shocked now, since they had been discussing this topic over and over again the last years. “Of course, it is more expensive than other institutions, but our opinion is that it is worth it. We think that every living being,” it was annoying for her that she couldn´t say human, “should have the right to life a good live, with good memories, especially if it´s going to be exploited by us after their childhood.” “And what about our citizens,” said the representative. “Yes, it may be ethical complicated, but if it is too expensive, which it is, we have to reduce the number of clones and can therefore help less people.” “Would you like to live in cages? Would you like to live under constant medical surveillance? And would you like to live like that with a hundred others just like you in one room? So, I think that…” “But clones aren´t humans,” Eden interrupted Emily. And although they´d trained this moment over and over again, discussed it for years in public, in the press, in the parliament, she still hated it when one diminished other human beings. Her pause must have been longer than intended, since the host jumped in to keep the discussion moving. “Isn´t that the point you want to prove, Miss Emily?” “Yes… yes, absolutely. We´re going to encourage them to use their creativity and human instincts. And every year we will provide some of the material in an exhibition right here in the middle of London, where everyone will be able to see that clones are just like any other human being.” The host nodded and turned back to the camera. “Thank you, Miss Emily and Mr. Eden. We´ll be back in a few minutes.” The light on the camera went off and Emily took a deep breath. Eden and the host stood at the other end of the table talking. She herself stood up, said goodbye and left the studio, hoping that in the near future everyone would understand and join their cause. The funding provided by the government were only a small fraction of the money necessary for an institute like Hailsham. And without donations by their supporters, they would be lost. She didn´t want to fool herself. Everyone was talking like her, but most of the public thought of it exactly as Eden, a luxurious mine for organs, not a home for children. He was just the only one to say it out loud, for now.

Jannis Bewermeier