

Publication

Cryoethics

**Book Item (Buchkapitel, Lexikonartikel, jur. Kommentierung, Beiträge in Sammelbänden)**

**ID** 1757885

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**Year** 2013

**Title** Cryoethics

**Editor(s)** Hugh LaFollette

**Book title** The International encyclopedia of ethics

**Volume** 2

**Publisher** Wiley-Blackwell

**Place of publication** Malden, Mass.

**Pages** 1205-1207

**ISSN/ISBN** 978-1-4051-8641-4 ; 1-4051-8641-0

Cryonic suspension is a relatively new technology that offers those who can afford it the chance to be 'frozen' for future revival when they reach the ends of their lives. This paper will examine the ethical status of this technology and whether its use can be justified. Among the arguments against using this technology are: it is 'against nature', and would change the very concept of death; no friends or family of the 'freezee' will be left alive when he is revived; the considerable expense involved for the freezee and the future society that will revive him; the environmental cost of maintaining suspension; those who wish to use cryonics might not live life to the full because they would economize in order to afford suspension; and cryonics could lead to premature euthanasia in order to maximize chances of success. Furthermore, science might not advance enough to ever permit revival, and reanimation might not take place due to socio-political or catastrophic reasons. Arguments advanced by proponents of cryonics include: the potential benefit to society; the ability to cheat death for at least a few more years; the prospect of immortality if revival is successful; and all the associated benefits that delaying or avoiding dying would bring. It emerges that it might be imprudent not to use the technology, given the relatively minor expense involved and the potential payoff. An adapted and more persuasive version of Pascal's Wager is presented and offered as a conclusive argument in favour of utilizing cryonic suspension.

**edoc-URL** <http://edoc.unibas.ch/dok/A6223182>

**Full Text on edoc** No;

**Digital Object Identifier DOI** 10.1002/9781444367072.wbiee281