



## The Arrogance of Transhumanism

**C**hristian faith teaches us humility in light of the mystery of God's creation of life. Today, as we enter a brave new world of elite technocrats calling for "transhumanism," this faith is being tested.

We have been warned about the fate of those who seek to become gods on earth. Warnings found in Greek mythology (Prometheus and Icarus), Jewish tales (golems) and Western literature (Frankenstein) are being ignored in today's secular world of rapid technological advancement. This advancement is evident in artificial intelligence (AI), which places "knowledge" at the fingertips of every person with a phone or a computer; experimentation on human embryos; and technological tools such as CRISPR that can select for human genetic traits. Hubris is a natural consequence. For many, we have become gods.

*Technology can be a great boon for human progress, but caution is warranted for some of the latest high-tech fads, which seem to treat human life as just another physical process to be manipulated.*

### What is Transhumanism?

**T**ranshumanism is the call for three supers—super intelligence, super longevity and super happiness—all gained through technology. Tech billionaires such as Elon Musk and Peter Thiel are the biggest promoters of transhumanist thinking. While they debate whether transhuman beings will be organic beings with increased lifespans and mental capabilities enhanced through drugs, or inorganic machines uploaded with individual personalities and enhanced thinking ability, they hope that technology will enable humans to design our evolutionary futures.<sup>1</sup> Some transhumanists predict that the human mind will be uploaded into digital form; others believe that the future

rests in designer babies, artificial wombs and anti-aging therapies.

Transhumanists could be dismissed as computer geeks who have read too much science fiction. But designing babies has become a reality and will become more refined with technological advances. American companies already screen the genetic traits of embryos, discarding the ones with high risk of disease or unwanted traits (such as being male or female), then implant the chosen embryo into a womb. Other researchers are pursuing the development of artificial wombs.<sup>2</sup>

Technocratic transhumanists believe in using drugs to enhance human cognition. This includes the use of psychedelics, long promoted in Silicon Valley. In the 1980s, the psychedelic drug MDMA, known popularly as Ecstasy, was touted as enhancing feelings of love and social connection that would heal "global trauma" and usher in world peace. This faith in MDMA as a wonder therapeutic drug has continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2024, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration turned down an application by Lykos Therapeutics for MDMA therapy, arguing that more data was needed. Lykos remains, however, a favorite of Big Tech investors who see psychedelics as the future.

The tech entrepreneur Peter Thiel is a major investor in Atai Life Sciences, which is testing ketamine-related drugs. Elon Musk has publicly mentioned his use of small amounts of prescription ketamine, an anesthetic. Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. has talked about how his son overcame grief following the death of his mother by using ayahuasca, an Amazonian plant psychedelic.<sup>3</sup> In a Cabinet meeting on April 30, Veterans Affairs Secretary Doug Collins told President Trump that his team was looking at psychedelics as an option to combat veteran suicide.<sup>4</sup>

Big Tech gurus such as Peter Thiel and Elon Musk, however, understand some of the dangers of the new age of transhumanism. For example, Musk has warned that AI poses the greatest threat to humanity. It does not take a tech billionaire to see that the promise of bringing people closer together through social media technology has failed. People seem more divided and lonely than ever even though they regularly use TikTok, Instagram, SnapChat or Facebook. And who is not worried about government control of information and enhanced surveillance through technology? Many of our youth are living in an augmented reality through phones, screens and earbuds. We live in an age of in vitro fertilization, genetic manipulation and transgender surgeries.

The pernicious fad of transgender treatment through hormones and mutilating surgery, even on children, could be seen as an offshoot of transhumanist ideology. Probably no worse example of playing God with the natural order may be imagined. However, we should not blame it on Silicon Valley tech titans. Musk is vehemently opposed to transgender treatments of children, having seen one of his own sons “transition” by means of this Frankensteinian perversion of modern medical practice.

Equally Frankensteinian is gain-of-function manipulation of dangerous pathogens, which likely caused the catastrophic Covid-19 pandemic with the involvement of U.S. tax dollars in a Chinese lab. President Trump acted to restrict such research in May. He previously signed several orders to counteract transgender ideology.

### Longevity and Immortality

**M**edical clinics are popping up promising to help clients live longer and better—for a hefty price.<sup>5</sup> The goal of these longevity clinics is to extend and optimize a patient’s health for years through early cancer screenings, stem-cell therapies and so-called biological-age testing. Their efficacy is unclear. Venture capital is investing in longevity research, more than doubling the investment between 2021 and 2022 from \$27 million to \$57 million globally.

While aiming for longevity, scientists have explored the physiological dimensions of death itself. For transhumanists following this work on death, hopes of human immortality have arisen from attempts to keep the brain alive after the human body has failed.<sup>6</sup> In 2018 the

Silicon Valley AI billionaire entrepreneur Sam Altman reportedly paid \$10,000 to join a waiting list to upload the contents of his brain to a cloud computer, on the chance that his consciousness could live on after he dies.

Transhumanists believe that true human immortality is only a speck on the horizon, but some are convinced that the future lies in detaching oneself from one’s physical body. The Alcor Life Extension Foundation, based in Scottsdale, Arizona, seeks to capitalize on this vision of brain life after death through cryonics, the freezing of human bodies and brains in liquid nitrogen after legal death, to be revived (resurrected) once new technology becomes available.

Within the scientific community, cryonics is regarded as quackery and a pseudo-science, but this has not prevented the nonprofit from enlisting close to 2,000 members. More than 200 have already died and had their bodies frozen. Another 116 members have had only their heads preserved. Pet bodies have also been preserved. Immortality does not come cheap, though. Alcor charges \$200,000 for freezing a human body or \$80,000 for just the head.<sup>7</sup>

Stéphane Charpier, a professor of neuroscience at Sorbonne University who is a leading scientist in studying brain death, dismisses cryogenics as a “pipe dream.” He acknowledges that humans are capable of “tinkering with brains,” but considers it unimaginable that a machine could replicate complex neural processes.<sup>8</sup>

### New Frontiers in IVF

**I**n vitro fertilization (IVF) offers a devil’s bargain to humanity. *It is popular for helping infertile couples to have children, but is also used in ways that lack an appealing justification, including reproduction without both a legal father and mother, eugenic selection of embryos, or careerist postponement of childbearing.*

IVF works by extracting eggs from a woman who has been primed with injections of powerful drugs, then fertilizing the eggs with a man’s sperm in a laboratory. After a fertilized egg (zygote) undergoes embryo culture over two to six days, the embryo can be implanted in the would-be mother. Women can freeze dozens of their eggs—a practice sometimes encouraged and paid for by large corporate employers in the U.S.—while they wait

to make the decision to get pregnant. After eggs are combined with sperm to form embryos, surplus embryos may be frozen or discarded. How many frozen embryos exist in America is not known.

Embryos may be subjected to experimentation. Research on fetal tissue is permitted on a state-by-state basis. New York state has no limit on how long embryos may be grown for experimentation, while California has a guideline of 12 days.

Embryology has made huge advances in the last three decades, but we are still at the beginning of a wave of unforeseen consequences.<sup>9</sup> In the 1990s researchers pioneered preimplantation genetic testing (PGT). An embryologist took single cells biopsied from embryos and identified their sex, as well as certain chromosomal abnormalities. PGT subsequently became increasingly refined, and today nearly half of IVF cycles are tested, at a cost of \$3,000-\$5,000 per batch.

### Eugenics Based on ‘Risk Scores’

There are questions about PGT’s accuracy, but in any case this testing goes beyond the promise of improved health. Newer polygenic embryo studies have identified genes linked to traits ranging from height to likely educational attainment to propensity for mental health disabilities such as depression and schizophrenia. Unlike earlier PGT, which focused on single-gene disorders, polygenic embryo screening (PES) examines the likelihood of developing more complex traits that depend on many genes. PES provides “risk scores” that rely on identification of hundreds or thousands of genetic variants that can be linked with certain human attributes.

PES lends itself to eugenics, the selective breeding of children. Companies have been created to screen embryos for hundreds of conditions. One such company is Orchid, headed by Noor Siddiqui, in Silicon Valley. Orchid provides polygenic screening that produces a risk profile of each embryo’s propensity for certain health conditions. This risk profile aids the selection of which embryo(s) to implant.<sup>10</sup>

PES has not yet gained wide acceptance, but some surveys show that nearly 4 in 10 people said they were “more likely than not” to use it if it could increase their child’s chance of getting into a top college.<sup>11</sup> Several European

countries have banned this procedure or limited its use. Britain, for example, does not permit PES, but does allow screening for an approved list of roughly 17,000 single-gene disorders. In the U.S., such screening is not subject to any regulatory oversight. Genomic Prediction, based in New Jersey, has provided risk scores for at least 420 clients involving more than 1,600 embryos.

### Legal and Ethical Conundrums

The advances in embryo research have given rise to ethical and legal problems. In one among many similar disputes, a Tennessee divorce court in 1992 concluded that embryos “are not, strictly speaking, either ‘persons’ or ‘property,’ but occupy an interim category that entitles them to special respect because of their potential for human life.” Nonetheless, the court ruled in favor of the father who wanted to destroy seven frozen embryos, while his wife wanted to donate them to others. The court upheld the father’s claim, based on a contractual provision, that he should not have to father children against his will.<sup>12</sup>

State legislatures have only begun to address the status of embryos. In 2018, the Arizona legislature passed a law requiring judges to award disputed embryos to bring in vitro human embryos to birth and not keep them frozen in storage, regardless of preexisting legal contracts.<sup>13</sup>

Spurred on by a controversy that arose from an Alabama court decision during his 2024 presidential campaign, President Trump signed an executive order this year that calls for policy recommendations to protect IVF and lower its costs. Many around his administration support his pro-natal perspective and are strong supporters of IVF. Despite having experienced no known infertility issues, Elon Musk has used IVF to produce most of his many known children (some with the assistance of paid surrogate mothers). Peter Thiel has invested in multiple fertility-related companies.<sup>14</sup>

There is widespread concern in the developed world about declining birth rates, as described in the May 2025 *Mindszenty Report*. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to see IVF as a policy solution to this problem or to push governmental support of the \$25 billion global IVF industry. *IVF is very expensive and unpleasant, has a low success rate, and poses significant health risks for both the mother and the offspring.*<sup>15</sup> There are obvious ethical



problems with destroying embryos, practicing eugenic selection of embryos, experimenting on embryos, and engineering children who may never know both of their biological parents. IVF is contrary to Catholic teaching.

## Enter the Brave New World

Couples can be infertile for various reasons, but both eggs and sperm decline in quality with age. Therefore, IVF is less effective for older would-be parents. Changing the culture to encourage more marriage and childbearing for women in their 20s would be a preferable way to boost birth rates. And we certainly do not want the government to promote IVF, or related assisted reproductive technologies such as purchased eggs and surrogate motherhood, for gay couples or single parents.<sup>16</sup>

We are at a point in embryo science that allows for the culling of the population. Whether it is called positive or negative eugenics, it is all eugenics in the end. Although it is possible to do IVF without destroying embryos, IVF in the U.S. commonly entails the rejection and elimination of at least several embryonic human beings.<sup>17</sup> Designer babies culled from a herd of subsequently discarded sibling embryos may not appreciate their commoditized origins.

Essential to any discussion of transhumanism or IVF is the importance of understanding God and the mystery of our creation and His design for the world. Removal of God from the human equation tends to breed nihilism and hopelessness.<sup>18</sup> Transhumanism and Christianity present divergent value systems. For the transhumanist, the highest virtue is intelligence and the highest goal is to defeat death. Christians believe that the greatest ideal is

love—love of others, including one's own children, in their flawed humanity, and love of God. Transhumanism is a new religion, which should not replace God.

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Thomas, "Transhumanism: Billionaires Want to Use Tech to Tech to Enhance Our Abilities," *The Conversation*, January 16, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Legg, "What Does the Bible Say About Transhumanism?" *Denison Forum*, June 20, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/28/opinion/tech-billionaires-psychedelics.html>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.marijuanamoment.net/va-secretary-tells-trump-about-psychedelics-potential-to-combat-military-veteran-suicide-crisis-at-cabinet-meeting/>; <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/politics/va-sec-doug-collins-says-agency-will-look-at-psychedelic-other-alternative-treatments/85-d90e6b9d-a705-4f09-aeda-5b839879bd03>.

<sup>5</sup> Alex Janin, "The Longevity Clinic Will See You Now—for \$100,000," *Wall Street Journal*, July 10, 2023; Alex Janin, "Want Better Health and Status? For \$250,000, Longevity Clinics Promise Both," *Wall Street Journal*, April 6, 2025.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.polytechnique-insights.com/en/columns/health-and-biotech/immortality-an-ancient-fantasy-revived-by-transhumanism/>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2023-12-19/see-inside-alcort-life-extension-s-cryogenics-facility-in-arizona>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> This discussion of IVF and the current state of embryo research draws heavily from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/03/25/opinion/human-embryo-experiments-timeline.html>; and [https://answersingenesis.org/sanctity-of-life/2025/04/24/new-york-times-we-owe-cluster-cells/?srsltid=AfmBOoqAkPMgoM175\\_FK6K6D6kVjrK7t7T9ulxqgShugqUGsZsPK07gt](https://answersingenesis.org/sanctity-of-life/2025/04/24/new-york-times-we-owe-cluster-cells/?srsltid=AfmBOoqAkPMgoM175_FK6K6D6kVjrK7t7T9ulxqgShugqUGsZsPK07gt).

<sup>10</sup> Anna Louie Sussman, "Should Human Life be Optimized?"

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/04/01/opinion/ivf-gene-selection-fertility.html>.

<sup>11</sup> [https://answersingenesis.org/sanctity-of-life/2025/04/24/new-york-times-we-owe-cluster-cells/?srsltid=AfmBOoqAkPMgoM175\\_FK6K6D6kVjrK7t7T9ulxqgShugqUGsZsPK07gtd](https://answersingenesis.org/sanctity-of-life/2025/04/24/new-york-times-we-owe-cluster-cells/?srsltid=AfmBOoqAkPMgoM175_FK6K6D6kVjrK7t7T9ulxqgShugqUGsZsPK07gtd).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/FS268.pdf>. See also n. 17.

<sup>15</sup> See "A Comprehensive Report on the Risks of Assisted Reproductive Technology" by Katie Fell for the Center of Bioethics and Culture Network, <https://cbc-network.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Comprehensive-Paper-on-ART-Final.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> For an in-depth discussion of surrogate motherhood and purchased eggs, see *Mindszenty Report*, December 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Kayla Bartsch, "Eugenics Gets a Modern Facelift, with Investment from Peter Thiel," *National Review*, April 4, 2025. See also

<https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2024/12/96647/>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://firstthings.com/the-impossibility-of-christian-transhumanism/>.

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