

In Praise of Death – A Philosophical Critique of Transhumanism

Harald Walach

Change Health Science Institute, Berlin
Next Society Institute, Kazimieras Simonavicius
University, Vilnius



Transhumanism - Objectives

- ▶ To improve the human condition and enhance humans via technological implants with the final aim of abolishing death
- ▶ Those who believe that the „singularity“ is near, namely around the corner, 2045 (www.2045.com), state in their “Manifesto”:
 - ▶ “We believe that the world needs a different ideological paradigm....We believe that it is **possible and necessary** to **eliminate aging and even death**, and to overcome the fundamental limits of the physical and mental capabilities currently set by the restrictions of the physical body.”





The Transhumanist Manifesto

<https://humanityplus.org/philosophy/transhumanist-declaration/>

- ▶ ...
- ▶ 8. We favour allowing individuals wide personal choice over how they enable their lives. This includes use of techniques that may be developed to assist memory, concentration, and mental energy; **life extension therapies**; reproductive choice technologies; **cryonics** procedures; and many other possible human modification and **enhancement technologies**.
- ▶ One of the co-signatories: Nick Bostrom
- ▶ According to him Transhumanism is the consequent development in our evolution

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/11/23/doomsday-invention-artificial-intelligence-nick-bostrom>



Cryonics – Preserving Bodies for Future Treatment – e.g. Alcor



[What is Cryonics?](#) [Membership](#) [Pets](#) [Donate](#) [About](#) [Referral Program](#) [Resources](#) [Sign Up](#) [Q](#)

Preserving Life

Cryonics is the practice of preserving life by pausing the dying process using subfreezing temperatures with the intent of restoring good health with medical technology in the future.

[Learn More](#)



Pausing the Dying Process

The definitions of death change over time as medical understanding and technology improve. Someone who would've been declared dead decades ago may still have a chance today. Death used to be when a person's heart stopped, then when their heart couldn't be restarted, and is now being extended further.

[Learn More](#)

[Support](#)



CHS Institute

Cryonics – Alcor ctd.



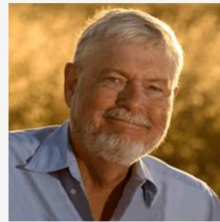
[What is Cryonics?](#) [Membership](#) [Pets](#) [Donate](#) [About](#) [Referral Program](#) [Resources](#) [Sign Up](#)



Martine Rothblatt, PhD
CEO, United Therapeutics



Hal Finney
Cryptographer,
Cyberpunk, and Bitcoin
Pioneer



Gregory Benford, PhD
Astrophysicist and
Science Fiction Author



Natasha Vita-More, PhD
Spearheading Innovator,
Author, and Futurist

224

PATIENTS

Alcor is the world leader in cryonics, with the most advanced technology of any cryonics organization. We're constantly innovating and improving.

1,418

MEMBERS

Becoming an Alcor member is easy – and surprisingly affordable. If you're looking to sign up for cryonics, you've come to the right place.

51

YEARS SERVING CRYONICS

Alcor was incorporated in California in 1972 by Fred and Linda Chamberlain. Fred is now cryopreserved at Alcor, and Linda still works here!



CHS Institute

Surprisingly cheap....



What is Cryonics? [Membership](#) [Pets](#) [Donate](#) [About](#) [Referral Program](#) [Resources](#) [Sign Up](#) [Q](#)

Membership Benefits



STANDBY

Medical team at your bedside, ready to start the process upon legal death



CRYOPRESERVATION

Whole body or neuro cryopreservation performed at our facilities



LONG-TERM CARE

Patients are kept in secure, long-term cryogenic dewars at a consistent -196° C



POSSIBLE REVIVAL

All with the goal of your revival and reintegration into society.

[Apply Now](#)

Costs

\$17-100/mo
Membership Dues

Dues are based on your age at signup.
\$60/yr for each child family member.

\$25 to \$800/mo
Life Insurance

\$250k coverage for a person age 25-50.
Insurance purchased from a licensed agent, not Alcor.
We recommend whole or universal life insurance.

i.e. if you signed up at e.g. age 60, 1.200 USD per year, if you froze at 80: 24.000 USD



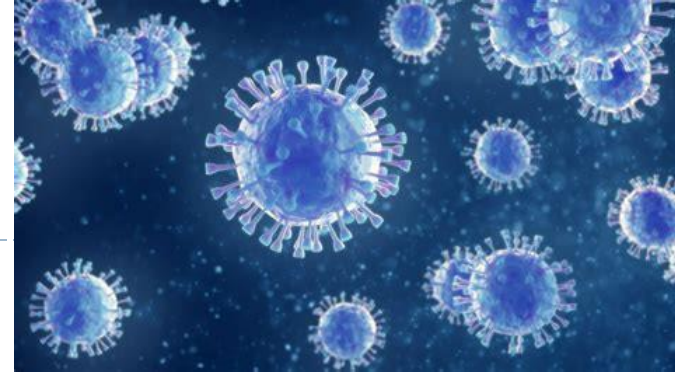
CHS Institute

Harari – Homo Deus

- ▶ States in his analysis that the current and ultimate project of humanity is to abolish death
- ▶ Influential as a very popular world-wide speaker, adviser to the WEF and government



We have been seeing this project in action



- ▶ Introducing of new genetic medical technologies (modRNA prevention therapies) that can easily be used to modify genes
 - ▶ Without any rigorous regulatory control
 - ▶ With DNA-plasmids found in some injections
- ▶ This is gene therapy introduced by the back door of vaccination, as the hurdles are not as high
 - ▶ modRNA and viral vectors program the cell engine to produce new proteins
 - ▶ They can also be used to introduce DNA-sequences to repair or alter genes



Fear of Death as the Driver

- ▶ Massive fear campaign to „prevent dying“, „every life is valuable and deserves prolongation“



- ▶ Factual attempt to eschew death with all means in high-tech medical interventions across the board

How sound is the project to abolish death?

- ▶ **The question is Not:**
 - ▶ Is it feasible? (Perhaps some time in the future? Probably not in the near future, anyway)
- ▶ **But:**
- ▶ Is it reasonable,?
- ▶ Is it philosophically sound?
- ▶ Is it a coherent concept?
- ▶ Is it rationally defensible?
- ▶ My answer is: **NO!**



Reason No 1: The Concept is Neo-Colonialist, Egotistic and Unsustainable

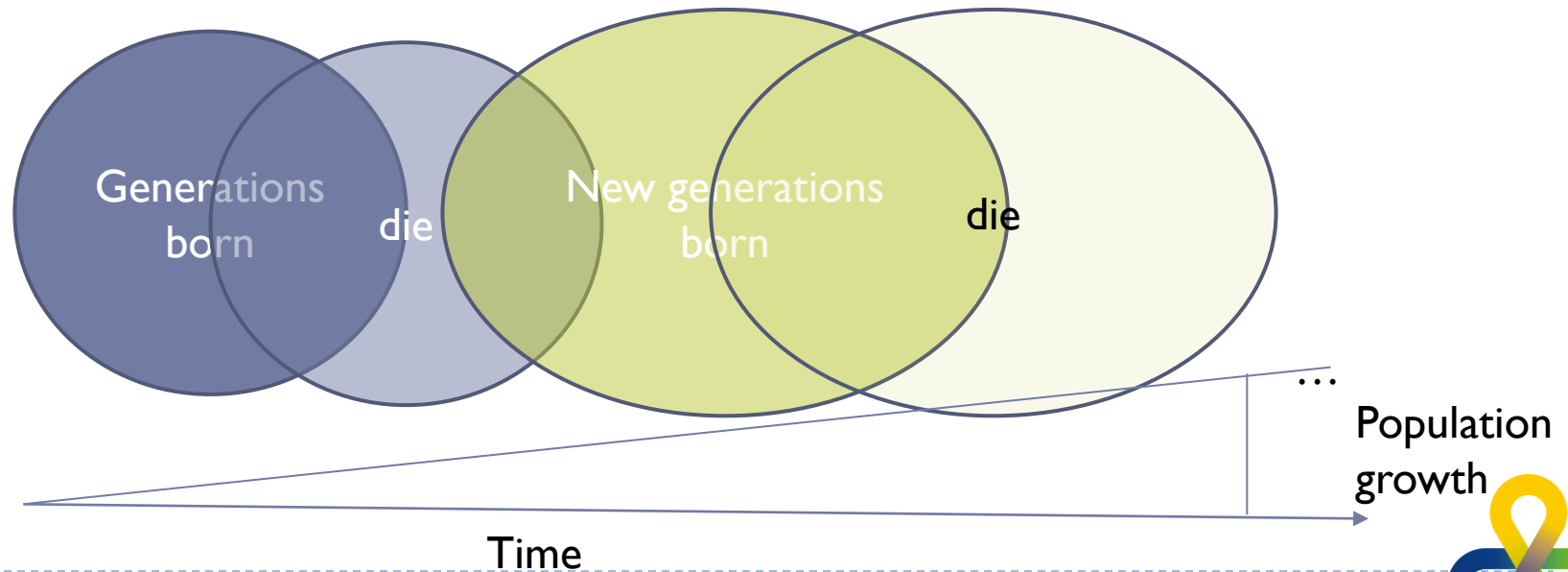
- ▶ It can never be a common project for all
 - ▶ It is **expensive**, and poor people and nations won't be able to afford it
 - ▶ If, on average 1.000 USD per person is required, to freeze **1 billion people per year**, this would require **$1 * 10^{12}$ USD per year**
 - ▶ More than the military budget of the USA and Russia together
 - ▶ It is a typically „Western“-style of thinking: my life and well-being first
- ▶ It capitalizes on the present state of affairs at the expense of future generations



Currently...

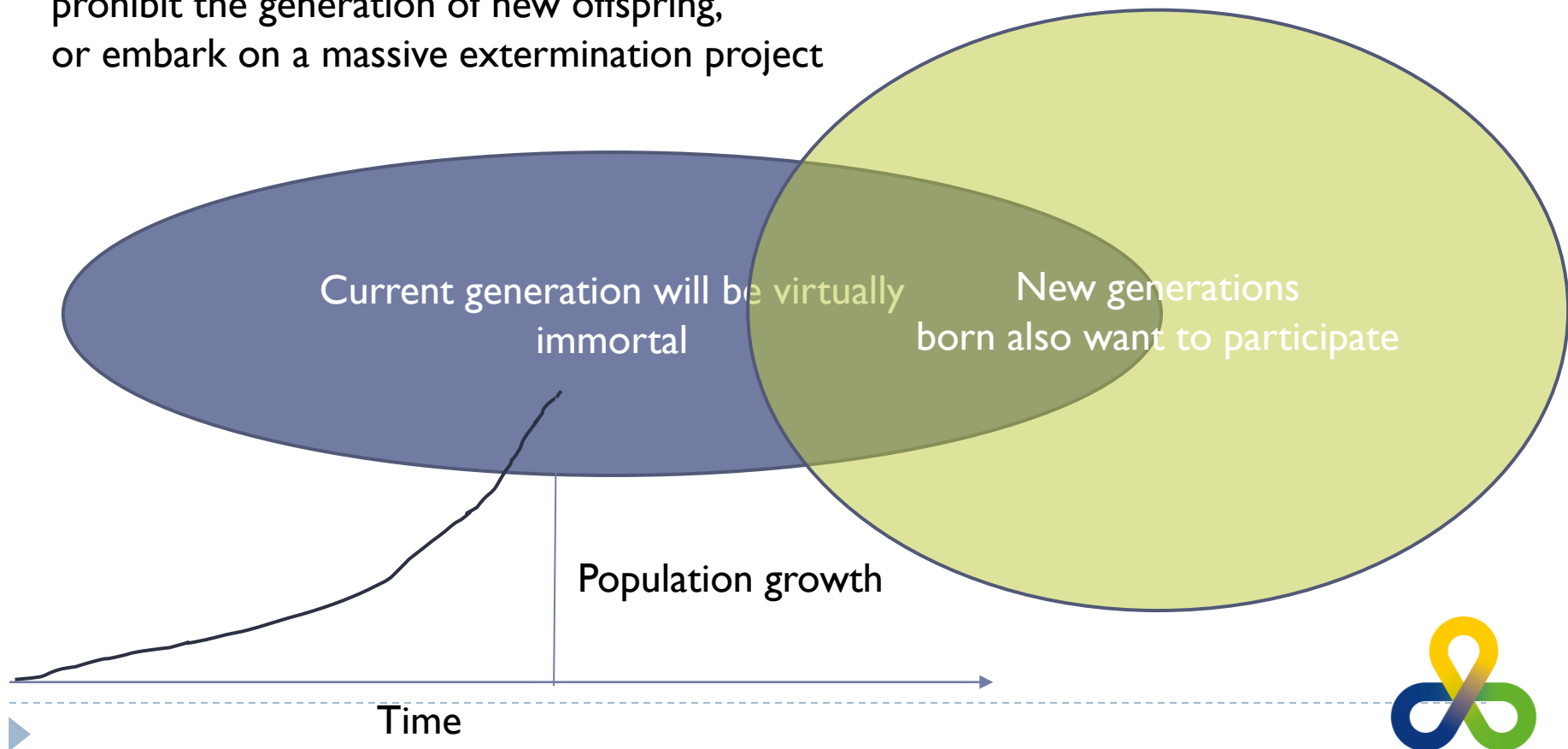
Old generations die and make room for new generations

A quicker growth leads to an increase of the world population which is still manageable



Immortality Scenario

... will lead to either a very quick overpopulation or will lead to a fascist control scenario, in which the current generation will dominate politically to keep its power and influence and either prohibit the generation of new offspring, or embark on a massive extermination project



Reason No 2: It is a self-contradictory concept and not coherent

- ▶ It is predicated on the premise that evolution is the prime motive and will create new technology, for instance life-enhancing technologies that prevent dying
- ▶ If old generations live at the expense of new generations, this prevents the potential of innovation
- ▶ I.e.: the attempt to prolong life and prevent death will itself prevent innovation and thus contradict its own premises of evolution and innovation
- ▶ Innovation is dependent on old ideas dying and new people creating new ideas:
 - „Science progresses funeral by funeral“ (sensu Planck)
- ▶ „It is good that I die – 85% of my ideas are nonsense“ (Nick Maxwell)



Reason No 3: Only death enables value

- ▶ If we do not die, there is no reason to choose and make decisions
- ▶ Only the finality of our lives makes them worthwhile living and creates situations that are valuable
 - ▶ I love and care, because I know I will have my partner, my children, my friends, my possessions not for ever
 - ▶ If I will live forever, every decision is equally good, i.e. there is no value and preference in my decisions
 - ▶ Because I am final, I am forced to make decisions (for a profession, for a partner, for a place to be, etc.), at least for the time being. This makes them valuable and creates meaning and purpose



Death is not the ultimate evil to be
abolished.

It is the ultimate helper that creates the
new and the good!



Only one thing in biology is eternal:

Cancer cells!



Thank you for your attention!

hwalac@gmail.com

