



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on August 22, 2012

Genetically Engineered Babies Are Moral Duty, “Ethics” Guru Claims

Prominent so-called “ethicist” and Oxford University Professor Julian Savulescu claims that humanity has a “moral obligation” to genetically engineer children — essentially creating “designer babies” — to make them into better people, sparking an outcry among critics who claim such morally repugnant practices would be akin to playing God. Embryos that do not qualify for life in his view, such as those whose genetic make-up is perceived to indicate potential future “personality flaws,” would presumably be destroyed.



Savulescu wrapped his argument in pseudo-compassionate language, claiming he simply wanted the best for children, parents, society, and the human race. Plus, he argued, some people already screen their future children for diseases before deciding whether or not to abort them, so using DNA and biotechnology to enhance people’s personality traits is not actually a very big leap.

“Surely trying to ensure that your children have the best, or a good enough, opportunity for a great life is responsible parenting? So where genetic selection aims to bring out a trait that clearly benefits an individual and society, we should allow parents the choice,” Savulescu [claimed](#), garnering headlines around the world with his call to legalize such procedures. “To do otherwise is to consign those who come after us to the ball and chain of our squeamishness and irrationality.”

According to Savulescu, whose controversial brand of so-called “[ethics](#)” has become a magnet for harsh criticism in recent years, improving the human race through genetic engineering is not just a good idea — it is a “moral obligation” to prevent the propagation of undesirables. Humanity left to its own devices, Savulescu apparently believes, will produce inferior people not worthy of living life.

Of course, that argument is hardly new. National Socialist (Nazi) Germany under Adolf Hitler as well as [Planned Parenthood](#) founder Margaret Sanger relied on a similar philosophy — known as [eugenics](#), though the term is rarely used now due to its negative connotations — to advance their vision of “[cleansing](#)” the human gene pool. Both argued that “race” and intelligence should be used as criteria.

Savulescu, however, points to different traits that should be extinguished. “Indeed, when it comes to screening out personality flaws, such as potential alcoholism, psychopathy and disposition to violence, you could argue that people have a moral obligation to select ethically better children. They are, after all, less likely to harm themselves and others,” he argued. “If we have the power to intervene in the nature of our offspring — rather than consigning them to the natural lottery — then we should.”

The “ethics expert” also correctly points out that many people, especially in the West, have already embraced some of the fundamental tenets of his philosophy: namely, that unborn children with certain characteristics can and should be exterminated. But there is a difference between Nazi eugenics and his philosophy, Savulescu alleged, saying that his designer baby proposal would be “voluntary” — at



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least in the beginning.

“We’re routinely screening embryos and fetuses for conditions such as cystic fibrosis and Down’s syndrome, and there’s little public outcry,” Savulescu claimed. Perhaps the blanket statement unfairly downplays the opposition to aborting children due to genetic problems — especially in the United States — but at least in Europe and the United Kingdom, his claim that there has not been a particularly vociferous or widespread outcry against the practice is largely true.

Even recently, Savulescu continues, the public, or at least broad segments of it, has mostly accepted the imposition of the eugenics philosophy without much outrage. Obviously, it is not commonly referred to as eugenics — people familiar with the word often recoil in horror when it is mentioned — but the practice of selecting children for extermination based on genetics is already widespread, often with taxpayer backing.

“What’s more, few people protested at the decisions in the mid-2000s to allow couples to test embryos for inherited bowel and breast cancer genes, and this pushes us a lot close to creating designer humans,” Savulescu correctly observed. “Whether we like it or not, the future of humanity is in our hands now.”

For people who believe in God, what Savulescu is really saying is that humans can do better than their Creator — quite an audacious claim by any standard, even if one holds the belief that “nature” is supreme. “Rather than fearing genetics, we should embrace it,” he argued. “We can do better than chance.”

Savulescu, who also serves as director of the Uehiro “Center For Practical Ethics” at Oxford, made his latest argument in the most recent edition of *Reader’s Digest* published on August 21. But it is not the first time he has proposed genetic engineering for humans.

In 2009, he issued [similar calls](#) at the “Festival of Dangerous Ideas” in Australia. In a controversial talk entitled “Unfit for Life: Genetically enhance humanity or face extinction,” Savulescu essentially argued that if people refuse to accept his demands for modifying the genetic make-up of future humans, humanity itself may face extinction.

Other far-out proposals that have led critics to label him everything from a dangerous lunatic to an evil monster include a piece published in the disgraced *Journal of “Medical Ethics,”* where he serves as editor. The dubious journal recently published a piece [arguing in favor of legalizing the murder of children](#) up to the age of three or even older — dubbed “after-birth” abortions in the paper.

Following a tsunami of outrage over the grisly proposal, Savulescu leaped to defend his decision to publish the call to exterminate imperfect or unwanted children even after they were born. “What is disturbing is not the arguments in this paper nor its publication in an ethics journal. It is the hostile, abusive, threatening responses that it has elicited,” he wrote, citing angry comments made at news sites. “More than ever, proper academic discussion and freedom are under threat from fanatics opposed to the very values of a liberal society.”

A protégé of “utilitarian” infanticide advocate [Peter Singer](#), Savulescu has regularly found himself under fire from all sides for his claims. He argued, for example, that cloning and then killing humans to provide cells for therapy was “morally required.” And after his recent ranting on the supposed morality of genetically engineering babies and terminating those he views as unfit, the outcry once again began to build — especially among [Catholics](#), Christians, and pro-life activists.



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“Of course this is eugenics repackaged for a more technological age, but Savulescu isn’t deterred,” [wrote](#) pro-life commentator Rebecca Taylor, comparing Savulescu’s proposal to the dystopian future presented in the movie *Gattaca* where non-engineered humans are second-class citizens. “He falls for the fallacy that this time eugenics is different because parents can choose instead of being coerced by the government.”

Taylor also blasted the notion that behavior could be predicted based on genetic information, noting that much of a person’s character is the result of his or her environment and upbringing. She also cited the looming demographic nightmare facing countries like China and India — both of which now have far more males than females due to cultural preferences, modern technology and widespread, sometimes [coercive abortion](#).

“The only way to avert the evils of eugenics is simply not to subscribe to the idea that some of us are genetically superior to others. We all have worth that is not based on a string of nucleotides,” Taylor concluded in her piece for LifeNews.com. “None of us should be discarded in favor of another that is deemed ‘genetically superior.’ [Savulescu’s] ‘procreative beneficence’ is simply another way of labeling people as ‘valid’ and ‘invalid.’ ... I say, ‘No thank-you!’”

While out-of-control self-styled “ethicists” continue to make increasingly outrageous and deranged proposals, the backlash, of course, is growing as well. Average people are quickly losing any and all respect for a field that purports to be about “ethics” even while arguing for legalized murder of children, genetic engineering of babies, government-enforced euthanasia, the [drugging of humanity](#), and much more.

However, as numerous analysts have noted, the attempt at “normalizing” horrific and barbaric acts that were once considered unthinkable is well underway. Slowly killing people like Terri Schiavo through dehydration, for example, did not become legal until being advanced in half-baked “ethics” journals.

It appears that prominent members and organs of the pseudo-ethics cabal are increasingly leading the way toward a nightmarish future where human life — especially “sub-standard” life, in their view — has no value. And without an outcry and an end to the massive tax subsidies, it is unlikely to stop.

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