



THE GENOME COVENANT: A MANIFESTO FOR THE NEW EUGENICS

A manifesto for genetic responsibility, autonomy and human dignity

HERBERT R. SIM

ORIGINAL PUBLICATION DATE: 21 DECEMBER 2021 | ZENODO DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22213009

ORCID: 0009-0008-6500-5749 | CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION 4.0 INTERNATIONAL

Autonomy, compassion, justice and responsibility.

Contents

Section
Prologue: A Date with Destiny
I. Reclaiming a Tainted Word
II. The Technological Tipping Point
III. The Principles of New Eugenics
IV. The Moral Duty of Care
V. The Perils of Commodification
VI. Global Responsibilities
VII. Human Evolution by Design
VIII. Answering the Critics
IX. Vision for 2050
X. Conclusion: A Beginning
Publication Record

Edition note

This PDF reproduces the public article edition of The Genome Covenant: A Manifesto for the New Eugenics in a stable publication format for scholarly preservation and citation. The canonical webpage remains the reference for public access and future notices.

Canonical webpage: <https://herbertsim.com/genome-covenant-manifesto-new-eugenics/>

Prologue: A Date with Destiny

For millennia, human beings have been prisoners of biology. The accidents of heredity - disease, frailty, premature death - have chained us to fate. We fought back with medicine, with vaccines, with surgery, with all the ingenuity science could muster. Yet until now, we could only treat what nature gave us, never rewrite its script.

That era ends today.

With the rise of CRISPR gene editing, embryo screening, mitochondrial replacement therapies, and the first advances toward ectogenesis, humanity has seized something unprecedented: the power to design its own destiny.

This is the founding of a philosophy: The New Eugenics.

I call it The Genome Covenant - a declaration of values for this new age of responsibility.

The Genome Covenant

I. Reclaiming a Tainted Word

The word eugenics is hated, and justly so. The old eugenics was an ideology of coercion, hierarchy, and cruelty. It empowered states to sterilize the "unfit," segregate the "undesirable," and, in its darkest incarnation, to murder millions in the name of racial purity. It was a betrayal of human dignity.

But words can be reborn.

We reclaim eugenics not as a program of state compulsion, but as a philosophy of freedom, compassion, and responsibility. The New Eugenics is not about who may reproduce, but about what choices families may make with the tools of science. It is not about exclusion, but empowerment. It is not about racial hierarchy, but the prevention of suffering.

The New Eugenics begins with a clean break:

- The Old Eugenics looked outward, judging populations.
- The New Eugenics looks inward, asking: How can we free our children from preventable pain?

II. The Technological Tipping Point

Why now? Because 2021 is the year possibility became inevitability.

The CRISPR Revolution

In only a few years, CRISPR-Cas9 has gone from obscure bacterial mechanism to a scalpel for the genome. Scientists in China have already applied it to human embryos. Though those embryos were not viable, the principle is clear: our code can be rewritten.

Polygenic Embryo Selection

IVF clinics are beginning to rank embryos not only for single-gene disorders but for complex risks: heart disease, diabetes, even cognitive potential. The ability to choose is no longer speculative - it is emerging practice.

Mitochondrial Replacement Therapy

The first child with DNA from three people was born this year. Mitochondrial disease was bypassed, proving heredity can be deliberately reshaped.

Ectogenesis

Perhaps the most radical development of all. Researchers have already sustained premature lambs in artificial wombs - fluid-filled biobags - for weeks. Within decades, human gestation may be possible entirely outside the body. Ectogenesis is not simply a medical curiosity. It is the liberation of reproduction. It severs the chains of pregnancy risk, maternal mortality, and biological exclusivity. It makes parenthood possible for those who cannot carry a child.

And when combined with IVF, CRISPR, and embryo screening, it makes reproduction fully deliberate: embryos can be created, tested, edited, and gestated externally, under optimal conditions.

This is not just gene editing - it is the redesign of reproduction itself. Together, these technologies inaugurate the age of self-directed evolution.

This is the hinge of history. We cannot pretend that these powers do not exist. We can only choose whether to shape them with wisdom - or let them evolve chaotically.

III. The Principles of New Eugenics

I, the author of this Manifesto, declare the following principles as the foundation of New Eugenics:

1. Autonomy, Not Authority

The New Eugenics rejects state coercion. The decision to use reproductive technologies belongs to families, guided by their values, informed by science, and protected from interference.

2. Compassion Through Prevention

To prevent suffering is an act of love. If technology can spare a child from a crippling disease, from agony and early death, then to use it is a moral good.

3. Distinction Between Therapy and Enhancement

Therapeutic New Eugenics: the use of technology to prevent disease, extend health, and reduce suffering. Consumerist Eugenics: the use of technology to indulge vanity, social prejudice, or market desires. The New Eugenics embraces therapy. It approaches enhancement with caution, recognizing both its potential and its dangers.

4. Justice and Access

We affirm that genetic technologies must not become the preserve of the wealthy. A New Eugenics that creates genetic elites is a betrayal of its principles. Equity of access is essential.

5. Diversity as Strength

We honor human diversity. Not all traits labeled "disorders" diminish human value. Neurodiversity, for example, enriches our cultures and ideas. New Eugenics must distinguish between preventable suffering and valuable difference.

6. Transparency and Dialogue

Decisions of such gravity cannot be left to laboratories and markets alone. Humanity must openly debate its genetic future. The New Eugenics is a democratic philosophy, not a secret science.

IV. The Moral Duty of Care

The New Eugenics is not mere permissibility; it gestures toward responsibility.

Parents already act to maximize their children's well-being: they vaccinate, educate, and protect them. If it becomes possible to prevent Huntington's disease or cystic fibrosis before birth, is there not a duty to do so? If one embryo is at high risk of Alzheimer's and another is not, is it not reasonable - compassionate - to choose the healthier life?

This is the most controversial claim of New Eugenics: that parents may bear not only the right but the duty to use available tools to reduce suffering. To reject such choices without reason may itself be a harm.

V. The Perils of Commodification

But beware. New Eugenics is not license for markets to treat children as products.

We reject the idea of "designer babies" as consumer goods. A child is not a luxury item.

The danger is real: unchecked, genetic technologies could stratify society into engineered elites and natural underclasses. If ectogenesis becomes an industry, reproduction could become commercialized beyond recognition.

The Genome Covenant warns: technologies must be steered toward compassion, not vanity; justice, not hierarchy.

VI. Global Responsibilities

The New Eugenics cannot be confined to one nation or one people. Genes know no borders.

- International Regulation: A framework must guide gene editing, embryo selection, and ectogenesis - neither reckless prohibition nor unchecked exploitation. The United Nations, the World Health Organization, and transnational ethics boards must convene not to prohibit recklessly, but to regulate wisely.

- **Equitable Access:** If only wealthy nations harness these tools, inequality between peoples will deepen into genetic inequality. The New Eugenics demands inclusion.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Different cultures will draw different lines between therapy and enhancement. Dialogue must respect diversity while affirming common dignity.

VII. Human Evolution by Design

The deepest implication of New Eugenics is this: human evolution is no longer blind.

Natural selection, for billions of years, shaped us by accident and necessity. Now, for the first time, conscious selection enters the story. We will decide which traits continue, which vanish, and which emerge.

This is the greatest responsibility humanity has ever held. To wield it without wisdom is to court disaster. To wield it with foresight is to begin a new chapter in human history: the era of self-directed evolution.

VIII. Answering the Critics

Critics will say:

- "This is playing God." But all medicine is an act against nature. Vaccination, surgery, antibiotics - each is a defiance of fate. Gene editing is continuity, not rupture.
- "This risks inequality." True. Which is why justice and equity must be built into its very foundations.
- "This erases diversity." Only if recklessly applied. Diversity is not the enemy of New Eugenics; suffering is.
- "This leads to hubris." Perhaps. Which is why humility must temper ambition. The New Eugenics is not a license for perfection, but a tool for compassion.

IX. Vision for 2050

Let us imagine what this philosophy can achieve if guided by wisdom:

- No child born with preventable genetic diseases.
- Lifespans extended, not by brute medical intervention late in life, but by resilience encoded from the start.
- Greater equality of opportunity, as hereditary disadvantages are reduced.
- Parenthood freed from biological constraint, as ectogenesis gives choice to all.
- A humanity that celebrates difference, while refusing to accept needless suffering.

This is not utopia. It is medicine extended to its natural frontier.

X. Conclusion: A Beginning

On 21 December 2021, I name and define this philosophy: The New Eugenics, framed here as The Genome Covenant.

It is not a government program. It is not a return to the past. It is not a program of coercion. It is a manifesto of values: autonomy, compassion, justice, responsibility. It is the claim that humanity now has the power - and therefore the duty - to direct its biological destiny.

We do not pretend this philosophy is complete. It will evolve as science evolves, as societies debate, as values deepen. But today we fix its foundation.

The Old Eugenics was born in arrogance and ended in atrocity. The New Eugenics must be born in humility, in democracy, in love.

This is the beginning. This is the covenant. This is the day the conversation changes.

Signed,

Herbert R. Sim

The Originator of the Genome Covenant

21 December 2021

Publication Record

Title	The Genome Covenant: A Manifesto for the New Eugenics
Author	Herbert R. Sim
ORCID	0009-0008-6500-5749
Original publication date	21 December 2021
Version	1.0 - Zenodo deposit edition
Canonical publisher	HerbertRSim.com
Canonical webpage	https://herbertrsim.com/genome-covenant-manifesto-new-eugenics/
DOI	10.5281/zenodo.22213009
Zenodo record	https://zenodo.org/records/22213009
Licence	Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

Preferred Citation

Sim, Herbert R. (2021). The Genome Covenant: A Manifesto for the New Eugenics (Version 1.0). HerbertRSim.com. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22213009>

Copyright and Licence

© 2021 Herbert R. Sim. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (CC BY 4.0).

Deposit Note

This PDF edition is prepared for scholarly preservation and citation through Zenodo. Typography and pagination have been adapted for stable print and digital reading; the public article text and sequence are preserved.

Autonomy, compassion, justice and responsibility.