

# What's the consensus on transhumanism/brain uploading?

**Post by “EPicuruean” of November 24, 2025 at 12:40 AM**

Seeing the advances in AI and robotics right now, it seems increasingly believable that by the end of the century, we may be able to leave our human bodies and continue our existence in man-made devices and machinery, and these may not only allow us to continue our existence but also inhabit better "bodies" than our biological ones. Stronger, easier to maintain or alter, less fragile, etc...

Pop culture makes this look scary, but I think this could have the potential to give us far better lives. I'm curious what others here think about the idea, though. What's the Epicurean view of transhumanism?

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**Post by “Cassius” of November 24, 2025 at 3:31 AM**

My first thought would be that since there is nothing divine or non-natural about the human mind, this is probably going to happen in the future and is definitely something to think about.

I would see it as the expected way forward and that we should bring to bear on the opportunities and issues all our standard methods of analysis to try to get it right.

I've never thought that Epicurus has anything bad to say about variety or the desirability of life extension. Yes it's true that life doesn't get "better" simply by being longer, and we need not regret that at least for our present technology death at no more than about 100 years is the natural result of the way things currently are.

But Epicurus clearly says that "life is desirable" in the letter to Menoeceus so I would not hesitate to take the opportunity to live longer where it appeared to me that the pleasure would outweigh the pain.

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**Post by “EPicuruean” of November 24, 2025 at 3:44 AM**

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Yeah, I think instinct is what it all boils down to. I wouldn't worry about trying to justify it. If you have to opportunity to extend your life, and your instincts drive you to do that, then go for it. At the very least, it'll spare you the pain from the process of dying.

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### **Post by “Martin” of November 24, 2025 at 6:01 AM**

Further improving bodies with implants, exoskeletons, brain interfaces and the like and extending lifespans is likely to happen. Full transhumanism by leaving the body/uploading something to machinery is a delusion. What can be uploaded is a reductionist copy of some aspects. I would not consider that as continuation of my existence. Transhumanism is an idea motivated by fear of death. Getting rid of the fear of death in accordance with Epicurus' philosophy and modern science and eventually embracing death when it happens (or suicide when pain permanently outweighs pleasure) makes more sense to me.

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### **Post by “Adrastus” of November 24, 2025 at 8:25 AM**

Depends entirely on the nature of the technology as well as the future state of the world and anyone I care to have in my life going forward, but I don't think about life extension nor would I ever willingly choose it. I distrust human society and its motivations even in these relative good times enough to make the decision that anything that can artificially extend my life through augmentation or alteration of my body can most assuredly be used to keep me artificially alive for who knows how long, and persist in whatever manner of pain and discomfort anyone who assumes control so chooses. It's already hard enough for me to clear out and banish the wealth of horrid thoughts and images society presents me with, let alone giving it an inch more.

Maybe some point humanity may become more Godlike, in our Epicurean sense, and true societies as extensions of Blessedness among true Friends could flourish; but that is so far and remote from humanity as it exists now to ever consider trusting my entire body-soul with these ya-hoos. As I reason, Death far outweighs whatever benefit that could be garnered by potentially having more life and potentially losing that control over being able to choose pleasurable things and avoid pain.

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### **Post by “Don” of November 25, 2025 at 10:41 AM**

My thoughts on transhumanism (e.g., uploading consciousness to a machine or transferring it to another brain) are directly akin to my thoughts on the "pleasure machine": WHO owns the hardware doing the storage or transfer? What are their motivations? Follow the money!

#### [Quote from Martin](#)

Full transhumanism by leaving the body/uploading something to machinery is a delusion.

I agree with [Martin](#) and [Adrastus](#) on this. From what I read, there is a lot more going on with consciousness than simply electrical patterns to be transposed to some hardware. I'm not talking about woo/supernatural goings-on. Gut bacteria seem to have a direct effect on mood/feeling for one thing. Mood/feeling are part of our consciousness. Anyone thinking we can "live forever" through technology is simply transposing the age-old idea of Heaven into a technological paradigm.

## Post by “Eikadistes” of November 25, 2025 at 1:11 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

WHO owns the hardware



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## Post by “Godfrey” of November 25, 2025 at 11:50 PM

Can't say why that brings this to mind...

[https://youtu.be/qN5zw04WxCc?si=Npgu93Qd\\_5Wst8A3](https://youtu.be/qN5zw04WxCc?si=Npgu93Qd_5Wst8A3)

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## Post by “Don” of November 26, 2025 at 6:35 AM

I need to state for the record that I have no problem with life-saving and life-enhancing medical science. Treatments and therapies like prostheses, vaccinations, surgery under anesthesia, cochlear implants, MRIs, pacemakers, and all the others that bring a good quality of life to those who would have died or would have lived lives of pain in decades and centuries past is a boon of modern medical science. Sign me up.

Where I draw the line is at those who feel life should be extended *at any cost* when death is inescapable. Trust me. I know firsthand how hard it is to "let someone go." In the past, this simply wasn't an option. They just died. Ventilators etc were not an option. Medical science now lets hearts beat and lungs breathe with no hope of recovery or consciousness. That's not life. To paraphrase Dr. Malcom in Jurassic Park, just because they can, they don't stop to ask if they should.

The other line is at those who feel death is something to be *conquered*. Like dying is some kind of failure. And, while not believing in a god or a supernatural afterlife, they place technology in the role of God and technological fantasies in place of Heaven. Extending a good quality of life is admirable IN THIS LIFE. Trying to "cheat death" by cryonic suspension, computer upload, brain transplant, and similar speculative fiction tropes robs people of taking pleasure in THIS one precious life that is here and now.

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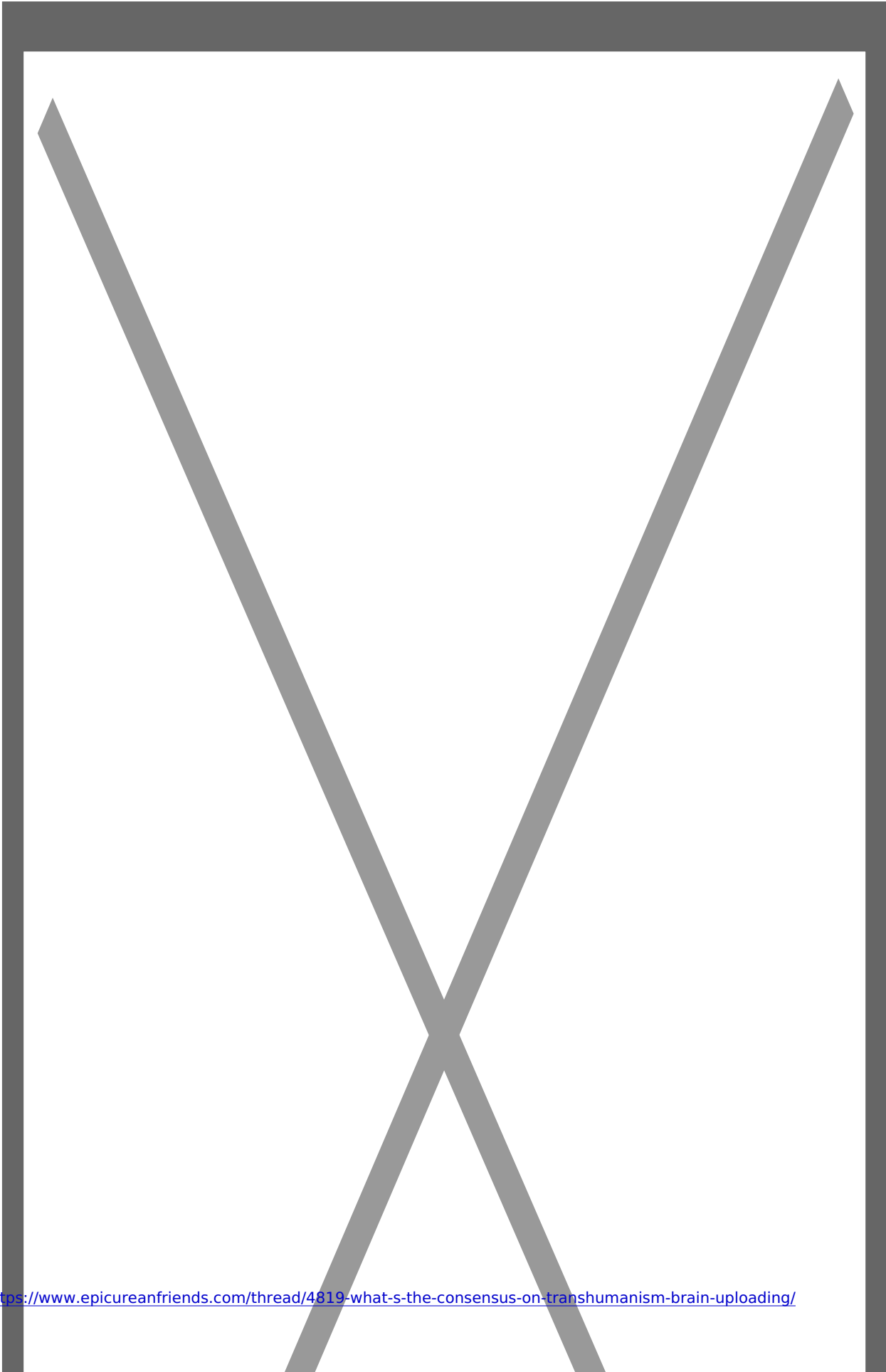
**Post by “Patrikios” of November 28, 2025 at 12:18 AM**

[Quote from Don](#)

My thoughts on transhumanism (e.g., uploading consciousness to a machine or transferring it to another brain) are directly akin to my thoughts on the "pleasure machine": WHO owns the hardware doing the storage or transfer? What are their motivations? Follow the money!

If you want to explore what can happen in a future with this capability, check out “Upload” TV series. [Prime Video 2020-2025]

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[Upload \(TV Series 2020–2025\)](#) □ 7.8 | Comedy, Mystery, Sci-Fi

30m | TV-MA

[www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)

I agree with [Martin](#) and others that uploading your brain is not a viable alternative. At what age do you upload, before [brain cells start dying ar age 25)?

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### Post by “Cassius” of November 28, 2025 at 8:15 AM

#### [Quote from Patrikios](#)

I agree with Martin and others that uploading your brain is not a viable alternative. At what age do you upload, before [brain cells start dying ar age 25)?

I interpret the original question (and most hypotheticals like this) not to refer to now ("...IS a viable alternative") but to whether such a thing will be possible in the future with more advanced technology.

Is there is some theoretical barrier or insuperable obstacle that will always be impossible to overcome no matter what the technology?

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### Post by “Don” of November 28, 2025 at 10:47 AM

#### [Quote from Cassius](#)

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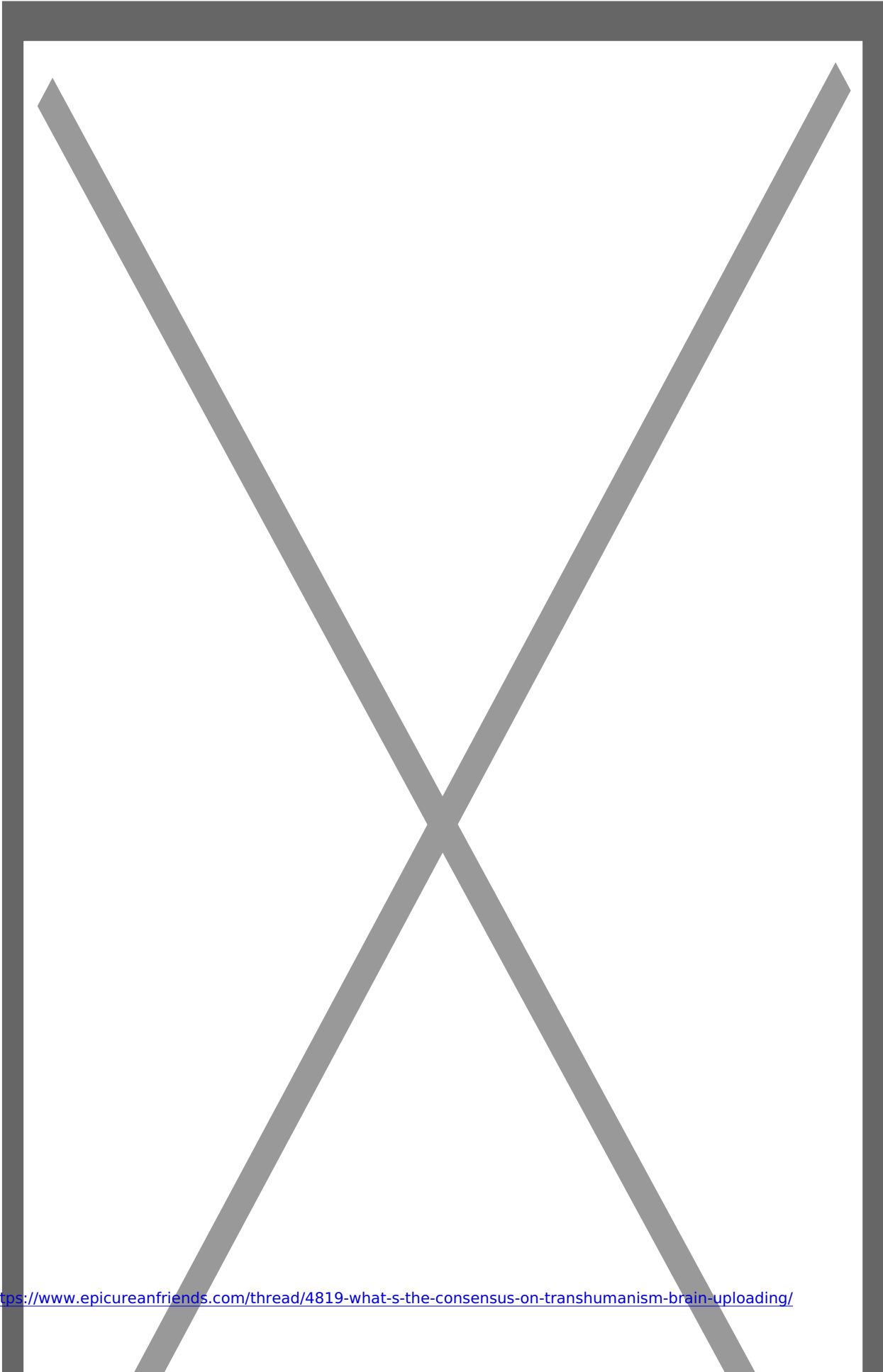
I think so. The whole premise seems to me to be akin to "stealing someone's soul" simply dressed up in techno-babble and wishful thinking. The idea that one could "upload" one's consciousness to a computer is based on the idea that a person's being is reducible to some kind of (let's say Aristotelian) essence, usually thought of as some kind of electrical signal that can be read and copied into some kind of a computer-like machine. Or think of a Star Trek transporter that "reads" the individual's construction, breaks it down into a signal, and

reconstitutes that person at a distance. For one thing there, it's not necessarily the same "person." See this video:

<https://youtu.be/nQHBAAdShgYI?si=LtXVnU3vABsmrtIL>

The video also brings up the idea of "What is consciousness?" Which is really what this question of uploading for immortality purposes hinges on. To upload one's consciousness means we have to define consciousness itself. Good luck with that! One intriguing idea is the embodied cognition theory:

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[Embodied cognition - Wikipedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org

Nevertheless, as Epicureans, we insist the mind and body depend on each other. The mind does not exist independent of the body and both die together. In light of this, the mind cannot exist separate from the body, so the mind (our essence) is not able to be uploaded or separated from the body. There's no "me" without my body and mind working together. Giving into the idea of some future technology being able to do this can be fun, but ultimately it's dangerous to our life here and now because it literally denigrates this physical flesh as lesser than some fanciful pure mental existence that is somehow better than our current way of living. That smacks of heaven-talk and a better next world which is anathema to Epicurean philosophy.

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### **Post by “Godfrey” of November 28, 2025 at 1:40 PM**

I'm in agreement with [Don](#) on this issue as far as I can tell. His post above points out what I have considered the basic problem, which is that the uploading idea, as far as I know, is typically presented as "a brain in a box", which is to me obviously untenable.

The more "realistic" approach would be to re-create a fully functioning brain in a fully functioning body, in a real world environment. This would seemingly increase the complexity of the problem exponentially, but might make the idea of reproducing consciousness captivating for those who take pleasure in pondering hypotheticals.

As for me, I'm off to the gym to work off my Thanksgiving feast. Bottoms up!

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### **Post by “EPicuruean” of November 28, 2025 at 2:55 PM**

[Quote from Don](#)

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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I can see your point. I don't have much to argue about. However, I think you oversimplify the mind-body idea.

Our current understanding of the mind is that it is just brain activity. Something akin to a computer program (or an analog circuit if you're more familiar with electronics). It seems that our experience is directly produced by neural activity. So, science indicates that our mind specifically is the electrical activity in our body (our brain more specifically). That's what we call our "conscious experience." It's electrical activity. Computation maybe.

So, yes, we ARE our body, just a specific part of it. We don't die or stop experiencing when we lose our foot, but we do die and stop experiencing when we lose our brain.

To say that brain uploading is possible is not a denial of the inherently materialistic nature of consciousness, rather it's an embrace of the idea. If consciousness or experience is material, then through proper interfacing with a computer that eventually replicates the brain activity

entirely, the same individual who once experienced their existence in a body of flesh could eventually experience it in a body of silicon. Just like how the same computer program that once ran on a clockwork computer can be made to run on an electronic one.

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### Post by “Don” of November 28, 2025 at 2:59 PM

#### [Quote from Godfrey](#)

The more "realistic" approach would be to re-create a fully functioning brain in a fully functioning body, in a real world environment. This would seemingly increase the complexity of the problem exponentially, but might make the idea of reproducing consciousness captivating for those who take pleasure in pondering hypotheticals.

Indeed. Maybe in the far future, lab-grown clones - independent of the *usual* way of creating humans - will be able to be grown. They would arguably have consciousness, but there's a whole genre of sci-fi where lab-grown humanoids and cyborgs create issues. For a humorous take, see the *Murderbot Diaries*. But this angle still doesn't address the transfer of an older person to a younger body (see John Scalzi's *Old Man's War* for an interesting and often humorous take on this): What's being transferred? Even brain or head transplants present an infinite number of issues (See *Mr. Humble and Dr. Butcher* for a fascinating nonfiction book on that!!)

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### Post by “EPicuruean” of November 28, 2025 at 3:01 PM

#### [Quote from Godfrey](#)

As for me, I'm off to the gym to work off my Thanksgiving feast. Bottoms up!

Count your blessings friend. Not only did we have a big dinner yesterday, we have a birthday today. And I'm out of town with family for the week. All my efforts over the last months were for nothing! 😞

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### Post by “Godfrey” of November 28, 2025 at 4:39 PM

Quote from Don

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That show was quite amusing! There's also a movie, *The Island*, which grapples with the subject, though not with a lot of intellectual depth. I only mention it because of the fun fact that the wombs which the clones were grown in were literally designed as scaled up breast implants. 🤔🤔

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## Post by "Don" of November 28, 2025 at 8:01 PM

[Quote from EPicuruean](#)

To say that brain uploading is possible is not a denial of the inherently materialistic nature of consciousness, rather it's an embrace of the idea. If consciousness or experience is material, then through proper interfacing with a computer that eventually replicates the brain activity entirely, the same individual who once experienced their existence in a body of flesh could eventually experience it in a body of silicon. Just like how the same computer program that once ran on a clockwork computer can be made to run on an electronic one.

Oh, I fully agree that consciousness is "nothing more" than biology, chemistry, and physics. But the question remains: If some kind of mechanism could "read" a biological, chemical, and physical signature at a given moment in time and "upload" that measured instance into a "computer" or into a new biological body (assuming the biological body didn't have its own active biological, chemical, and physical consciousness), the primary question to me remains: Is that new uploaded instance the original person with a continued existence - a continuity of consciousness - or it essentially a photocopy or duplication of the original? If I acquiesce to the eventual possibility of upload technology, I still don't accept that that uploaded version is a continuation of the original. There's a break, just like the transporter issue in that video. A fictional version of this is the *Altered Carbon* series where a physical disc storing the essential memories of a person is installed in a new "skin" over and over again. At least that's something physical that makes the trip from one "life" to another.

[Quote from EPicuruean](#)

So, science indicates that our mind specifically is the electrical activity in our body (our brain more specifically). That's what we call our "conscious experience." It's electrical activity. Computation maybe.

There's more than just "electrical activity" in that there's influences on that electrical activity and chemical reactions in the brain from throughout the body and environment that directly affect the conscious experience, from hormones and interoception of bodily signals to external factors that influence cognitive and behavior. The brain is, of course, inseparable from the experience of consciousness; but I would offer that the experience of "me" is not separable from the whole interplay of brain, body, and environment. That totality is what I'm very skeptical of being uploadable; and without that context, I'm highly skeptical of there ever being any technology capable of "storing" a copy of a human consciousness. Can a machine become conscious in the future? Maybe, because we're biological machines in a sense. But we've evolved over millennia of millennia. Is natural selection necessary for consciousness to arise? I don't know. I lean toward consciousness being more than computation. It seems there needs to be a body interacting with the physical world, but now we're heading down a deep deep rabbit hole. In summary: I remain highly skeptical of there ever being a feasible upload technology at any time in the future.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 28, 2025 at 8:34 PM**

This seems like a very close issue as raised in Lucretius Book 3 when he points out that even if our atoms were rearranged later due to the effects of infinite time and space, that would still not be "us" because of the absence of continuous memory.

However I am not sure as I reread that whether Lucretius is making a specific assertion that continued memory is somehow necessarily impossible. He may be relying solely on the objection that we don't remember any past lives, which I gather he is taking as sufficient proof that these rearrangements have already happened. He may well be inferring from the fact that we have no such memories that this is sufficient proof that the break is a matter of fact regardless of the cause.

I tend to think that that is his reasoning and that given the implications of infinite universe/eternal time that the inference is sound.

**[3-843](#)**

And even if the nature of mind and the power of soul has feeling, after it has been rent asunder from our body, yet it is naught to us, who are made one by the mating and marriage of body and soul. Nor, if time should gather together our substance after our decease and bring it back again as it is now placed, if once more the light of life should be vouchsafed to us, yet, even were that done, it would not concern us at all, when once the remembrance of our former selves were snapped in twain. And even now we care not at all for the selves that we once were, not at all are we touched by any torturing pain for them. For when you look back over all the lapse of immeasurable time that now is gone, and think how manifold are the motions of matter, you could easily believe this too, that these same seeds, whereof we now are made, have often been placed in the same order as they are now; and yet we cannot recall that in our mind's memory; for in between lies a break in life, and all the motions have wandered everywhere far astray from sense.

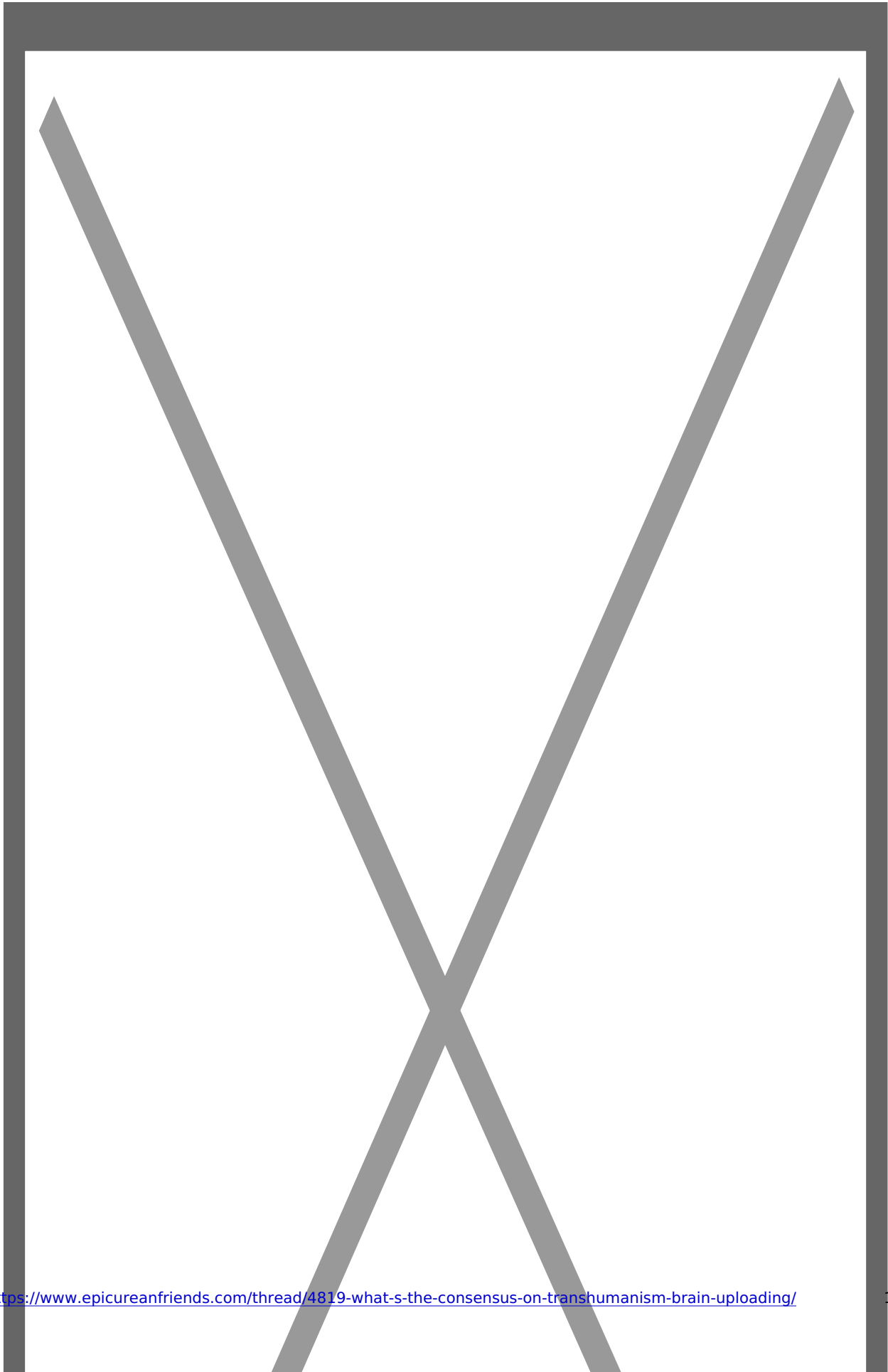
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### **Post by “DaveT” of November 29, 2025 at 10:05 AM**

Here's an interesting recent paper out of Germany on three different levels or degrees of consciousness in humans and some animals. The discussion deals with some Epicurean concepts as it posits the physical capabilities of consciousness that humans have developed by the process of evolution. As for the ability of humans to replicate and transfer the consciousness of one person to another being, I have to chuckle. Respectfully, aside from the use of vast computing power that virtually no one will be able to use even if it became possible, the hubris of those who create such a capability is laughable. What does it matter anyway to the universe? Are we, flesh and blood and all the components of living humans so important to a universe destined to swallow itself one way or another? I think not. The sooner we accept that death means nothing to us, the more satisfying everyone's life will be, as limited at it is.

Here's the link to the study:

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[Examining why some species developed consciousness while others remained non-conscious](#)

What is the evolutionary advantage of our consciousness? And what can we learn about this from observing birds? Researchers at Ruhr University Bochum published...  
phys.org

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**Post by “Kalosyni” of November 29, 2025 at 10:58 AM**

[Quote from DaveT](#)

The sooner we accept that death means nothing to us, the more satisfying everyone's life will be, as limited at it is.

I think that there is a difference between saying that "death is nothing to us [me]"...vs..."death means nothing to us [me]".

Maybe I am splitting hairs here...but...

The first one is a simply way of saying that you can't think about or experience death once it has occurred, and therefore for this reason we should not spend time worrying about it. The second one is seeming to say that the concept of death is empty of meaning, but this isn't true because we need to be able to think about the concept of death so that we don't procrastinate in living our lives to the fullest.

[Quote from DaveT](#)

Respectfully, aside from the use of vast computing power that virtually no one will be able to use even if it became possible, the hubris of those who create such a capability is laughable

This popped into my mind...having recently re-watched the movie "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy", and there is a scene in which they return to the supercomputer that is working on "the question" and having been left to her own devices she is busy watching television.

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**Post by “Kalosyni” of November 29, 2025 at 2:19 PM**

There is a hubris here in thinking that everything that humans imagine can eventually be technologically created...the hubris is in the idea of going beyond **Nature**, and the nature of

things ("atoms/void").

Regarding the word hubris:

#### Quote

English picked up both the concept of hubris and the term for that particular brand of cockiness from the ancient Greeks, who considered hubris a dangerous character flaw capable of provoking the wrath of the gods. In classical Greek tragedy, hubris was often a fatal shortcoming that brought about the fall of the tragic hero. Typically, overconfidence led the hero to attempt to overstep the boundaries of human limitations and assume a godlike status; in response, the gods inevitably humbled the offender with a sharp reminder of human mortality. Take, for example, the story of [Phaethon](#), a mortal son of the sun god [Helios](#). In his hubris, Phaethon drives his father's sun chariot into the heavens but loses control of its horses. The chariot begins to scorch the earth, and Zeus strikes Phaethon down with a thunderbolt.

#### [Source](#)