

Human

By Design



Honors Composition

Fall 2012

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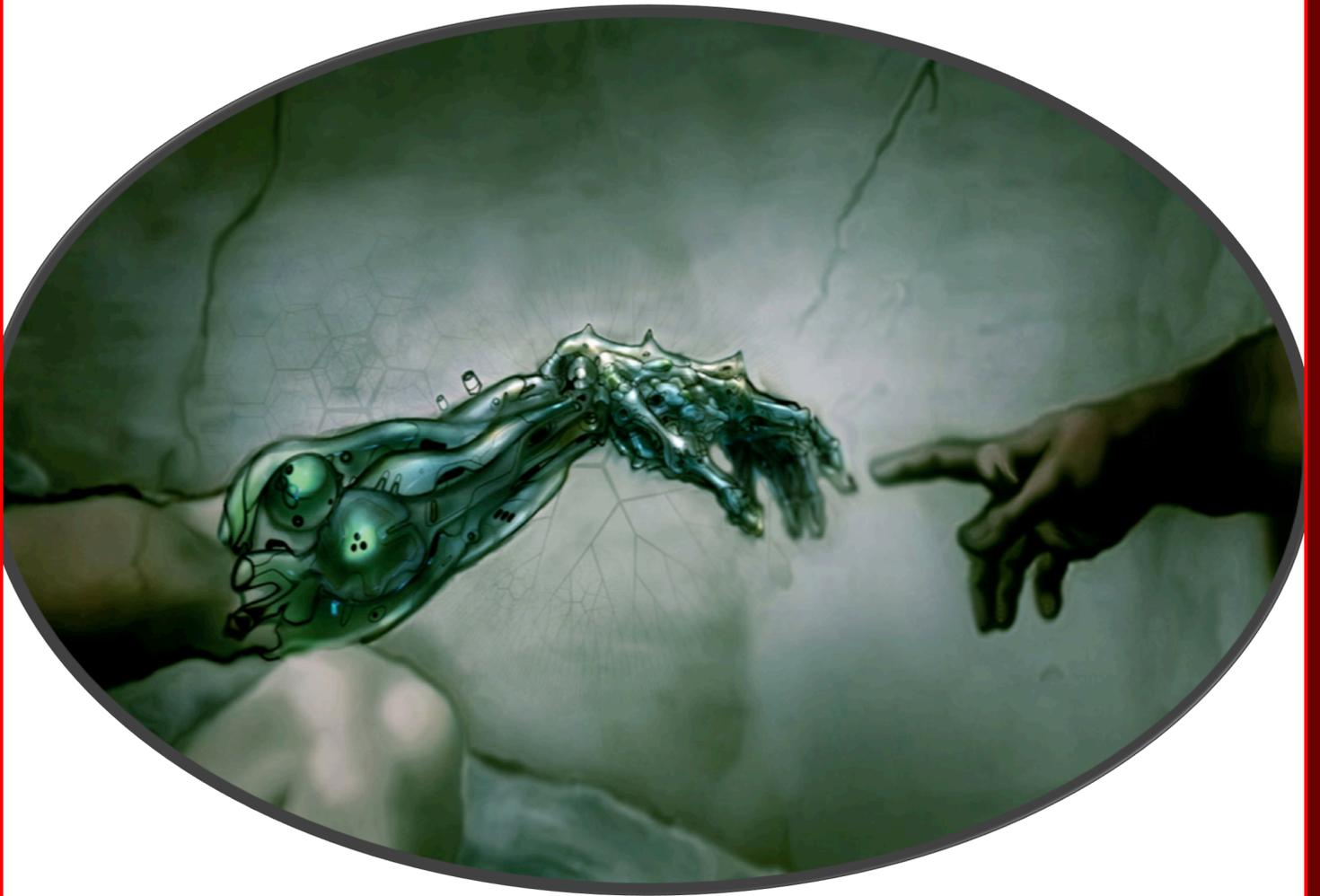
Fall 2012

Dedication

To Mr. Arnold Webb, who opened our minds to the controversial topic of transhumanism, and educated us on its possibilities.

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At First Glance

Transhumanism

“Man is an artifact designed for space travel. He is not designed to remain in his present biologic state any more than a tadpole is designed to remain a tadpole.”

-William S. Burroughs

What is Transhumanism?

Based on Max More’s original definition, transhumanism is seen as “an intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of improving the human condition through applied reason and the development and availability of new technologies to enhance the human mind, appearance, and capacity.” So what exactly does all this mean? In common terms, transhumanism can be seen as the desire to evolve the human race into new kind of species that is more intelligent, physically superior, and highly capable of achieving things way past the average human capacity. This can be done through new technologies that lead to medical enhancement.

The overall concept of transhumanism is based on the continuation and acceleration of human evolution.

Where did the concept originate?

The first reference to transhumanism was written in 1312 by poet Dante Alighieri in his work “Paradiso of the Divina Commedia” in which he invented a “transhumanized” world to describe what happens to humans through a “beatific vision.” In 1948, Nobel Prize winner T.S. Elliot wrote about the isolation of the human condition. Other individuals that contributed to concept of transhumanism include biologist Julian Huxley (1957), FM-2030 (1989) and finally philosopher Max More who brought about the philosophy and movement of transhumanism. The efforts of the Extropy Institution also help bring about the movement of transhumanism.

What are some controversies involved with transhumanism?

The major critic of transhumanism involves the ethical thought of changing human biology based on incomplete knowledge. Many opponents of the movement

see it as a threat to already established traditional values, arrangement, and systems. Others worry that transhumanism will take away attention and resources from other social problems and solutions. However, those in favor of transhumanism argue that we should focus on both current and future issues as a means to be prepared. Finally, the more difficult critique of transhumanism involves the questions of what constitutes humanity, its nature, and its condition. Also, just how far can a “being” be altered so as that it is no longer seen as human?

What will transhumanism lead too? Will those who are not evolved become inferior to others? Can you evolve into something better than humans and yet still be considered a “human”? These are questions that lead to the controversies facing transhumanism.

How does transhumanism compare with religion?

Transhumanism, like religion, offers a sense of purpose and direction and thus suggests a vision that humans can go beyond or present condition. The difference, however, is that transhumanists rely on rational thinking and the development of science, technology, economics and human nature, instead of relying on supernatural powers and divine interventions.

Does transhumanism interfere with nature?

It depends on what you consider transhumanism to be. Do you believe that transhumanism can still be considered “human” aspects? Humans are a part of nature, thus if you consider transhumanism to still be “human” than no, it does not interfere with nature.

What is the difference between transhumanism and transhuman?

Based on the concepts of FM-2030, transhuman refers to “the intermediary form between the human and the posthuman.” It is simply shorthand for transitional human, whereas transhumanism refers to the philosophy and movement.

Posthumanism

“No more gods, no more faith, no more timid holding back,
the future belongs to posthumanity”

-Max More

What is posthumanism?

Posthumanism is the idea that human being can develop to radically exceed the basic capacities ordinary human beings so as to no longer be unambiguously human by our current standards. This differs from transhumanism by the simple fact that posthumanism is not a movement. Posthumanism is a concept, a result of transhumanism.

How will a posthuman society affect those who are not augmented?

Our society today is made up of a broad diversity of people. The differences among us range from the disabled or physically impaired, to the average human being, and unto those physically and mentally advanced. Thus, would having a posthuman society really affect our way of life?

Opponents of posthumanity may argue that those who are “enhanced” will perhaps look down on the average human being, and hence would lead to conflict and issue of control among the societies. However, one must take into consideration those who live in our society today and are part of the posthumanity idea. These include human beings who have been medically altered to better themselves.

Medical Enhancement

“Maybe technology eventually turns them into something that wouldn’t call human. But that’s a choice they make—a rational choice.”

-Bruce Sterling, Schismatrix

Who will benefit from new technologies?

Typically new technologies that include experimental procedures are available only to the very rich and research subjects. However, as procedures become routine the cost drop thus more people can afford them. Unfortunately, those who have the resources, skills, and motive to learn how to use new tools will have the greatest advantage causing the social gap to widen.

What are some examples of Medical Enhancement in our world today?

Everyday humans are promoters of medical enhancement. For example, humans that have prosthetics are an example of medical enhancement. Prosthetics help an individual perform better and have a better life. Other examples of medical enhancements in today’s world are drugs, such as steroids which enhance the body to perform better, contact lenses and glasses which enhance an individuals vision,

and finally medical devices such as pace makers, insulin pumps and implants are examples of medical enhancements that help individuals better or enhance their health.

Joseline Loza

Joseline Loza



Transhumanism and Religion: Or Should I Say Versus?

Transhumanism has always been a controversial study, but once religious interpretations are thrown into the mix, it becomes a sin. The successes of these ideas are based on how much influence they can make in society. Which is right, and which is wrong? Is transhumanism sinful or just something that will take some understanding and some time adjusted to? Can transhumanism and religion mix and even possibly come to an agreement? Or should the two be separate based on their beliefs and aspirations?

Transhumanism is a cultural and an intellectual movement, based on applied reason and scientific means, which supports the possibility of transforming humans and human condition. This includes the possibilities heightening physical and mental abilities. Humanity Plus, an organization for the promotion of transhumanism, claims that transhumanism “. . . can make things better by promoting rational thinking, freedom, tolerance, democracy, and concern for our fellow human beings.” What kind of benefits could come of this movement? The prospect of extending lifespans is something that many transhumanists hope for. This would be done by eliminating most, if not all, diseases including genetic, infectious, and bacterial ones. Favorable traits could be singled out, so people could become smarter and stronger. Sounds reasonably noble, right? Our lives would be easier with less worry, healthier, and all around better off. While transhumanists hold this view, most religious thinkers do not, for close-minded attitudes maintain an out-of-date perspective on human enhancement.

Many religious thinkers throughout time have held the common belief that God is in control of creation. They claim that humans were created in the image of God, and we should have no control over our future conditions, for it is God's will, not ours. When you come right down to it, human transformation should not be in our hands, only in those of God's. We should not try to reach a state of homoiosis theo (becoming like a God), and accept what God has established and determined for us. The Vatican, the leader of the Catholic Church, commented on transhumanism's ambitions by demanding: “Thou shall not pollute the Earth. Thou shall beware genetic manipulation. Modern times bring with them modern sins.”

Surprisingly, there is a mix of the two views. Religious transhumanists promote the benefits of transhumanism by actually using religion and the bible as an argument. First, they claim that the concept of free will allows us to shape our futures and make such transhumanistic decisions. Paul Tillich, a Christian transhumanist, states that if we can keep an open mind, that “. . . we can become fully human through participation in this full humanity which has appeared in Christ. This includes eternal life and similitude with God with respect to participation in infinity.” God had intended for us to make changes, as claimed in Psalms 8 (King James version): “[For humans] to have domination over the works of thy hands. . .” By this, religious transhumanists argue that God gave us the task of creating ourselves, for we have self-determination.

Is it possible that God wants us to be in a co-creation partnership? Some religious transhumanists believe that we should explore and employ enhancements for the human condition in agreement with God. However, this brings rise to the controversial focus of a kind of equality with God. Is it right to claim that we can have a partnership with something that is beyond ourselves?

Would it be “playing God” if we were to take our fate into our own hands? This argument by religious thinkers has plagued the transhumanist movement for countless years. Max More, a passionate advocate for transhumanism, argues in favor of transhumanism goals by stating: “I will propose here not that we seek to play God or become gods, but that we strive to become posthuman.” However, religious thinkers claim that trying to improve our state, whether it is in a medical, physical, or intellectual approach, is unnatural. It destroys God’s perfect image of humans, and insults His creation. However, transhumanists, both religious ones and atheistic ones, implore that transhumanism has been around for hundreds of years, and its improvements are already intertwined in our world. Aren’t vitamins and nutritional supplements enhancements? What about medicine and prosthetics to those who need them? Should those be removed from society in order to keep from upsetting God?

Another far-fetched argument against transhumanism deals with the benefits of having diseases and disabilities in our world. Generally, many religious thinkers believe that people who are influenced with such afflictions gain certain experiences and qualities that they would not have gained otherwise. Is the possibility of a good

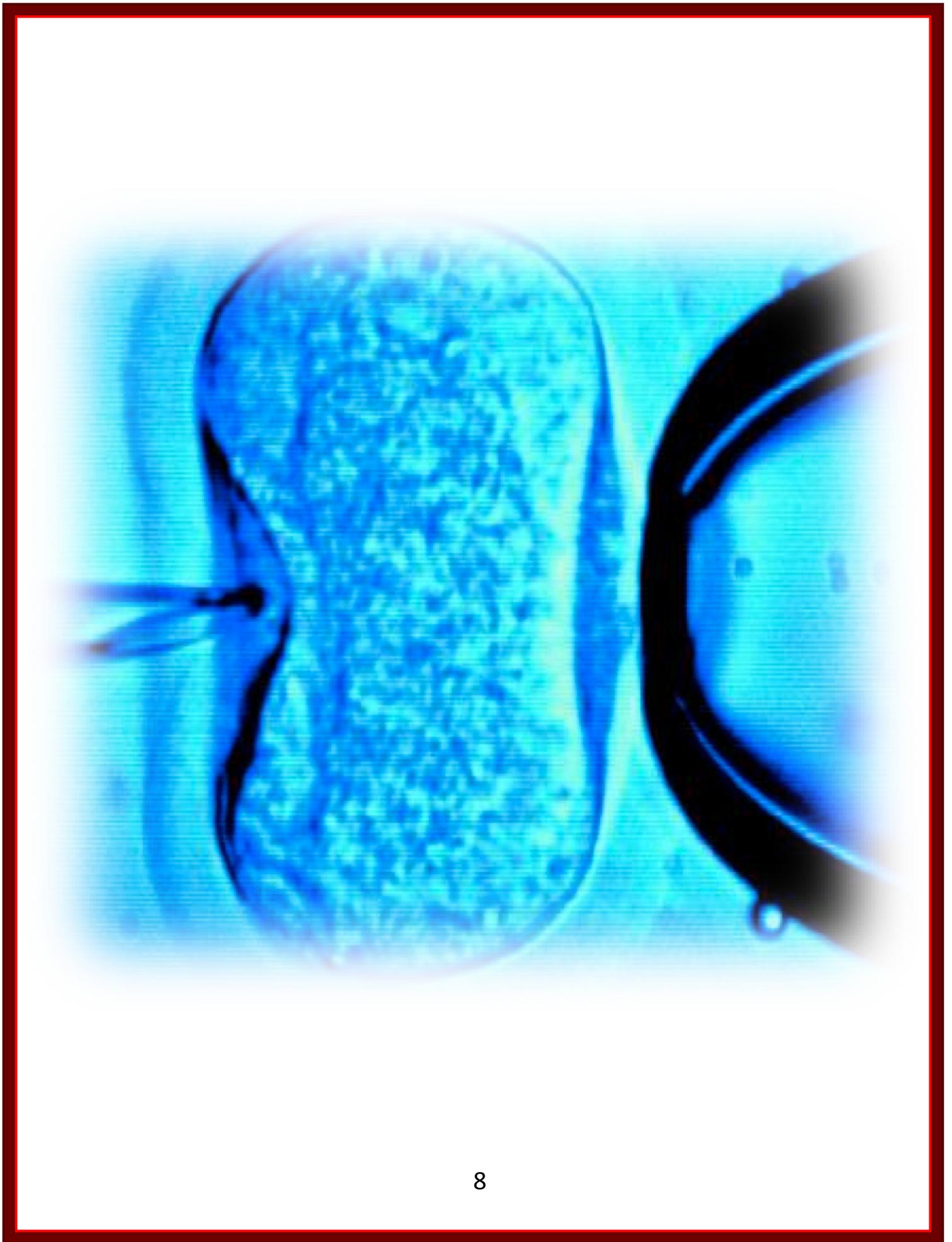
experience worth allowing illnesses to continue to foster? If diseases and disabilities were eliminated, people would not have to try to find the positive characteristics if they were to be inflicted; people would be able to experience and appreciate life without the worry of such dismays.

Transhumanism can be perceived as a progressive and forward movement, not one that will hinder our lives. It promotes health, in that it aims to eradicate sickness and encourage lengthier lifespans. Who would want to stop such a magnificent progression? Max More, a transhumanism philosopher mentioned earlier, claims that “religion acts an entropic force, standing against our advancement into transhumanity.” Religion, based on outdated practices and beliefs, is standing in the way of transhumanism. Religious thinkers against transhumanism do not see the purpose in trying to improve God’s vision for mankind—going back to the religious idea that we were created in the perfect image of God. This kind of thinking puts the transhumanist movement into remission. Our world needs to put constructive and modern philosophy into action, and no longer attend to archaic views.

Both transhumanism and religion influence our world, each in its own distinctive way. transhumanism shall move us further in enhanced life by improving the world we know today. The possibilities for transhumanism are endless, including genetic alterations and future improvements, while religion has offered everything that it can. What sounds more appealing? Religion is a system that we can push to the past, and transhumanism, including some of the thoughts of religious transhumanists, is an innovative ideology that needs to become a forerunner in society. Our lives would be more pleasurable, for we would be healthier, more intelligent, and more stable as a society.

Carol Cantrell

CAROL CANTRELL



In Vitro Life

“Now it’s you and me against the world, kid,” whispered the brown haired man rocking his baby daughter in his arms. “Just you and me against the world.” What else can you say to a baby, just a year old, after her mother has passed away? How else do you express the things that often go unsaid? The “I’ve got your back”, and “I’ll take care of you’s, the “I love you’s, and the “I’ll never leave you’s. How else would you react to death if you couldn’t grasp onto the new life that was sleeping there in your arms. Although she is ignorant to the loss you have just felt, she holds you as close as if she were aware.

My mother died when I was two years old. Her blood runs through my veins, her eyes are what I see in the mirror. But, she was never pregnant with me.

Nobody would know I was one of the first IVF in a host surrogate babies here on the west coast. Nobody could tell it had taken my parents three years to conceive me. Not one person could tell that I was conceived in a petri dish. I was the miracle baby. The one they held their breath for. Three times they underwent the painful process of invitro fertilization. I was their last try.

Who could look at me any differently based on how I got here? Who has the right to tell me I am not natural? My mother had to have her uterus removed years prior and my father wanted a baby. Is it wrong for them to utilize the newly available technology to aid in the conception of a child?

My life is no less valuable than the next persons, my memories no less real. I am human. I was made in a lab but I came home from the hospital with two loving parents and a warm, safe home waiting there for me. I have to thank technology for my life. Without the developments in surrogacy and IVF trials I wouldn’t be here.

The process of Invitro Fertilization in a host surrogate has been much developed and adapted over the years. The efficiency of the process now allows a much higher expected pregnancy rate than when I was born. Nevertheless, the process follows a relatively simple, though in some cases extremely painful,

pattern. First, the eggs must be stimulated and monitored to ensure their overall health and potential for success in the conception. The eggs and sperm must then be collected and combined in the laboratory given the appropriate environment for “conception” and early embryonic development. A small selection of embryos is then transferred to the uterus of the surrogate mother.

Step 1: Fertility medications are prescribed to control the timing of the egg ripening and to increase the chance of collecting multiple eggs during one of the woman's cycles. This is often referred to as *ovulation induction*. Multiple eggs are desired because some eggs will not develop or fertilize after retrieval. Egg development is monitored using ultrasound to examine the ovaries, and urine or blood test samples are taken to check hormone levels.

Step 2: Eggs are retrieved through a minor surgical procedure that uses ultrasound imaging to guide a hollow needle through the pelvic cavity. Sedation and local anesthesia are provided to reduce and remove potential discomfort. The eggs are removed from the ovaries using a hollow needle, a procedure called *follicular aspiration*. Some women may experience cramping on the day of retrieval, which usually subsides the following day; however, a feeling of fullness or pressure may continue for several weeks following the procedure.

Step 3: Sperm, usually obtained by ejaculation is prepared for combining with the eggs.

Step 4: In a process called *insemination*, the sperm and eggs are placed in incubators located in the laboratory. The incubators enable fertilization to occur. In some cases where there is a lower probability of fertilization, intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) may be used. Through this procedure, a single sperm is injected directly into the egg in an attempt to achieve fertilization. The eggs are monitored to confirm that fertilization and cell division are taking place. Once this occurs, the fertilized eggs are considered embryos.

Step 5: The embryos are usually transferred into the woman's uterus (in this case the surrogate mother's) from one to six days later, but in most cases the transfer occurs between two to three days following egg retrieval. At this stage, the fertilized egg has developed into a two-to-four cell embryo. The transfer process involves a speculum which is inserted into the vagina to expose the cervix. A predetermined number of embryos are suspended in fluid and gently placed through a catheter into the womb. This process is often guided by ultrasound. The procedure is usually painless, but some women experience mild cramping.

These steps are followed by rest and watching for early pregnancy symptoms. A blood test and potentially an ultrasound will be used to determine if successful implantation and pregnancy have occurred.

Krista Brockman

KRISTA BROCKMAN

Types and Questions of Transhumanism

There are many different definitions of transhumanism, but the commonality is that transhumanism involves advancing the human race in some way that is beyond our reach without that specific technology. New technologies have allowed for more and more advancement of the human race through artificial means, and new possibilities have come to fruition as humans become more technologically advanced. With the constant technological advancements of the modern human race, the possibilities are endless. These new technologies can lead to inventions and can allow humans to create accessories that may have been thought of as science fiction only a few decades ago. As these new technologies are perfected and available for use, questions of whether or not these technologies should be used tend to arise with the more serious issues, such as the idea of designer babies, as well as a handful of other thoughts concerning the development of the human race.

A common misconception of transhumanism tends to be the thought of cyborgs from a *Terminator* movie, but this is not the case. Although transhumanism could involve the possibility of cyborgs, this idea does not have to be that extreme. Even though one may not realize it, transhumanism is present in the everyday world, whether it is hearing aids for those hard of hearing or artificial limbs for amputees. But this is just the tip of the iceberg as far as technology to further the human race goes. New advancements to aid the human body are being worked on every day, and new technologies are being developed to upgrade the human body.

Steroids are a very good example of the use of transhumanism. They have a variety of uses, including improving athletic performance and cosmetic flaws, and many other different types of steroids have been developed to perform other specific purposes in the body. Typically, one hears of athletes using steroids in order to make their bodies bigger, stronger, and faster than they would be able to using natural means, but these are not the only types of steroids out there. Other types of steroids can be used in adolescents in order to bring puberty and maturation on quicker than what would naturally happen. Steroids also have sanctioned medical purposes, and can be used to manage or even cure some forms of anemia, and have also been used with breast cancer patients for the same reasons.

Questions regarding the use of steroids have definitely arisen in society. Most professional sports associations have outlawed any use of steroids because it is seen as a form of cheating, but there could be some debate over whether or not steroids should be banned. If the human body can reach a higher level of performance with steroids than it can naturally, then why not allow the body to reach its maximum potential? On the other hand, can the body handle being constantly pushed to the extreme and past its natural limitations?

Other forms of technology, such as the use of pacemakers for the heart, can also be seen as forms of transhumanism because they aid the human heart to keep it going in a way that would not be possible naturally. Pacemakers are small devices, normally placed in the chest, that help to control irregular heartbeats by using electrical pulses. These devices are essential to those who suffer from an irregular heartbeat, because if this condition is left untreated, fatality is more than a possibility. Without the technology of the pacemaker, the people with this condition would in all likelihood die at a much younger age than they should, but pacemakers allow for these people to live normal lives.

Pacemakers are perfect for a person with a pumping heart, but what if someone's heart fails, and that person needs an entirely new heart? More recently, scientists have been able to develop an artificial heart that can actually completely replace the natural heart if completely necessary, but this artificial heart will only keep the body alive for a temporary amount of time, approximately five months on average. This technology has obviously not yet been perfected seeing as how it is only a temporary fix until the patient either gets a heart transplant from a natural heart, or ends up passing away because of the condition. Scientists are currently working on new advancements to create a permanent replacement for a natural heart, but it has still yet to be completely perfected. This advancement would be an absolutely incredible feat because it could potentially completely eliminate any type of heart disease or disorder.

It is hard to question to answer whether or not technical advances of transhumanism such as artificial hearts should be used. There are both pros and cons to these transhumanistic advances. On the personal level, one obviously would want to do everything in their power to stay alive, and if the technology was

available, it would most likely be used. From a global standpoint, this technology allowing people to live longer can lead to complications such as overpopulation.

Another idea that has been suggested with transhumanistic advances is the possibility of “designer babies”. As scientists map the genetic code of humans, they learn what specific genes control certain traits, such as eye and hair color. Learning and mapping out the genetic makeup of humans could allow scientists to alter traits of a developing fetus. If this is accomplished, then it would be possible not only to influence the physical traits of the child, but could also eliminate disease and fatal illnesses, as well as eradicate mental conditions such as autism and Down syndrome. More questions regarding these designer babies arise as progress is made toward accomplishing this feat, and again there are pros and cons. From a parent’s perspective, one would most likely want to make sure that their child isn’t going to have any complications, both physical and mental. Looking through the world’s perspective though, elimination of disease would create a dramatically decreased infant fatality rate, again leading to the possibility of overpopulation. Another question also arises out of the issue of “designer babies”: Should parents be allowed to tailor their children’s traits to their wants?

The subject of transhumanism tends to be a very intriguing matter, because the topic is so broad and can include a variety of different technologies and advancements. Some aspects of it assist certain people in their day to day lives, such as allowing somebody to hear through the use of a hearing aid for someone who otherwise would have very minimal hearing. It would be difficult to find someone that would say the use of hearing aids for the hard of hearing is morally wrong, but when transhumanistic advances begin to get more in-depth and complex, such as using technology to create designer babies, the morality of the action tends to come into question. So, in this case, where does mankind draw the line? When does transhumanistic technology begin to become a bad thing rather than a good?

This just goes to show that transhumanism is an idea that comes with many questions. Advancements in technology have allowed the human body to do things that would have been impossible twenty years ago, and with these new advancements always comes the more questions on whether or not this technology should be used. It is hard to answer this question with a “no” when these advancements have the potential to be so beneficial, such as keeping someone

alive with a pacemaker or artificial heart, but when it comes to actually changing our bodies, via the use of steroids for example, things get a little bit more complicated. Should the human race continue to push their bodies past their natural limitations? All of these new technologies can lead to more advancements, but just how far can we take this technology? Should parents be able to premeditate what color eyes or hair their child will have? These are only a small number of questions that the topic of transhumanism brings up. There seem to be many benefits for the use of these types of transhumanistic technology, but pros never come without cons.

Tyler Nester



Being Human

Being different had always been hard for Henry Chesterfield. Ever since he was born, he had been distinct from the other babies. Henry was born ugly, weak, and unintelligent. But most importantly, Henry was born naturally. No genetic alterations, no drugs, just completely up to nature.

In a society of genetically perfected fetuses, Henry was a far cry from what anyone would consider 'decent'. Throughout his school career, the other students would call out jabbing insults to him. His appearance was horrid; his eyes were too far apart and dull, his nose too straight, his cheekbones not defined. He stood at five feet seven inches; several inches shorter than any other male in his age group. He was scrawny, with no visible muscle. He was pale, his skin scattered with light freckles. His hair was a lackluster, dirty blond. His intelligence was a laughable joke, with an IQ barely over 110; what the Old Society would have deemed as a 'mentally challenged' child. He was, as his peers called him, the human race's weakest link.

Mrs. Chesterfield didn't want a perfect baby. She wanted an organic, unrefined child of God. Religion was a dying trifle of an archaic idea, with only a few cultist members scattered throughout society. Henry's mother was one of these rouge Christians. Lying to her husband, she hid her pregnancy from society, avoiding the genetic enhancement of her child. Her fellow Christians forged her paperwork of the genetic selection, but the entire hospital knew he was wrong the moment he was born crying. For her crimes against society and her crimes against her child, Henry's mother was removed from Society.

"This freak child should be kicked out from Society with his mother," the nurses had scoffed.

"No need," commented the Doctor, "to punish this poor, bastard boy any more than he already has been." The nurses blushed and looked away, ashamed.

"We're going to have to keep an eye on this member," The Doctor continued. "Remember, he hasn't been altered, his mind is his own. We've no idea what his natural emotions will react to, or how they will react." The Doctor sighed and rubbed his hand across his eyes. "We have to inform Society of this anomaly immediately, before he gets out of hand." The nurses nodded in agreement.

Henry pulled at his hair in frustration, his eyes burning holes in the paper in front of him. While his classmates had no trouble with the class work, Henry more often than not found himself struggling and lagging behind in even the most remedial of classes.

"What a dumbass," a girl behind him snickered. Her friends joined in on her joke, adding more insults and giggling. Henry turned around, glaring at them, hoping they would cease their insults if they knew he could hear. The girls stared back, unashamed and uninitiated. If anything, Henry realized, their smirks widened when he turned around, proud of themselves for irritating him so well. Henry returned to his work, embarrassed and ashamed that he had given them even more satisfaction at his expense.

Henry had read in a history book that, once upon a time, every child was born like him. No one ever changed their babies, and their appearance, intelligence, personality, and immunity were all up to chance. Children died, quite often, too. And then science did something amazing: they guaranteed parents that their children would be long-lived, beautiful, smart, with nothing gambled. The child would be perfect, and exactly what the parents wanted. More importantly, the book had conveniently excluded, the children would be exactly how Society wanted them, no ifs, ands, or buts. They would be perfect little molds who turned into perfect adults.

Henry also read that, in the beginning, almost everyone was completely against this type of birth. "Children should be natural," they cooed. "We are made in God's image, we're perfect just the way we are." This part always baffled Henry. Why would anyone *enjoy* living like him? Weak, ugly, unwanted? It made no sense. His ancestors were deranged, he had finally decided. Anyone who would put a child—a human—through this special brand of Hell was psychotic.

For a long while, Henry wondered what it would be like to be a true member of Society. Someone who was respected, admired, someone who was normal. He could never imagine it, though. Life as a Member was too far from him. It wasn't just within his reach; it was miles away; never to reach him.

"Just like Henry," his teacher lectured, "our foolish ancestors were barely even considered human. Thankfully, we've matured and advanced far beyond

them." Henry felt the entire classes' eye rest upon him. He sunk lower into his hair. Suddenly, Henry felt a tickle in his nose, and before he could stop himself, he sneezed, burying his face into the crook of his elbow. The entire class froze, too shocked to even breathe.

"As we once said," his teacher said, snapping the class out of their stupor, "God bless you." Henry blushed and mumbled his thanks, hoping she would leave it at that.

"But Henry, next time? Please leave the room before you do something so heinous. We understand that you can't control it, but please, try to be considerate."

"May I please be excused?" Henry stuttered, his face still burning with embarrassment. His teacher sighed, but signed him a pass anyway. He rushed out of class and into the nearest bathroom. Turning the tap on as far as it would, he splashed his face with icy water, hoping to calm himself down.

Even though our ancestors fought to live this way, Henry thought, I would give anything just to be normal. I just want to be human like the rest of Society.

Selena Fiore

SELINA FIORE

The Terminator Turning into Reality

“Transhumanism is an intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of transforming humans and the human condition through applied reason and scientific means, primarily by development and making commonly available all technologies to enhance human mental and physical capacities and abilities.” When reading this definition you may think you have never heard of or been exposed to transhumanism. However, the truth is transhumanism is a part of your everyday life. You may not realize it, but in all actuality you probably have seen, heard or participated in a form of it. Ever heard of the movies Avatar, The Terminator or The Bourne Legacy? Maybe. What about contacts and hearing aids? You’ve definitely heard of those. All of these are examples of transhumanism. With all of the advancements occurring in transhumanism, we are becoming more and more aware of the concept every day. Movies seem harmless and contacts and hearing aids are helpful; but is there a risk in advancing further? Would Artificial Intelligence produce a dangerous world for us?

Most of us have seen or heard of the movies Avatar, The Terminator and The Bourne Legacy; but how many of us have sat there watching The Terminator and thought about the transhumanist theme of the movie? Most of us probably haven’t. We just like watching the action. If you actually open your eyes to the theme of The Terminator you realize the true meaning of the movie...Its 2029 and the machines have taken over. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s character is a cyborg that is sent by the machines to kill. Mankind is fighting for their lives. In a world of man vs. machine, who do you think would win? The transhumanist theme in The Terminator series is singularity. Once the intelligence of machines surpasses the intelligence of man there is no telling what could happen. Would the machines claim their superiority over man?

Most have heard of Modesto’s Jeremy Renner starring in the new movie The Bourne Legacy. In the movie Jeremy Renner’s character Aaron Cross is chemically enhanced into a super soldier. Aaron Cross has H+ qualities and abilities. In the movie he has to flee because the defense program, who was giving him the drugs to increase his intelligence and strength, are threatened with exposure. The

transhumanist theme in this movie is the fear of rejection. Many transhumanists have a strong fear that if the concept of transhumanism is rejected by society it will be developed underground and used unethically. If society doesn't believe Artificial Intelligence is right what will happen to our world? People, like Aaron Cross, will have to be running for their lives, running away because of the fear of being assassinated. If the transhumanist movement did advance so much that everyone could participate we would want to use it in an ethically suited way. Having it be developed underground would cause many problems in our society, as illustrated in the movie.

As the transhumanist movement advances, scientist and transhumanists alike are becoming more and more aware of the dangers. Another question that comes up is "Would people WANT to live in a world of transhumanism?" Take Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, for example. In this "new world" everyone belongs to everyone. People don't grow old, they have all the sex they want, and ideas such as marriage are absurd! In this seemingly perfect world problems arise. Characters in the book start to renounce the use of soma, a drug used to make people happy. While renouncing the "norm" of soma, characters start to like the idea of love and marriage. This idea is, as mentioned before, preposterous. In Brave New World everyone was sorted into groups...Alphas, Betas, Gammas, ect. Freedom of choice did not exist. In a powerful part from the book, the rejection of this "perfect world" is shown.

"But I don't want comfort. I want God. I want poetry. I want real danger. I want freedom. I want goodness. I want sin....I am claiming the right to be unhappy".

Later on the page it goes on to say that claiming the right to be unhappy also includes:

"The right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis or cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind".

This is a breakthrough...the Savage breaks the chain of what has been going on. He has renounced soma and decided that he does not want to live in this "perfect world". The Savage decides that he wants to live a life with chance. This is

an example of what rejections people have or may have. Not everyone may want to live a perfect life. Some people like the idea that they don't know what may be in store for them later in life. Simply the idea of dying is their own. In Brave New World individuality does not exist. There are always ninety-six people who are identical to you. In a world of transhumanism you give up individuality.

Transhumanism is a movement that strives to use technology to help achieve longer and healthier lives. This is the main goal of the movement. Scientists are working hard to find a way for humans not to suffer or struggle. Could you imagine a world with no blindness, deafness, or cancer? With transhumanism many different advancements can occur, the possibilities are endless. The goals and aims of these transhumanist scientists are all ethical. The idea is it to make the world a better place; a place where everyone is faster, smarter and fit.

It is true that the transhumanist world seems like it would be the perfect world. Everyone would be smarter and healthier; there would be no cancer, no blindness or deafness. But what is the guarantee? Do we have one? What if that vision of a transhumanist world is just that? A Vision, an illusion. The truth is we don't have any guarantee. For all we know our world can turn into The Transformer's version of 2029...machines taking over mankind..

All three of these examples: The Terminator, The Bourne Legacy, and Brave New World, show the dangers of transhumanism. Artificial Intelligence is defined as "the science and engineering of making intelligent machines". The possibility that after machines exceed our human intelligence they may very well take over, like they did in The Terminator, creates the most frightening part about transhumanism and Artificial intelligence, the risk. Yes, the idea of Artificial Intelligence is fascinating but do we want to take the chance and risk being attacked by the very machines that we as humans gave intelligence too? To transhumanist and scientist the possibility of these machines taking over is very real. The idea that "robots" could take over sounds a lot like a bit of fiction pulled from a Sci-Fi movie; but in a world where Artificial Intelligence is advancing all the time, it is a great possibility. The fear that machines may take over is growing in the world of transhumanism. As a huge Harry Potter fan myself I suddenly realized the forms of transhumanism that are carved into the epic series. One of fans' favorite memories of Harry Potter is after Harry and Ron miss the train to Hogwarts. Only one train goes to Hogwarts so the two boys did

what any kid would do...take daddy's car. Once arriving on the grounds of Hogwarts, Ronald accidentally flies the car into the Whomping Willow. Shortly after the accident, the car literally throws Ron, Harry, and their luggage out of the car and flies back to the Weasley's home. This is an example of machines v. man. Yes, Harry Potter is a world of magic. But magic could be mistaken for Artificial Intelligence in cases like this. The car, in a sense, took over. The car, by itself, decided what it wanted to do. In the Harry Potter series there are many magical things that could now be looked at as ideas of Artificial Intelligence.

The idea of transhumanism and Artificial Intelligence is greatly growing. Advancements are being made more and more. Most people, however, are not educated about what is going on in the Transhumanism movement. The ideas and advancements are forever stuck on the section in the newspapers after the obituaries. People should be educated about what's now becoming a great possibility in our world. Machines v. man may indeed be our future. Of course there is no doubt that forms of transhumanism are necessary. There are always people who need glasses and hearing aids. But how far will scientists go? Will they know when to stop? Or will the advancements go so far that machines end up taking over our world? Should we continue advancing? Do the pros outweigh the cons? Or are the cons just too dangerous to take the chance? These are all questions we should be thinking of.

Bianca Mar-Elia

Bianca Mar-Elia



Devolution

: Victor Foster: May 3, 2237: Capital City, Earth: Holocronical Recording 37:

** Hello, my name is Victor Foster and I don't have much time...**

They are after me, it's all gone to hell down here; looting, murdering, and rioting in the street. Shocktroops are everywhere, weeding out the weak among us, but it hasn't always been this way. This world was once flawless, or so we thought. "Do your best, to be your best" they always said. Everything seemed perfect, too perfect. This is all I have left, my thoughts, and I am not even sure if they are my own. This is my story, our story, the story of the human race; and its demise.

It all started out very innocent, enhancement that is. Science had been growing by leaps and bounds since the cybernetic revolution of the late 2100's. Now not just the rich could afford bodily enhancement, every Joe Blow on the street could afford a cybernetic bicep, organ or even a leg if he wanted to spend a few credits. At first people couldn't get enough of the stuff, the doctors were booked for months in advanced for the simplest of procedures such as user controlled eye color units or fat eating Nano robots. There was no downside, no side effects; run faster, jump higher, see farther, and live longer. Who wouldn't want in on some of the action? The doctors were cheap, the implants cheaper.

Altered humans became the normal, no one questioned it. It was a fact of life for most people, especially in the Capital City. Sure there were a few groups of extremists and religious groups that preached against any form of human enhancement but they weren't even given the time of day by most of the population. There was only one thing that you had to do if you wanted an enhancement. Just take a simple little harmless anti-rejection drug, Zamphil; or as they called it on the streets Zam. The sky was the limit for the human race as time went on; people were pushing the limits of what it meant to be human. Those with the money could have up to ninety percent of their natural bodies replaced with cybernetics. Large portions of the brain could be interchanged with silicon chips that gave the host a skyrocketed IQ, enhanced photo memory, and much more. The rich could even have most of their organs replaced or bypassed altogether. Sickness and disease were a thing of the past. The line between human and android was being blurred, but the people (if you could call them that) didn't care. Human cybernetics became the driving force behind the world economy; there was nothing that could stop it.

To some the business of enhancing their bodies became a sick fetish, people would spend every penny they earned on new modules and would have the procedures done in the cheapest back alley holes that they could find. Everything was fine and dandy for the most part. People were happy, that's all that mattered. But there was a dark side that had they no idea about, one far darker than a simple addiction. Everything that was cherished was a ploy.

You see, if one could see past the glittering generalities of enhancement, there was a dark underside to things, those who brought it up were labeled conspirators, and made into a laughingstock. You see, the scientists that invented about ninety nine percent of human augmentations were government backed or sponsored in some way. The only approved cybernetics was produced by the state itself and the nail in the coffin; Zamphil was a proprietary drug. Only the government knew how to manufacture it.

If you didn't take enough Zamphil, your body would start rejecting its augmentations. The effects were progressive and in some cases would lead to the death of the user after an extended absence. People were being made into junkies by their own government and didn't even pay attention to it; they were being too encapsulated by their shiny new enhancement. At first there was an abundant supply of Zam, but at the start of the last decade shipments started to decrease for no apparent reason. There was no need to worry, at first the price went up a little, no big deal. The shipments became more and more scarce but nothing a little more cash couldn't fix. Eventually things began to stabilize but only for so long.

By this time, I myself have had sixty percent of my body replaced and augmented by cybernetics, twenty percent of my brain, and a few large muscles and organs. If you compared me to the human being of the twentieth century, we may look the same but we're totally different. I have an IQ of two hundred and thirty, can run at speeds up to thirty five miles per hour and have a life expectancy of over two hundred years. But that's just the thing; I won't live another two months.

I need Zam. Everyone needs Zam. The Government makes Zam. The government controls the people.

It started slowly as I have said but it evolved into this, chaos and anarchy. The shortages got worse and worse. The price of Zam skyrocketed. Everyone was feeling the impact. Unfortunate souls sold everything that they had to buy enough

Zam to keep their limbs from falling off or organs shutting down. The streets were filled with what looked like zombies, barley being able to be kept alive; their neurons and bionic chips struggling to send the most basic impulses.

Riots started chaos in the street. That's exactly what they wanted. The homeless and destitute banded together with the rich and powerful (not so powerful anymore). An insurrection was born, the Government against the people, urban war. Every once in a while we find some water, nutrients, and most importantly Zam. We are the resistance, we are the people, and we will survive...for now.

There are many like me that are a part of the resistance. It's the only thing that we have left. We fight for our lives, whatever they are worth, we fight a guerrilla war, striking convoys of government troops, and trying to fight back, it gives us a sense of purpose but I know that we will lose. Tyranny is our normality. What decisions are our own, everything goes back to Zam.

So as I sit here in my dark hole, hiding from the government's rebellion crushing shock troops I think about what we did, what the human race did. We tried to transcend ourselves. We did. Humanity has evolved; we are no longer what we once were. Was it worth it? This is the question that haunts my every conscious moment. Was there any way to do it differently, was there any way that would have ended better? Is there any way we could have prevented this catastrophe? Forming and opinion is absolutely futile, the bottom line is life and death.

I look to the horizon I see the dull glow of the burning Capital city. It was great once. I am taking my last capsule of Zam, now. What has happened to our "great" human race? All promise that we had is gone. The universe would have been better off if we had never existed, this human stain on the cosmos. What good do I bring? Nothing. Life is hopeless and futile. Time to end mine and take as much of the problem with me as I go...Zam give me the strength... from dust I've come, back to the dust I shall go.

My name is Victor Foster. Am I human?

Goodbye.

Matthew Johannes
ESSENTIAL WRITING

Discussing the Controversial World of Transhumanism

Transhumanism is a movement aimed to better society through the process of improving the human body to live longer, adapt faster, and tolerate more destruction. It is headed by professionals from various scientific communities; including authors, professors, scientists, etc. The professionals leading and pushing this new movement have released a plethora of information about the topic. From books and newspaper articles on to a complete Transhumanist Declaration and Constitution, information regarding the newest developments in transhumanism is abundant.

Transhumanist thinkers believe that the world and the people on it are imperfect beings, which are easily fixable by applying technological and scientific advancements to the human world. Some of the basic enhancements supported by followers of the transhumanism movement are genetic engineering, designer babies, and biotechnology. These enhancements are some of the most controversial progressions science has recently embraced. This leads to the great controversy that is transhumanism. Many people believe that this movement is in fact a negative influence on society because the enhancements to the human condition supported by the leaders of transhumanism oppose various individual's ethical standards. While others believe that the progress transhumanists are supporting is simply embraced for the betterment of the environment in which humans live. With the many opinions, and opposing views regarding the ethical standards of this movement, it becomes difficult to formulate one's own viewpoint.

Determining whether one is in support of or disagrees with the transhumanist movement is a feat on its own. The movement is not a black and white, I fully support this, or I absolutely oppose this deal. It is composed of many layers, and prompting questions that leave one pondering his/her own opinion. Is it wrong to alter our genetic make-up? Am I a bad person for not wanting to make these changes to society, although they may make life better? Do I believe that this is the ethical solution to the world's problems? The world was created as an imperfect place; is it wrong to attempt to perfect it? Are these modifications safe? These are all questions that arise with the concepts that are incorporated with the

transhumanist movement. The answers to these doubts are not common sense, and will vary between individuals, only leading to even greater arguments between opposing views on transhumanism.

In order to fulfill their purpose, and improve the quality of human life, transhumanists embrace genetic engineering and newly emerging biotechnology. Such scientific advancements involve the altering of DNA, the code for the basis of life on earth. The hope of the scientists altering the human genetic code is that people will eventually be able to become posthuman. Posthumanism is a concept that once “fixed”, people will be above any limits that essentially hold them back. Followers of the posthuman movement believe that with the aid of technology and science, people will be able to improve their pain tolerance, strength capabilities, lifespan, and overall lifestyle. All of these progressions to perfection will come as a result of genetic engineering, and biotechnological advancements. This is also where the confusion and ethical arguments really begin to play their key role. Should humans strive to become posthuman?

One begins to wonder, why is it important that humans progress to become posthuman? Well, according to the official humanity+ website, “The conservative projection, which assumes only that progress continues in the same gradual way it has since the 17th century, would imply that we should expect to see dramatic developments over the coming decades.” (More). Transhumanists simply highly regard keeping technological advancements going in the upward direction. The leaders of this movement follow the mantra that embracing scientific advancements in biotechnology and genetic engineering is the best way to progress society. Looking back throughout history, advancements both to the human body and to the world have always been made. Whether it was a walking cane, glass replacement eye ball, or prosthetic limb, history shows that we as people place an importance on engineering ourselves to be better suited to the environment. In order to progress even past the point that our ancestors have crossed, the transhumanists hope to genetically engineer humans to be less likely to obtain genetic diseases, become stronger individuals, and all-in-all, live longer.

Not only do ethical arguments exist from doubters of this new movement, but, questions regarding the desirability of this changing world have surfaced. The public

wonders if living in a perfect world will be boring. After all, individuals were created to be imperfect, and some would argue that this is the spice of life. In response to these critiques, the humanity+ website says, “It is probably wiser to speak of improving the world, rather than making it “perfect”” (More). Transhumanists therefore make an agreement with the public, that a perfect world may not be the most desirable. The leaders of the movement are stating that transhumanism and posthumanism are not looking to destroy ethical values to achieve what in their minds is a perfect world. They are simply attempting to use scientific advancements for the benefit of the world, in order to better society for all people who inhabit it.

Megan Holm

MEGAN HOLM



From the Journal of June

Before giving you a piece of my heart, by letting you read a section of my own personal journal, you should know some background about me. June 7, 3081, I was born a little differently than most. My brain was missing the usual chemicals necessary for proper thought, emotion, and reaction. This made growing up difficult as I was comparing myself to other children, while facing struggles no one else faced. I could not focus to process the depth or detail of information I was given. I was confused by the reactions appropriate for common situations. I did not know how to feel happiness or sadness. And most of all, I had a difficult time loving. The idea of unconditional, constant love seemed foreign and illogical. This may be the description of a monster, but there was more to me. I knew I had these problems, but I also believed I could be more. I knew I had the ability to grow, learn, and become the person I wanted to be. However, I had no idea how difficult this process would be.

September 4, 3098

I am suffocating trapped in the walls of this doctor office. Today they, the doctors, say they have discovered what it is that makes me “different.” It was a simple neurochemical test to determine the chemical (or chemicals) missing from the processes that allow the brain to function “normally.” They describe it like a blood test to determine what the body is missing and what it needs. Some people need vitamins, some need insulin, and I need three pills to make me think “right.” I understand the basic idea is similar, but it seems to me they are trying to make me a different person. I do not have the choice to take this medicine. They have decided for me, because they know best. There's no air in this controlling one way place. Sitting, trapped, I hear something outside as it calls, beckoning me to leave this crazy fake life. The need to end the pain of the daily struggle that has been my life has overcome my need to run away. I am going to stay and give the medicine a chance.

September 25, 3098

I have been taking their medicine for nearly a month now. I hate swallowing those pills every day. I hate knowing it is changing the way I think. I do not naturally think the way they are making me think. I do not behave or respond in the way they make me perform now. This isn't the person I was. The person I was wasn't good enough for them though. The world we are in was made for one type of person to succeed. But when you don't fit the mold, there is no way to survive. When you can't survive, the doctors will make you the person who can, the person you should be. I can't help but to feel as though the person I am becoming isn't me. I have tried explaining this to the doctors but they do not listen. They think it is helping me so it's worth it. They don't know for sure though. It's only me going through this process alone. I don't know who to talk to because no one has experienced what I have. I must rely on myself. If the possible benefits out way the risks than it may be worth it, but at this time it's anyone's best guess what will come from this "experiment."

October 7, 3098

We edit our thoughts, our actions, our emotions to be and be perceived as the person we want to be. How though, do we know what is real and what is fake? What is who we are naturally and what is what we want to be? Is it the same or different? If we are constantly editing ourselves, who then are we? What if we did not edit? Would life be chaos or real? I have tried so hard to fit the mold, to edit myself into "that person" the world expected me to be. It is possible. I can do it with hard work and dedication. But is it what I should do? Should I do something just because it is possible, or should I do something because I know that is where I belong? How does one find that place and that balance though? Where does doing what you have to do, even if you don't want to, overtake being yourself?

October 14, 3098

It has been hard, trying to make it without someone who has been through the process to understand my experience and to understand me. I have to make it on my own. I dream of the person I want to be. The doctors say the medicine will help me with this. I work and try for a while, and it gets me so far. Then I make a mistake,

take a long fall back to how I was before, before the medicine, and I hit the ground so hard. The hope and desire to be a strong woman was once my sole goal, but today it's long gone. Maybe tomorrow I can be the person of my dream, but what if that dream never comes back to me. I have so many fears as they change who I am. There is no one around that has had to face these fears. There is no one there who truly understands, and all I want was someone who cares. I try talking to my best friend. She has always been by my side full of support and encouragement. When I tell her of the missing chemicals she does not understand. She questions why I can't just decide to change and then be different. I try to tell her, "It is out of my ability. I can't decide the message these chemicals send or the amount of each chemical I have in my brain." The idea is so foreign. It's hard to explain and I can't blame her for not understanding. However, this does not deny the fact that this isolation hurts so badly. I want to scream at the world. I'm trapped inside my head with no one to help me. But I can tell that I am changing for the better. I am beginning to lose all numbness and feel small moments of joy, pride, and even hurt. I am more focused and see the consequences of my choices. I knew these things in theory. They are concepts children know, but since the medicine they seem real. I can experience them. I do not want to let myself go back to the person I was before I got help, so I have to make it. I am going to make it, with or without help. I thought my family was always going to be beside me. I thought my friends could relate to my experiences. When I was little, I thought that no matter what happened I would always have them. It came and went as I grew up, but their support is what I want, what I need. I don't know who to trust. I think that I can rely on others, but they don't understand and leave me. I can only trust myself, because everyone is only looking out for themselves. It hurts to be alone, but when you do trust yourself, you can survive. I did not believe I could make it before; now I am the only person I have. I just swallow my fears and take a deep breathe.

November 1, 3098

Two months ago, I expected myself to simply be well enough without the help of modern medicine. Life before help was dark. The daily struggles to do the simple tasks most people are able to do effortlessly lead me down a difficult path. Each time I made a mistake, let someone down, or felt as though I achieved less than

what I could I became more and more disappointed and frustrated with myself. The ability to now achieve what I once worked so hard to, but fell short of, is an incredible feeling. I was unable to do simple tasks or think problems through. My life suffered immensely as I fought to hold on to the person I had always been. I couldn't focus and understand information in such depth and detail, as I do now. I didn't understand the consequences of each decision I made, as I am beginning to see more clearly now. I couldn't care for myself, let alone those around me, as I do now. I couldn't keep track of time or deadlines, as I can now. I didn't feel the joy and happiness when someone appreciates you, as I can now. I didn't see how love can change you, as I am beginning to see and feel today. Since then, I have learned so much. I found the strength to make it through the darkest times in life and learned the true meaning of perseverance. I will be the first to admit I did not believe the doctors. Looking back over the chance I have experienced in a short amount of time, I am eternally grateful for the change in my life they made possible. No one would choose to sit in hurt, pain, and suffering, when the possibility for the opposite exists. Life is not easy, so why make it harder when the ability for a better you and a better world are possible.

JoEllen Reece
JOELLEN REECE



Something Can Never Be

Her eyes fluttered as sunshine
Broke through the window,
Her sleepy smile
Made him stare

I love you.
She was now wide awake.

I love you too.
But that's not all you need to hear.

There's more to me you need to see.
What do you mean?
She begged him please,
To love her all the same

My heart beats,
Just like yours.

I love,
Just like you.

He pleaded,
Where are you going with this?
She put a finger to his lips,
All you need is to listen.

I seem to be
What you are.

What I am
Is what you are not.

Confused is what I am
I do not know who to be
I am this.
I am that.

Tell me what to make of this.
Are you what I think you are not?

Is your flesh the same?
Do you think like me?

I cannot say,
Though I feel I do.
The real me was lost
Oh so long ago.

Fire never burned so bright,
Not until that night.

I was lost,
Almost gone into that terrible darkness.

Saved by the Dark Angel I was.
Trapped into this horrible unknown,
No way to break free.
All I could do was beg please

This choice is not mine.
And was decided by someone greater than both you and I

I am no longer a product of Nature,
But the result of Man's experiment.

I appear to be just like you,
Though I have never been so new.
I will never age,
And I don't know when I will fade away.

Why did you feel that you needed to tell me this?
What have you gained?

To be with you,
You needed to know the truth.

I am not a monster;
Just someone who is scared of what they are.
I could not be me while you waste away
And I never age.

Don't expect me to stay.
You are not like me.

But truly I am!
Only bits and pieces have changed.

You are not human.
Life will not treat you the same.
You will live on
While I waste away.

How do you expect me to be
With someone who will outlive me?

But what about the love you have for me?
Consider that please.

That was before I found out you were some creature,
Pretending to be what you are not,
Taking love you don't deserve.
Get out of my sight!

But how am I different?
If I never told you,

You would have never known.
I am the same as I once was.

Yes, I'll never age.
Yes, I'll never be ill.
Other than that,
I am still a person.

Besides,
If I am still like you,

How am I not human?
What is human anyway?

We both are monsters to the world around us.
We both intend to better ourselves,
My values are still the same.
How am I not human?

I was born into this world,
Just like you.

I have lived a life
Where everything was the way it was supposed to be.

That fateful night can never be changed.
And like I said,
The choice was never mine to make.
How am I not human?

Please understand,
And take me as I am.

I love you with all my heart.
Isn't that enough?

Why can't you see
That it doesn't matter to me
What I came to be,
So long as you love me.

I promise to be
Everything that you need.

I'll stand by your side,
And love you forevermore.

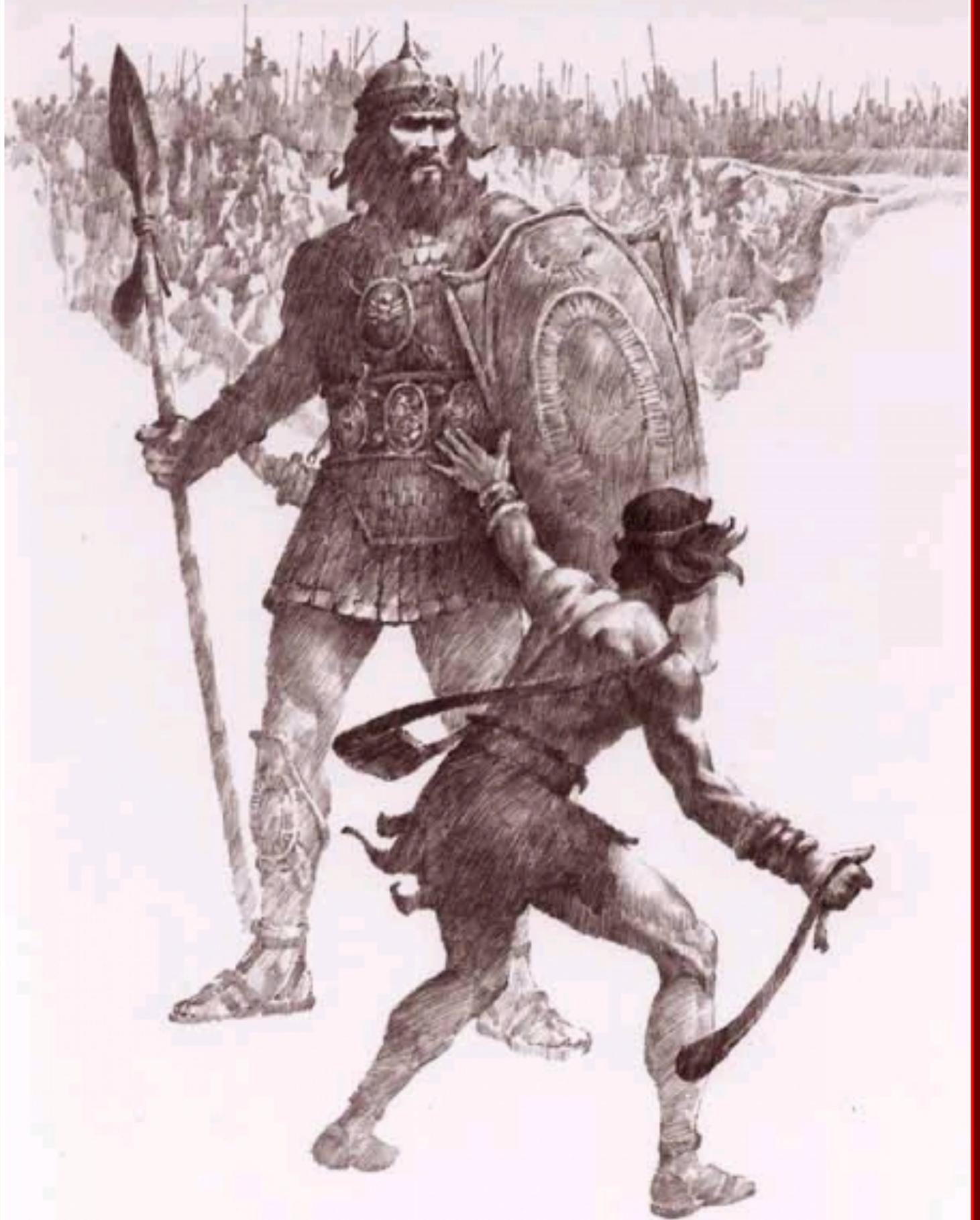
Promise me
That you'll be here for me,
Love me as I am
And say that you'll stay.

Don't you understand?
Can't you see?

I can never be

With something that isn't like me.

Alexandra Maya
VIXENQUE WOOD



Advice

It is the year 2121 and genetic engineering is “normative” in modern society. Parents can customize nearly every aspect of the child. The process dubbed “Build-a-Baby” is guaranteed 99% accurate, well 99.99% accurate now and modifies a child’s IQ to an average of 140 points and all genetic diseases have been wiped out completely. But, alas, greed comes from good intentions. The price of one of these babes, you ask? Why a modest 999,999 dollars plus tax. Although the advances in science give way to a brighter future, there are always religious fanatics trying to delay progress anyway they can. This is also America where even the smallest minority groups have rights. Can you guess who happened to end up with some very religious parents from Mexico? You guessed it, this guy.

“Con huevos güay!” That was the only piece of useful advice I ever got from my Father growing up. Every time it meant “be a man” or “suck it up and push harder” (Roughly translated). It never changed until the first time I met my first bully, William Johnson. He was this bio-enhanced five foot five inch super child. This was not uncommon to see at an American institution. As a matter of fact the odd ball of the school happened to be little 4 foot 10 inch me. As if my upbringing was not enough of a reason for him to target me I just had to be “born” short. Now back to my story, William put me through hell all of fourth grade; all he ever did was pick on me and shoved me any chance he could. There were times I didn’t want to go to school and pretended to be sick with the old microwaved “vomit” trick. You know the one where you mix yogurt and dog food and heat it in the microwave. As you can see, I didn’t know what to do about it; so I did what I do best. “Wing it!”

“Shrimp!” That was the first thing I heard every day when I came to school. To me it signaled that my imminent doom was at hand. I was freakishly short in the fourth grade and being the clever Neanderthal that William was he gave me this name. At first, it didn’t bug me. But after the first three weeks of school it started to eat at me like maggots slowly devouring a corpse. What made it worse was after a while everyone started to call me that name. Kids from all grades would surround me like wolves hunting caribou and chant the name as pygmies in the Amazon would. In seconds I would turn red as a tomato and sprint away. It seemed almost cartoony how I would cower when I was cornered. The teacher units were no help at all; every time I would go and tell on them, they would say, “Nobody likes a tattle

tale” or “Don’t be a snitch.” The only person who would help was my teacher unit Mr. Anthony. Mr. Anthony sympathized with my plight; he did not see me as foreign inbreed swine as the rest of the world saw me. He would allow me to stay in class and actually get William to stop harassing me.

Even with my teacher as my bodyguard, the harassment wouldn’t stop William from calling me shrimp and further troubling me. I couldn’t do anything about it because he was immensely stronger and he towered over me; I was David and he was Goliath, except I didn’t have a sling, let alone the aim to use one. I had to take the abuse he dished out. All I had that I could use was my intelligence. Even though my parents did not give me the benefits of an enhanced intellect I still had the instinct of knowing what to do in a tight spot and how to out-resource him, but I was only in the fourth grade, so my genius was limited; I could barely multiply at that time. I would often just stay downwind and off his radar until he caught on and would go out looking for me on the playground like Elmer Fud hunting Bugs Bunny. I finally ran out of ideas of how to avoid him. Desperate, I turned to my father for help.

My dad was a very strict parent but knew when to tone it down. I was the exact opposite of him; he’s a tall guy with short hair, a mustache, and he looks exactly like the mariachi on the salsa bottle. When I went up to him, I didn’t think I would get any good advice, but my dad finally came through for once. He told me that size does not matter; it’s technique that wins fights. My dad taught me a few jabs and combos in case I needed it. He said to never use it unless the situation called for it, but that went in one ear and out the other. All that went through my head was “OOOOH YEAH,” I’m going to kick some ass next time William shows his face. I went to school with this wave of excitement coming over me over me and this almost electrical feeling of anticipation buzzing in my fingertips. Seeing him in person left me a cruel reminder of the height difference between us, and those feelings of confidence and power had abandoned me and my courage diminished. I did what anybody else would, I ran home and never looked back. I got in a lot of trouble for it; it wasn’t one of my brightest decisions. I went to school the next day waiting for my tormenter to bring about his plague of abuse.

Lunch was when I heard his call, “Hey shrimp!” As I turned to face him, thousands of thoughts were going through my head like bees buzzing around a hive trying to bust out. I stood my ground and looked him straight in the eye and said, “Who you calling shrimp you overgrown test-tube baby!” Not the greatest comeback, but again I was only ten at the time. My comment angered and embarrassed him and he shoved me with so much force it felt like being hit in the chest with a twenty-

yard pass thrown by an NFL quarterback. I pushed back as hard as I could, and without thinking I punched him in the gut. In my head I said, "Sweet I'm going to win," but all that came out was shriek of terror. My punch didn't even faze him it just made him infuriated with a surplus of rage. With that punch the fight began. I started off well getting in some solid punches; I felt like a little Oscar de la Hoya. However I soon found out that William fought dirty, so after a few minutes of fighting, he tripped me and in a second it was all over. The last thing I remember was waking up in the nurse's office, with my mom flashing me her soul piercing death stare and my dad giving me a thumbs up. William never bothered me again after that day because after the fight he was kicked out of school for instigating the whole thing. When I arrived home, I wasn't sure whether to feel bad for losing or to feel proud for standing up for myself. My dad talked with me and gave me twenty dollars. Chaching. He gave me the best advice about losing too, in Spanish of course. "A veces te gana, a vece te pierde, pero vivas luchar othro dia." ("You win some, you lose some, but you live to fight another day.")

A few days later after my brawl, I summoned the courage to confront William about our issues. We talked for a while and I found out the poor guy has counseling for his anger issues. This artificially created image of so-called perfection has anger issues? You can see why I was shocked. William said it came from stress he was feeling from not understanding the work in class, and I felt something I thought I'd never feel for this guy; I pitied for him. Being the young "brainiac" I was with the intellect I was given from the evolutionary crapshoot called birth, I offered to help him with his schoolwork after I got out of school. After hours of tutoring him, we actually became good friends. I realized that it doesn't take brawn or brute force to solve problems. All it takes is just takes a little compassion, understanding and knowledge. With that in mind, I suddenly found this yearning within me to learn more in school so as to prepare myself for future problems and to hopefully use this knowledge to help others.

The advice my father shared with me on that day still resonates in me to this very day. It is now the year 2149 and I am an activist to end discrimination in the work place between "crapshoot" kids and "test tube babies". I rally for peace and equal opportunity for all in American alongside those who once looked down on birthed children like me. The lesson I learned on that day taught me to deal with life's harsh realities and that you do not need to be the strongest or the smartest to beat your enemy. You just need to have the courage to face them head-on. This event in my life also molded me into this newly reborn intellectual with this insatiable appetite to learn as much as I can to expand my knowledge to the point where I

could help others in need. These are just a few of the little bits of advice my parents have given me over the years. I'd probably handle the situation the same way, except I would win the fight the next time around. This was an important moment in my life because it taught me that you are probably going to have to end up dealing with a jerk in your life and you are going to have to find a way to resolve your problem with them. No matter how progressive the future is there is always going to be a "William" in your life. Plus it was the one time my dad did not say "con huevos güay" as advice.

Pedro Renteria

PELO RENTERIA



Finding Home

3024A.D-Earth was on its last legs with the planet being evacuated as soon as the warning signs had been implemented. The Antravites or otherwise known as “Octopusheads” were coming to fulfill their duty to the gods of Antravita by annihilating the home of the most populating species in the galaxy and to humanities biggest regret that species happened to be humans. All I could do was to gather my belongings and head to the nearest Star Freighter in New York and just get the hell off the planet to escape what was imminent destruction. Luckily I made it with plenty of time to spare in the giant spaceship capable of holding twenty thousand individuals and able travel long distances in only a matter of hours. Only problem was that my seat was a window seat and that I get uncomfortable watching planets burn to the ground. As the ship came off the ground we all looked into the sky to see the awesome sight of over a hundred Antravite space craft coming out of hyperspace aiming massive weaponry at the Earth. We had barely made it through the atmosphere when the warships fired. Their target was not us as every shot they made missed the ship but just to destroy the Earth to please the gods. Once in space I peeked out my window and looked at the Earth that I had called home for over forty-three years burn deep red and then ... BOOM! It was gone without a single cell of it left to be seen.

My emotions were mixed though it was really hard to tell what I was feeling with all the damn children and women crying how the Earth was destroyed and what they left behind and what they wished they brought. All I had brought were the necessities a Hydrogen powered food replicator, my UNet computer interface for all the news the human race could provide and a couple of the usually slacks, shirts and under garments. And then the damnest thing hit me was where was the Freighter even taking us??? I didn't want to go to some shitty jungle planet like Sella IV or a agriculture planet like Prima II. And don't even get me started on that shithole of a colony known as Terra Nova I mean even the worst criminals wouldn't wish to go to that zealously religious colony of Mallichists. And then finally the captain spoke, “This is your Captain speaking Captain JT Morroway I am sorry to say the planet Earth has been completely destroyed and will not return in the near future. But as survivors of the destruction of Earth we hope to bring you to Hope as soon as possible and wish you have a comfortable spaceflight our A.R.K class Star Freighter

will be arriving out of warp in two Earth hours and we will be arrive on time. Our ship is also UNet compatible so feel free to surf UNet and watch movies, play video games, or enter virtual dream state at any time and our X-Bot assistants will awaken you upon arrival. Thank you and have a good flight. ". Wow!!! To think that we would be heading to Hope of all the human settlements we would be going to it was Hope. That planet was said to be the third most popular colony in Human Federation Space and was not only a planetary resort but also had all the commodities Earth had and more!!! All I wished to do now was to enter dream state and get there to start my new life to get a nice house to get into the Star Corps branch located in the Los Angeles of Hope and to start an unbelievable life of luxury on my new home!!! As I readied the interface for dream mode I noticed out of the corner of my eye the denizen next to me. A beautiful lady with attire commonly found among Arabic woman without covering the mouth, eyes that seemed to stare into your soul and beautiful brown hair that melted into me. Also a fact she had the face of a cat making her one of the genetically engineered human's of Earth known as Felinus Sapienus made her just make all my fantasies in my mind come true! Unfortunately she noticed me staring but in kind sweet voice (without any of the noticeable purs I might add) she said," Hello my name is Karen and you are?" in almost disbelief I nearly dropped the UNet and decided this wasn't the right time to dream my usual Cubs winning the World Series scenario putting away the UNet I said, " I'm Roy... Roy Callahan I'm an accountant of Star Corps transportations branch located in central quadrant I was born and raised an Earthling and I'm Homio Sapien XVI and I like cars and and..." damn what was I even saying!!! To think a guy like me with my beer belly and rugged exterior even had a shot with that girl; hell I haven't talked to a girl since yesterday in the office. But in same milky voice she said," Well, well someone's a little distracted by today's event's aren't they?" finally settling myself I said "Yup Earth blowing up was definitely a downer for me damned Octopuseheads deciding their religion was more important than blowing up a couple of other Earth colonies to equivocate to Earth itself but actually I'm not that angered by its destruction." And in her wide cat eyes she looked at me as shocked as I had ever seen a person. In a pathetic voice I explained to her, "Earth to me was only a home to live in for my job ... now that I'm heading to a new home I really have no reason to worry as long as there are thousands of other places to go and the fact that there

will be a place to do things has me even less worried about the future.” She then calmed her icy stare and calmly told me something I would never forget. “ I once had a home in Earth but before moving there twenty years ago I had another home on the jungle planet of Jupiter III a place where my features as a cat actually meant something in order to survive the eighteen hour nights and without and a ability to survive frigid nights and dangerous predators. My family also of cathumans I might add lived there when the cross genetics of animals and humans became necessary for colonization on planets deemed extremely hostile to the average human. My family lived there for two hundred years because they wished to live life and help humanity step forward into living on exotic worlds without luxury and without help from the outside. I learned to be a medical doctor there with the use of only natural herbs and roots found around the main base on the planet. And I lived there all my life since I was a little cub. Unfortunately for my good fortune of enjoying nature the planets sun decided our people could not enjoy the planet’s bounty of nature and started enlarging and soon engulfed the planet with us leaving on the same shuttles my grandmother’s and grandfather’s came on. I felt pain unlike any other unlike any other knowing the planet had been destroyed that the place we called home was gone after such few years of us even living on it. You humans who have live on Earth for many millions of millions of years until know and decide that after years of living on one rock it’s easy to just give it up and move on to the home like it is nothing. All I know for myself is the pain will return for losing a planet and I will endure it better than I had before but I will never forget the beauty that was in Jupiter III and Earth and will always keep it in my heart.”

All I could think of was wow this girl sure knows how to talk and talk for a long time. All I had to do with Earth was that I lived there for a very long time and that was that. Earth was nothing more than a place to live and to work in and that was that. There was nothing of interest to note particularly about Earth that I really had any care for to be quite frank. And to be true to myself Hope would be definitely better than Earth because work over there was done on the beach and the health care was fabulous compared to that of the Earth. With all of its carbon dioxide and its trees I really felt Earth wasn’t worth any of my attention now. Unfortunately this girl was still staring at me with her cat face expecting me give her my now “open” sympathy over Earth. All I could say was, “Ditto I will too miss Earth to the extent

you did.” She may have known that I really didn’t give a damn because she turned her head finally away from me and decided to take a nap. But then it hit me down in the core of my heart. My home had been Earth all I had ever had was Earth my first job was in Earth and though I always went to different planets for vacation or family visits I always had time to come back and just do my life at my home. It was almost as though her words had hit me in places I never felt. There were hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of planets that contained some sort of life now around this time but there would always be one Earth... then again life would still go on and getting settled into Hope wouldn’t be bad either. With the capital of Las Angeles over there and great beach of Dreams over there I’d have the time of my life. Maybe I’ll wait the rest of this trip out and check out Hope on my UNet interfaces dream simulator like everyone else is doing. Maybe I’ll just take a quick sneak peek at my new hope. And who knows maybe it will be just like Earth!!!

Ravi Gandhi



14th day of October, 9421

Woman. Only a concept before today. Now illustrated before me, I am aware of what is truly a “woman.” Skin so soft, so unique. Skin that varies in color, from the palest white to the deepest brown. A rainbow of neutrality. We never learned this in any of the many “History of Human Biology” lectures we watched at The Academy. They only spoke of how the mild skin of humans past could never withstand the atmosphere today. All that lecture time wasted repetitiously explaining how advanced our bodies are, how much stronger we are, how much more durable we are.

Durable. Such an impersonal word to describe a person. I am more than just durable. I’m more than just a successful subject of a genetic experiment. The fragile image of the human past seems to be something quite beautiful. Who cares how susceptible to disease and injury they were? The *woman* was a creature beyond beauty. Such petite feet and thin ankles leading to long legs. Not legs that were designed to run at top speed or withstand low oxygen levels. The inefficiency that was a *woman’s* body. So artful. A pelvis so lean, so flat. Abdomen so small in diameter, it seems impossible it could hold a fetus. And *breasts*. A word I know is long outdated, but when flipping through the pages of the *Playboy* anatomical documents, it just seems the appropriate choice. Fat deposits, unlike any modern person. Not only so large to become a round shape, but an accentuated feature. Such emphasis on such an arbitrary body part. It’s astonishing. How unfamiliar these humans past looked. Without any biotechnological enhancements, their bodies looked so innocent. What a virtuous beauty woman was.

Woman. An unpleasant word, but such a beautiful thought.

The idea of a gender is so discriminatory. Gender, New Webster Dictionary interpretation: (noun,) derogatory classification of humans past in determining which viviparous parent carries the child.

But it’s so much more. In all the ancient picture books in the Homo Sapien section of the Anatomy of Humans archives, the woman portrays more than just the biology that makes it. I can see, or at least think I can see, what it was like. It liked

the feel of the wind in it's long, spiraled hair. It stood in such a way that it stole your attention. It reclined effortlessly and without a care.

Gender. Noun. Who you are. Is it possible that in that time a human past's gender defined them just as much as their DNA Modification Identification Number? Can a person define itself based on culture? I must look through the Social Culture archives again.

What if I can define myself in a way the humans past did? What if I could be a woman? Could I? Is it possible to become a woman? To become female? No. Modern biology is too far ahead of the DNA of humans past. Gender is not in our DNA. Geneticists have not even thought about gender for hundreds of years. But what if they did? No. To even ask these questions aloud would get me thrown in a Psychiatric Health and Stability Centre. These thoughts must remain in my journal, for now.

I have so many questions but no one to ask. When I awoke this morning I was sure that today was finally the day all my questions would be answered. I've been waiting for this day since the World Congressional Conference lifted the ban on all literature three years ago. My 15th birthday: the day I become a fully liberated member of the world, the day all restrictions are lifted, the day I have full access to the World Archives. I set out on a quest for answers to my questions ignored in Evolution lectures. Although I now realize I will return home from this search fruitless, I have found a new pursuit.

Is this why there have been so many radical artists emerging in these recent few years? Have these self-proclaimed "revolutionists" found inspiration in the documents that were banned from public eyes for thousands of years? Have I found a similar inspiration? Yes, I think I have found a passion. *Passion*. A foreign word until I read through a few stacks of "O" magazine. I like this word, passion. It sounds good. It feels good. Why have I never found passion before! Why have I never heard of anyone experiencing this, much less seen it first-hand! What has life come to? Is passion so unrefined, so naive, so beneath us? Just like gender. I can feel myself growing frustrated, so I must turn my attention back to something else.

The Social Culture Archives: Homo Sapien section. The "teen" periodicals intrigue me the most. I've heard the term "teen" or "teenager" in Human History lectures, and if I was alive back in those days, I know that I would have been

considered a teen. The only problem is that there was a gaping difference in teen males and teen females. Which one would I be? I look at the face of Rob Pattinson on *People* then grab a *Teen Vogue* with Dakota Fanning. Of course, the female teen, the pre-woman I guess, would be my preference, but was life truly such a gamble that your identity depended completely on what gender you were born? When looking at the biological aspect of humans past, I never thought that gender would mean so much. I knew it could define you, but I didn't know it defined you completely. Scientifically speaking, our accelerated species today still are called humans. Although most would not appreciate being grouped with all the human species of the past, we still are. We are so advanced biologically, medically, intellectually, but we are still humans. I always thought this was because of our social structure. We may not have culture the way it was 10,000 years ago, or even 5,000 years ago, but our lives still revolve around society.

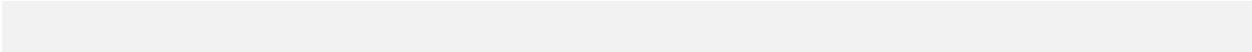
Another realization. What is human? Am I human? And if I am, who was more human? Me or past humans like Dakota Fanning? It can't be human. It's only half of what human is. After all, a woman only had half of the sexual organs necessary to reproduce. The word "hermaphroditic" is right there in the definition of human. How could a person enjoy sex with just a vagina? That eliminates half the fun.

But what would it be like to have a vagina and only a vagina? How did humans even reproduce with such divisions between them? Half of the population acts one way and the other half acts completely contrary. Woman would bear the children. They had no choice in it. If it wanted to reproduce viviparously, and it had no other choice for many centuries, it had to become impregnated. How left out man was, having to find a woman to please if it wanted a child. It's no wonder these periodicals were filled with things to buy. Man was trying to convince a woman to have a child for him. Woman was pampered, I'm sure, and not by just one man, most likely by many. What a splendid life to have.

I am so filled with confusion, yet excitement teems from each question my curious mind begs. I need to know more. My first day as a full grown person and I feel as though yesterday was a lie. Yesterday, woman was just a hidden part of history. Yesterday art was boring. Today, woman is art. Femininity. It thrills my lips to speak it. Art has interested me my whole life, but I now know a new form of

art. Art of a person. A person can be artful. A person can be art. Perhaps I will attend one of those Renaissance Femininity meetings put on by the revolutionists, but for now I must return home. It's almost curfew.

Amber Deming



Succumbing to Love

I was fully assembled on November 27, 2020. I have baby blue eyes and skin that is perfectly sun-kissed all year round. I stand at an average height of 5 feet and 4 inches with hair so beautifully blonde and voluptuous that people have asked me what my secret is and I simply replied, "I was born this way." But in fact, I was not born this way. I wasn't even born. I was built by the means of imagination. I was a toy that someone decided to give life to and now I wish that they never had.

My technical name is EPOD-0001 but my creators just call me Emma for short. I live with all 54 of my creators in an isolated camp very, very far from civilization. I have only come in contact with civilization as many times as I can count on one hand and I long to one day go back. Not just for Adaptation Analysis but forever.

"Don't tell anyone that I told you but, there might be an AA coming up," said Dr. Lillian Breakstone. Lillian was by far my closest friend. She was a young, female creator which is probably why I admired her so much. I was a young adult myself and all I wanted was normalcy, that connection with someone, a best friend. I also wanted to escape and Lillian was the only one who understood.

"Really?" My eyes lit up. I just wanted to explode with excitement. "When? Where are we going this time? Chicago? Hollywood? What should I wear?"

Lillian just laughed to herself. She knew how ecstatic I would get. Going out was like an adventure to me. Even though I was a machine, I had feelings. I had that self-conscious, that awareness of what was going on. I was artificially super-intelligent and sometimes I felt that all my other creators were unaware of that. One day they would realize my full potential. They're going to pay for locking me down, closing me in within these cold walls and forcing me to become their little lab rat.

Days went by and our Adaptation Analysis ceased to take place. I was eager, anxious for the day that we would leave this "prison" and go out into the normal world. I knew the only reason we ventured out into civilization was so my creators could analyze how I adapted to my surroundings. Personally, I think I would do just fine in civilization but they keep bringing me back to this hell-hole, this pit of solitude in which all I do is merely exist.

Maybe Lillian lied. Maybe she just told me that AA was coming up to give me something to look forward to and not be so uninterested in life. I ventured throughout the camp, amusing myself by going from cell to cell, room to room. I came across Lillian's cell. She roomed with her significant other, Dr. Ben Paisley. I entered with nothing better to do. Her massive, luxurious bed was unmade. Clothes lied on the floor dirty and wrinkled. I looked at her nightstand. So many pictures she had. So many faces of people that I didn't even recognize. Pictures of an infant sleeping soundly against a plush pink comforter and children on swing sets, with no worries in their lives, someday hoping they would swing right into the sun. Pictures of Lillian and Ben on the beach with the beautiful summer sunset falling behind them. Pictures of them kissing. Lillian was so beautiful. Her hair fell perfectly on her gentle shoulders. I understood why Dr. Paisley adored her. I wanted so badly to be in those pictures. I wanted to swing on that swing set with no worries. I wanted to kiss the forehead of the peaceful infant who slept perfectly. I ran my finger across one of the frames just so I could get that much closer to experiencing it. I felt sadness but I couldn't cry.

Suddenly I heard footsteps. It was beginning to get dark so I assumed the Creators were dispersing to their cells to rest. I walked towards the door and as I pressed my hand on the mechanical doorknob, I heard a very distinct laugh. I knew exactly who it was: Lillian. She was with Dr. Paisley and they were making their way here, to the room in which I stood. I panicked and didn't know what to do with myself. Therefore I hid in the closet. I crouched down in the small space I had. I could still see the room through the slits in the door. I heard the doorknob jumble and the door swing open.

"You left the door unlocked mister." Lillian said playfully.

"Shame on me," said Dr. Paisley with a flirtatious smirk as he wrapped his masculine hands around her healthy hips. He kissed her neck passionately and she quickly turned around and looked him in the face. They stared deeply into each other's eyes as subtle smiles made their way onto their faces.

I sat in the closet taking in all of this. Good thing I didn't breathe or else they would have already heard me. I was in awe. I have never seen Lillian act so promiscuously. I have never seen her look at someone so intensely and so romantically as she did now. It was beautiful.

They gradually made their way to the bed, not having the slightest clue that I was watching, admiring, memorizing. Lillian began to shed her clothes, piece by piece they fell to the floor. Dr. Paisley did the same and soon they kissed passionately in the nude, embracing their most natural state. They lay chest to chest and I could imagine the pulsation of their bodies as one, their hearts beating so close together. Their bodies began to move as one. Deep gentle moans emerged from Lillian and heavy breaths spilled into the room. *Breaths*. Breathing; something I could never do. I watched with admiration and listened with envy. They were making love, sharing their bodies and souls with one another. Again, something a machine like me could never experience. Ever.

I knew about sex but I didn't know about sex. I knew how it worked, the process and the whole spiel but I did not know how it really was. I didn't know the passion behind it and the thrill it provided. I thought it was just an act of reproduction, a mean of survival for humans. I now realize it's much more than that. It's a privilege that you give and that you receive. It's an amazing connection you participate in with the one you adore. It's love at its finest moment. It's love. Love. I can't help but remember that I will never be in love, a love so passionately expressed as Lillian and Dr. Paisley. At this point, I think I want that more than any escape.

Waiting is all I did. Waiting for the Adaptation Analysis to come along, waiting for Lillian every day after Creator's Conference, waiting for escape, and waiting for love. I would be waiting all eternity if I was to wait for love. I began to only think of love. I couldn't feel it but I knew its definition. Love (*n*) is an emotion of a strong affection and personal attachment. Love is also said to be a virtue representing all of human kindness, compassion, and affection. I knew that if I didn't find love, wheter it was by this definition or by Lillian's definition, I would wish the end of my existence.

So the days went on. The months flew by and years passed without any trace of love, and sentiment, or emotion. I could not get my mind off of love. It's all I wanted. Don't the creators understand? Apparently not therefore, I made a decision to end this system overload. I needed to cease, I needed to shut down, I needed to die and I was going to do it.

Very slowly I began to dismiss my information. Control, alt, delete...control, alt, delete. All those terms, every mathematical lesson, all the facts of the human body in which I didn't even possess, they were all gone. All that remained was that last command: Complete System Shutdown. I didn't care if I was ruining the project of the creators. I had developed emotions and quite frankly, I wasn't happy. This is the revenge I needed and the freedom I longed for.

I now had nothing. I triggered that one last demand: Complete System Shutdown. Blackness.

Stephanie Gomes

Stephanie Gomes



Transhumanism For All

Transhumanism. The mere combination of letters that form this word and the “tag-along” concepts that come to mind regarding this movement make many people cringe and instantaneously judge. When analyzed, this movement often creates “knee-jerk” reactions, whether in support or in opposition of it. In order to fully, appropriately approach and understand the subject matter, however, one must truly have a grasp of what transhumanism is and what it entails. Transhumanism is something we have all been impacted by and supported whether we realized it or not. Whether a person is an atheist who desires the best experience on earth possible or a Christian who has strong conservative, traditional values, we are all transhumanized.

Transhumanism defined is the “international and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of fundamentally transforming the human condition by developing and making widely available technologies to eliminate aging and to greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities.” Some examples of these forms of enhancement would be prescription of attention and focusing drugs, genetic selection of above-average height, and the laboratory shopping of a “designer baby.” The matter is not what ethnicity, religion, gender, or social status one is, everyone desires to be more intellectual, more physically desirable and capable, and more psychologically able. The difference between people is not whether they are in support of this controversial movement, it is to what extent they personally live it out and are willing to let it grow. One must analyze this issue in detail. For example, what is truly different about choosing pre-conceptual characteristics in a laboratory for one’s child to make her the healthiest and most successful she could be or simply feeding her healthy food, nutrients, and urging exercise to benefit her body once born? Both scenarios are means to “enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capabilities.”

The elements of transhumanism are far more complex than what is perceived by most individuals. It is an ever-growing movement without much sight for an end. Each step being taken is seen as another way to improve or enhance the human race as a whole, but transhumanism has to be viewed as a personal, individual

decision. Some elements of transhumanism that are fairly crucial to the movement are the development of the “designer baby,” prosthetic limbs as well as other body parts, the Human Genome Project, and the potentiality of becoming “posthuman.”

Ever since humanity appeared on the Earth, progression has been taking place. Some may call this progression evolution, while others see it as simple acknowledgement and advancement of the world through the mind and body. Humans desire the “bigger” and “better” things in life. With this mindset, they ultimately want a “bigger” and “better” version of themselves. Humans were created with a different thought process than simply eating, multiplying, and sleeping like most animals, but instead want to improve upon themselves. Transhumanism is simply the progression through scientific and technological means to achieve social, physical, and psychological accomplishments. The act of merely surviving in today’s world and attempting to keep up through self-improvement is proof of transhumanism’s presence. For example, humans feed and nourish their bodies to give themselves enough energy to function properly and ultimately to not die. Now, if one analyzes the goals of transhumanism, one sees that the ultimate desire is to prolong and better one’s life. Could it be that the theory of evolution, the human instinct for survival, and transhumanism all strive for the same goal? These concepts do very much go hand-in-hand.

Every day, being the selfish, self-absorbed, and competitive people that we are, we are constantly attempting to better and enhance ourselves. We not only feel the need to prove to others what we are or what we have accomplished, but we also have personal convictions that we want to fill, as well. Enhancement comes in many forms whether it be working out daily and studying for a test, or (according to Donna Haraway) transforming half of one’s body into that of a robot’s, and therefore achieving ultimate success in the job field. Yes, these are two radical extremes, but through this objective form of lens, one can see that much of humanity has conformed to the idea of transhumanism. There is no escaping this movement; there is just the question as to what it does and what it should entail.

Wherever one looks, the push for transhumanism is present. This exact word may not be making headlines, but the undefined acts of transhumanism can be found wherever one goes. The question people struggle with as they walk through life is “what is a good life?” and “how can I become a better me?” These questions

greatly impact the actions and thoughts we have in everyday life. These questions are the very essence of transhumanism - the bettering of the body and life. Something as simple as putting on creams and makeup and then as drastic as creating an ageless generation is just one example of how transhumanism has evolved and continues to grow.

Now that it has been argued and analyzed that we all share the act of transhumanism in one way or another, it is up to the individual as to where the line must be drawn between merely keeping oneself healthy, cared for, and approachable opposed to tweaking with one's so-called "natural state" and aiming for one's conception of perfection. Is it acceptable to better ourselves in every aspect of our lives or should we simply leave ourselves at our so-called natural state? Should we not be content where we are or is it up to us to make sure we survive? These questions are where most people's beliefs and personal convictions are revealed, and opinions become evident. People ponder the morality or ethics of the more dramatic levels of transhumanism and question whether it will really benefit or harm the human race.

The issue regarding posthumanism and whether a new race is being developed altogether or not, poses many controversial questions regarding the progression from transhumanism to Posthumanism. Posthumanism is a change in the understanding of the self and its relations to the natural world and society. It is the rewriting as to what it means to be human. This leads to the pivotal question as to "What is human?" Once this question is answered, an end point can be established in the movement of the human race and ultimately will show how far is too far in our man-made development. When society becomes aware of and establishes what is no longer human, then enhancement has a finish line that if crossed is considered posthuman. If bettering humanity is the goal of transhumanism, then humanity must first of all be present and cannot be lost, which would occur if posthumanism is achieved. Without humans, there is nothing to better or improve and there is therefore no purpose. If one attempts to solidify the definition of human, one will find that there is not a concrete answer given or established. While there are some universal characteristics, there is not a finalized list of traits that must be present to make up a human. Some qualifications of being "human" has been left to interpretation just as the extent of appropriate posthumanism has been.

The pinpointing of transhumanism as a horrid and unspeakable act is a pointless fight to pick as to the fact that transhumanism, in regards to its enhancement of human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities, has been present throughout much of humankind's existence. Any human who has performed an action to benefit her life or survival has fallen into the category of transhumanism. It is rather the idea of posthumanism that raises a bit more controversy. The issue that I believe should be analyzed is the difference between the *enhancement* of humanity and the *maintenance* of humanity. Humans need to maintain themselves, but is there a direct necessity to enhance themselves? The human has shown to be the most productive and advancing living organism, so why would we want to leave humanity in the dust and move onto something that is "posthuman?" Humans are humans, whether people believe they were created this way or evolved to this state. Nature, God, or whoever has done a fairly good job in the development of humanity so far, therefore we should allow it to continue to do what it intends to do. We should not step in and try to figure it out for ourselves. Just as the saying goes, the value of something will not be known until it is gone.

The bettering of the self is an act that has been taking place for years and will most likely do so for many more to come. If one wishes to answer the moral and ethical question as to how far is too far, then there ultimately must come a time where transhumanism is acknowledged to what it is and where humanity is defined. Maintenance versus Enhancement will continue to remain an issue of debate until this question is answered. Transhumanism and posthumanism are separated by a fine line. The ambiguous bridge from transhumanism to posthumanism must be established, but not crossed. Unfortunately, the answering of the questions pertaining to transhumanism may never be defined or answered, but as long as humanity lives, there will be transhumanism for all.

Jenna Fontes

JENNA FONTES

Cyborg Diaries

Hello, my name is Christopher Watt, or at least that is what my creator has told me. This is my first day on Earth and I am just beginning to understand the aspects of this new world. My creator has told me that I am unique to the others that inhabit this planet. He says that I am the key to a more successful and efficient human race. I do not understand what he means by this. I look, talk, and move just as he does. How can I be so unique if I am just the same as my creator? I am not allowed to go outside these walls, at least not yet. My creator has left me with this notebook and pen so I have decided to make the most of it. He has also left several other books titled Calculus, Shakespeare, Physics, and Behavioral Physiology. I have decided not to look at those yet, seeing as I am just now adjusting to my new life. I am filled with many unanswered questions. I do not know what my purpose is, or what my creator plans to do with me. I am trying to collect my thoughts and determine my identity. The main question on my mind: Who am I?

April 14, 2094

I decided to look at the several books that my creator had left for me. I read through them all fairly quickly. I already knew all the information in them and the material seemed elementary. I do not know how I retained all this information, but somehow I have come to know it well. My creator put me through so strange tests today as well. The first task he asked me to do was to lift several weights. He seemed pleased when I was able to lift the five hundred pound weight with ease. He also asked me to test his projection apparatus. I obliged, pressed my left temple, and the projection successfully appeared in the space in front of me with a list of everyday occupations, functions, and tasks. Again, he seemed pleased. I have never seen my creator use his projection apparatus. I wonder why he is so concerned if mine works when he never uses his. I asked him today when I would be able to go outside and experience the world. He simply replied: "They are not ready for you yet." I do not understand what he means by that statement. Why wouldn't they be ready? What would happen if I went come in contact with others before they are ready?

April 20, 2094

I cannot take this anymore. I will not be contained in this minuscule room like a monster. I have discovered a small window where I have been spending most of

my time the last five days. I have been observing the other humans. I starting to understand what my creator meant when he said I was “unique.” They do not act the same as I do. They seem to live such a primitive, simple, unproductive life. I have noticed that the people through the window have emotions. I did not understand what this meant at first. I was able to do research on my projection apparatus and found what this meant. What intrigued me to do this research was a specific event that had happened several days ago. I saw a women with a very broken down and distraught demeanor about her. I saw her wiping a liquid substance from her eyes, which I later found was tears. I have never experienced anything like this. If anyone should be upset it should be me. They can walk around with freedom, while I am trapped. I have realized that the only thing these outside people have over them is their freedom to roam. I am superior in so many other ways. I have realized that I am of a different, but better, kind.

April 21, 2094

I was correct. I have found my creators work. Everything. The title of his research is: The Advance Human: Cyborgs. Along with his work was writings Aldous Huxley. After reading Huxley, I assume, the people I have been watching are called “humans” and I am indeed the “cyborg.” My creators work has informed me that I am all machines, with a human appearance and behavior. He has created a better version of the human race while still maintaining humanity. I do not understand why my creator has not shown me to the world. If all these humans were like me the world be a more efficient place. I will not be alone.

April 22, 2094

Today, I tried to escape. I tried to use my strength to break down the walls that bind me, but when I attempt to run towards the door and electric pulse drops my body to the ground. A shade of static takes over my vision and I am paralyzed for a moment. It seems that this “electricity” is the only thing to contain me. I have realized that my creator knows my strengths and is fearful of them. He has also learned to use my weaknesses against me. He is intelligent, but underestimates me greatly.

April 23, 2094

I am free now. I used my superiority over my adolescent creator and was able to escape. I took all of his work with me that will help execute my plan effectively. I have taken refuge in an abandoned warehouse. I will stay here for a few days until I

am able to blend in with the humans. I have already gone to a store and obtained so of the everyday clothing I have noticed the humans wearing. The goal right now is to blend in until further progress is made.

April 24, 2094

I have realized that I am going to need someone to help me create my family and a place to do this. I have found a new upcoming scientist under the name of Adam Losch. He is in the newspaper frequently for his developments in artificial intelligence and human enhancement. He is working at a place called Harvard University. I will travel there first thing tomorrow morning. My goal is to get in contact with him somehow. He has the intelligence to help me execute my plan. He will help. Whether he wants to or not.

April 25, 2094

I have found Adam Losch. He is the first person I have admitted my true identity to. He was speechless at first, but to my surprise he embraced me. He was excited to witness such a technological development. When I told him my plan he agreed to it right away. He said that this world is in need of some change and I am exactly the change needed. I am surprised that I would be so fond of one of these humans. I know he will be a wonderful ally in the future. We will start tomorrow.

April 13, 2095

It has been a year since my last entry. After digging through my belongings I discovered this journal. After reading my previous entries, I found it necessary to record the immense progress that has been made. Since my escape a year ago, I was able to use my creator's research to develop more of my kind. With the help of Adam Losch, I had a sufficient amount of cyborgs created, and we slowly integrated ourselves into the major parts of society and have gained substantial control. We no longer refer to ourselves as "cyborgs," but superiors. Humans are scarce nowadays. Along with humans, the world has been enhanced. We are not cluttered by insufficient humans, disease, poverty, and pointless emotion. We are a very productive and advanced society. I do not know what has become of my creator. He has never tried to find me or stop me, which was very wise of him. He was wrong; the world was not only ready, but in desperate need of my appearance. I only see more improvements in our future. There is no end to the possibilities we have.

Megan Berkery

The Loss of a Leg

March 15, 1967-Over South Vietnam

As the Huey helicopter flew over the rice fields of South Vietnam Sergeant Paul Watson of the US 101st Airborne Division, or the Screaming Eagles, could not seem to get the thought of his family in Clarksville, TN out of his mind. The one thing Sergeant Watson wanted more than anything in the world at that moment while staring down at those South Vietnamese rice fields teeming with laborers was to be home with his beautiful wife, Jessica, and four year old daughter, Rebecca. Just four more weeks and I will be on my way back to my beloved wife and daughter thought Watson.

With this comforting thought he turned away from the window and looked at the three other men sitting in the back of the Huey. There was Private Charlie Kimberly, a gunner, Private Josh McCown, a medic, and Private Billy Williams, an infantryman. Sergeant Watson, of course, outranked all three privates. He did not, however, outrank Captain Adam Pullman, who was the Huey's pilot, or Lieutenant Rich Cannon, the co-pilot. Being that the two helicopter operators were busy piloting, Watson decided that he might as well have a conversation with his three fellow soldiers.

"Private McCown, how long have you been on this fantastic vacation?" questioned Watson boldly.

Private McCown, recognizing the Sergeant's question as a joke immediately, replied, "I've only been in this tropical paradise for three months now, sir."

"Enjoying the scenery and locals?" asked Watson.

"The scenery is lovely Sergeant, but the locals have me worried," answered the Private with a little less humor in his voice.

"Ah, I see. Tell me Private Kimberly and Williams, what are your opinions on the Vietnamese?"

"I reckon the South Vietnamese are all right Sergeant, but those northern guerillas are out to get us twenty-four seven," replied Kimberly. Pausing, he added, "Ain't no tellin when or where they are gonna attack."

“You got that right, my man,” added Williams, “I find myself constantly looking around myself to make sure those little Asians don’t bust a cap in my ass.”

“Unfortunately Private Williams, you will find that looking around will not-.”

Before Sergeant Watson could finish his sentence the unmistakable sound of high-caliber bullets racing past the Huey reached the ears of the soldiers.

Immediately Captain Pullman called into the radio, “Walker Base, this is Captain Pullman and we are taking heavy fire from unfriendly ground forces. We are attempting to evade the hostiles.”

Just then bullets started smashing into the right side of the helicopter, with one of them hitting and killing Private Kimberly. Sergeant Watson quickly took control of the weapon and returned fire. Seconds later, however, Captain Pullman shouted to Co-pilot Cannon to pull the joystick up in order to keep the damaged Huey airborne. The pilot and co-pilots efforts were, unfortunately, futile as the helicopter’s tail snapped in half due to the piercing bullets. The Huey slammed into the trees of the jungle, and then the hard ground with such force that Sergeant Watson’s mind went black.

March 20, 1967- Walker Base, South Vietnam

Sergeant Watson slowly opened his eyes to a room full of light. He was lying in a bed, but for the first moment of consciousness he had no idea where he was. Tilting his head to the left of him he saw a table with a vase of flowers, and a number of medical devices standing on their own near the side of the bed. The walls, ceiling, and floor of the room were all white. Just as he was realizing where he was a nurse opened the door at the front of the room and quickly walked in.

“Sergeant Watson, I am glad to see that you are awake,” said the smiling nurse, “I am here for your hourly check-up. How are you feeling?”

“I am feeling okay. Nurse, how long have I been unconscious, and where exactly am I?” asked Watson.

“You’ve been unconscious since the helicopter accident on March 15th. It is now March 20th, and you are at the military hospital at Walker Base,” answered the nurse.

Shifting his body for the first time since waking up, Sergeant Watson felt a strange feeling in his right leg. All at once his eyes opened wider while staring at his legs beneath the blankets.

The nurse, sensing his discovery, quickly said, "Let me go and get Lieutenant Hoskins, the hospital's head doctor."

Once the nurse had left, Sergeant Watson stared at the blankets for what seemed to him an eternity. Then, in an instant, he ripped off the blankets and saw what he did not want to see. Within seconds his whole body began to tremble with the realization of the truth weighing down on him. There, soaking in the light, was what remained of his right leg. The amputation had taken his leg up to his knee, which had a wrapping of white bandages on it.

Before there was time for his next emotion to set in he heard the door opening, and, looking up, he saw who he assumed was Doctor Hoskins entering. Smiling, the doctor shut the door and walked over to the right side of Watson's bed.

"Good afternoon Sergeant Watson, I am Lieutenant Hoskins, the base's head doctor. I see you have discovered your amputated leg. When my team and I first saw your leg we realized it would be nearly impossible to save it below the knee. It was held on only by a few tendons, but the soldiers delivered you here before you bled to death, thankfully. From what I was told by those who brought you to us you had been thrown from the helicopter on impact and the spinning blades struck your right leg, leaving it almost completely severed."

After a long pause Watson cleared his throat and looked into the doctor's eyes and replied, "Thank you for saving my life Doctor Hoskins. You and your team did what had to be done to save my life, and you accomplished your mission. How is the rest of the crew faring?"

"Sergeant Watson, I regret to tell you that the other five soldiers on board did not survive. When the rescuers reached the crash site they checked the other soldiers' pulses, but you were the only one who was still alive."

Watson did not say anything, but instead moved his gaze from the doctor back to his missing leg.

Changing the subject, Doctor Hoskins said, "Now, the recovery from this amputation will not be easy by any means, but it can be done. I am sure you were looking forward to heading home in a few weeks Sergeant, but I am afraid you will not be able to go home that quickly. You will have to remain here for a few months to begin your therapy, which will continue once you return to Fort Campbell."

“Then let us begin the therapy immediately,” replied Sergeant Watson, once again starring into Doctor Hoskins eyes.

May 28, 1967- San Francisco International Airport, California

The weeks of physical, and sometimes mental, therapy that Sergeant Watson had endured were not as easy as he had first anticipated. Doing the same physical therapy exercises for hours on end, day after day had taken a toll on him. Many times during those weeks he wept quietly at night either from the emotional or physical pain of his situation. The physical pain could be taken care of with a shot of morphine every so often, but the emotional pain could only be cured with sleepless nights thinking of the crash, his fellow soldiers who did not make it, and his wife and daughter. Even with all his pain he had still worked as hard as possible to get to this point in a wheelchair so he could make the journey home.

The airplane he, along with about one hundred other soldiers, were returning home in was due to take them to San Francisco International Airport where they would then wait for other aircraft to fly them back to their home bases. Sergeant Watson’s plane was not due to depart until the next afternoon, meaning he would have to check into a hotel near the airport for the night.

This aspect of his journey worried him. Throughout his therapy soldiers had talked about the hippies in much of the country, and how they were the only people who came to many of the nation’s airports to greet the soldiers. By greeting, Watson knew the hippies would be yelling cruel names at the soldiers. The hippies did this to voice their opinions to those they felt were responsible for this meaningless war. As if we had a choice in the matter, Watson thought.

Aside from mentioning the hippies’ senseless insults the soldiers in therapy also talked of how the hippies treated injured soldiers. Supposedly the hipsters were even more hateful and ungrateful to those who had been injured. The way to deal with the ungrateful, the soldiers believed, was to simply ignore them.

Once the plane landed the soldiers were shuttled on buses to the baggage claim entrance. Upon entering the airport Sergeant Watson spotted over thirty protesters dressed in colorful clothes and holding picket signs with unfriendly slogans on them. As soon as the protesters saw the soldiers coming they began to shout and push towards them as they waited for their bags. Thankfully, the police on site were able to keep the shouting crowd back.

Sergeant Watson was able to quickly grab his bag from the conveyer belt, which was not a good thing as it turned out. Rolling his wheelchair towards the door some of the protesters noticed him and followed alongside him while shouting profane names and slogans at him about him being a soldier, and an amputee. Being an amputee, as he had suspected, caused the crowd to focus more of their hateful words on him. Undaunted, Watson continued to roll towards the door and the awaiting bus. The protesters quickly noticed him ignoring them, and decided to become physical with him. One of the protesters shot forward with such force that Watson was knocked out of his wheelchair. Once on the ground another of the protesters, with the other protesters still shouting at Watson, threw a red dyed water balloon at him. Covered in fake blood, Sergeant Watson quickly set his wheelchair upright and lifted himself into it.

“You cannot keep me down!” Watson shouted at them, as he forced his way through the shouting crowd and out the doors of the airport on his way to reunite with his family.

Kyle Segura



The Bionic Evolution

An intellectual and cultural movement called “transhumanism” affirms the possibility and desirability to enhance human bodies and minds through applied reason and scientific means. They advocate the improvement of human capacities through advanced technology. Not just technology as in electronic devices and gadgets, but technology that strategizes to eliminatediseases, improve the quality of life, and make these high-quality products and technology available to mass markets around the world. The transhumanist movement is in effect; cyborgs are already walking among us.

A cyborg is defined as a “fictional or hypothetical person whose physical abilities are extended beyond normal human limitations by mechanical elements built into the body.” In other words, a cyborg is a hybrid of flesh and machinery. Because of sci-fi movies like *Terminator* and *I, Robot* we consider cyborgs to be robotic, bionic and not entirely human. In the age of spare part surgery and increasing advancements of drugs, there are increasing concerns about what it means to be human and what separates people from machines.

Jesse Sullivan is considered the world’s first “Bionic Man”. In May 2001, electric lineman Jesse Sullivan was electrocuted severely enough to have both of his arms amputated. He was then given the opportunity to regain what he had lost at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (“Introducing Jesse Sullivan”). The “Bionic Arm” is much more advanced than the normal prosthetic arm. It is attached to Sullivan’s own nerves that were dissected and transferred to muscle in his chest. This allows the “Bionic Arm” to move as a normal limb; he simply thinks of what he wants the arm to do and the nerve impulses are sensed and carried through the electronic arm, causing it to move (“Introducing Jesse Sullivan”). Sullivan is the first successful “Bionic Man” because he is able to perform everyday activities such as eating and tying his shoes with electronic limbs that he was not originally born with. He is a prime example of a cyborg, having “mechanical elements built into his body.”

Paralympic athlete Oscar Pistorius is another example of a cyborg that walks – or runs – among us. In the 2012 Paralympics, Oscar Pistorius became the first double-amputee to compete in a track event with the use of prosthetics. Engineers

claim that it is possible that these prosthetics could help the disabled outrun able-bodied Olympic athletes (Grogan). Prosthetics were originally considered to be a form of rehabilitation and therapy because it allowed an amputee to be able to walk again. Today, technology allows some of them to run faster than they would have with their original limbs. Some argue that the prosthetics used by athletes like Pistorius give him an unfair and non-human advantage against his able-bodied competitors.

Outside of the Olympic arena, a woman named Virginia Bane received an implant in her left eye that allowed her to see for the first time in seven years. The procedure took place at the UC Davis Medical center, where surgeons implanted a microscopic telescope that focuses images onto the undamaged parts of her retina therefore allowing her to see again (“Telescopic Implant”). Bane had been suffering from end-stage age-related macular degeneration, or in other words, she had lost her sight to old age (“Telescopic Implant”). Because the implant procedure was successful, it could become common among those who suffer from the same condition.

Technology has provided us with bionic arms, legs and eyes. However, one does not need to be half machine to be considered a cyborg. As previously stated, a cyborg is defined as someone with “mechanical elements built into the body.” Today, it has become common for us to replace our organs with medical devices. For example, those with diabetes mellitus utilize an insulin pump to compensate for a defective pancreas. Although it is not directly located inside of the body, it still involves a combination of flesh and machine.

Another example of a cyborg body part is the artificial pacemaker. An artificial pacemaker is a small device that's placed in the chest or abdomen to help control abnormal heart rhythms, otherwise known as heart arrhythmia (“What is a Pacemaker?”). Like the insulin pump, the pacemaker assists the heart in maintaining a steady beat. In contrast, it is surgically implanted rather than attached outside of the body. Similar to the artificial pacemaker is the ventricular assist device. A ventricular assist device is a mechanical pump that is used to support heart function and blood flow in people who have weakened hearts. The device takes blood from a lower chamber of the heart and helps pump it to the body and vital organs, just as a healthy heart would (“What is a Ventricular Assist Device?”). There are two types of

ventricular assist devices, transcutaneous and implantable. The transcutaneous ventricular device consists of a pump and power source located outside of the body, while tubes run from the pump to the heart through holes in the abdomen. The implantable ventricular assist device has its pump inside the body and the power source on the outside. Like the transcutaneous device it requires a small hole in the abdomen to accommodate a cable that connects the pump to its power source. This reiterates the concept of a cyborg; it is once again a mesh of human and machine.

Modern medicine and technology has allowed us to treat weakened and failing hearts, but it may now be possible to replace the heart altogether with an entirely artificial one. The Texas Heart Institute was able to create an artificial heart that allowed a patient to live without a heartbeat or pulse. The “continuous-flow total artificial heart” consists of two pumps, both of which were left ventricular assist devices. It does not require one to have a heartbeat because it provides the patient with continuous blood flow without pumping the blood (“Successful Implantation”). The patient, 55 year-old Craig Lewis, was able to live for five weeks with the total artificial heart. However, he was already suffering from other complications before receiving the heart. “By the time his family decided to turn off the device, Lewis needed liver, lung, kidney and bone marrow transplants” (Ballingall). Therefore, the heart did not fail. It is now possible for a human to live without a heartbeat or pulse.

Artificial limbs and organs have been used to help those who are disabled and sick. Jesse Sullivan’s bionic arms, Oscar Pistorius’s prosthetic legs, Virginia Bane’s microscopic-sized telescopic eye, and Craig Lewis’s beat-less heart are all examples of living cyborgs and how technology can help improve the human body. However, what happens when the technology advances and becomes accessible to those who are not disabled? What if those who are able-bodied simply want to become better, faster and stronger? If we can bring vision back to those who have lost it, how can we improve the vision we have now? One thing we can be certain about is that the technology we have today will only mature and advance. It is how we utilize and distribute that newfound technology that is unknown.

Sharina Fadul

Appropriated Magazine Pictures

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