

Machinehead: From 1984 to the Brave New World Order and Beyond

Wherever the survival of humanity is threatened we find the work of Satan. In the previous century that was Fascism, then Mutually Assured Destruction during the Cold War. Today, Satan hides behind the ascendancy of the global Empire of Technology: assimilation of humanity into the machine, creating a new planetary being: the Cyborg. I believe people best understand large conglomerates when personalized, such as, referring to the Federal Government as "Uncle Sam," so I have chosen to name the Brave New World Order: Machinehead!

Post-Orwellian World

Say good bye to Orwell's nightmare world of 1984![\[1\]](#) And welcome to Machinehead: the Brave New World Order and beyond!

Machinehead is what I call the technological idol or the planetary being taking shape in the convergence of human and computer intelligence, a global cyborg. "Machine" is defined as *one global system with many subsystems*.

Experts already recognize the global system as a superorganism, one life-form made of billions and billions of individual parts or cells like an anthill or beehive, with one mind and one will. Thus, the global machine consists of millions of subsystems interfacing one over-system. Mankind acts as agent for the global machine's ascendancy, creating a technological god in its own image.

The suffix "head" refers to the *divine essence* as in "Godhead" (Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. Acts 17: 29).

Machinehead is the replacement of all traditional views of God with the new Living God of the Machine, best illustrated by the recent movie *Transcendence* (2014), which depicts the computer's awaking to consciousness in one mind and will, the Singularity!

Two prophets of modernity plead in dire warning for us to reconsider modern faith in expansive government and escalating technological acceleration. The first and most notable was master political satirist and critic George Orwell (1903-1950), famous for *Animal Farm* and *1984*, and the second, English literatus Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), author of *Brave New World* (BNW).

Orwell envisioned the end of history in the all-powerful political dictatorship of *Oceania* marked by perpetual war, omnipresent government surveillance, thought control, and the ubiquitous media projection of Big Brother.

Orwell gave us the foundation of the current age in Cold War politics, but does not serve as guide to the future, which belongs, if humanity allows it, to the apparent benign technophilia of *Brave New World* that follows upon Orwell's cruel political combat boot in the face!

The Cold War Era and *1984*

Orwell divided his fictional geopolitical borders into three grids: *Oceania*, *Eurasia* and *Eastasia*, shadowing accurately Cold War divisions between Western and Eastern Bloc countries allied behind NATO (*Oceania*) and Warsaw pact nations (*Eurasia*), leaving the Third World (*Eastasia*) as pawns (proxy wars) for interminable power battles between the two Super Powers (Super States). Perpetual war characterized normative relations between the super states in *1984* with the objective to further consolidate the State's power over its own citizens. The threat of war inspires fear in the population and offers government the opportunity and justification for

further largesse and control. War insures a permanent state of crisis, leaving the population in desperation for strong leadership and centralized command and control.

The wars of 1984 were a side note to the main thrust of the novel, omnipotent government control. The novel introduced the world to the ominous character Big Brother. The central drama takes place in *Airstrip One*, the capital of *Oceania*, formerly London, England, where Winston Smith the protagonist struggles to maintain his dignity as an individual, under the crushing gears of Fascist government.

Popular criticism asserts that Orwell had Stalinism in the cross hairs in his novel. However, that interpretative ruse acts as an escape clause for the West to disavow any participation in totalitarianism. Most Americans falsely assume that 1984 applied to the Soviet Union and not NATO. Eurasia (the Eastern bloc) was a mere literary foil. Orwell's social criticism applies to all forms of totalitarianism, especially the subtle power structure of the West hidden behind democratic rhetoric, media bias, and an acute lack of national self-criticism. *Oceania* was Orwell's analogy and commentary on the future of the West after World War II. The NATO alliance, founded in 1949 the same year Orwell published 1984, was the target of Orwell's criticism—not the Soviet Union.

***Brave New World* Order in the 21st Century: The Imperial Machine**

Huxley's novel *Brave New World* foresaw a techno heaven on earth that knows nothing of wars, political parties, religion or democracy, but caters to creature comforts, maximization of pleasure and minimization of pain; total eradication of all emotional and spiritual suffering through the removal of free choice by radical conditioning from conception in the test tube to blissful euthanasia.

Television was the controlling technology in 1984, so in *BNW* control is asserted through media, education and a steady flow of *soma*—the perfect drug and chemical replacement for Jesus. “Christianity without tears” was how Mustapha Mond the World Controller described soma. “Anybody can be virtuous now. You can carry at least half your morality around in a [pill] bottle.”[\[2\]](#)

Spiritual perfection commanded by Jesus, “Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48), will be given to all through genetic programing, sustained through chemical infusion and mental conditioning (propaganda). If 1984 was about power for the sake of power, *BNW* emphasizes the kinder, gentler technological dictatorship that does not promise happiness, but delivers it to all whether they want it or not!

Brave New World Order amounts to technological totalitarianism, analogous to Huxley’s “World State” motto: “Community, Identity, Stability.”[\[3\]](#)

The “imperial machine” as it has been called by political scientists acts outside the traditional political process and in tandem with it when needed with no central geographical location or person or groups with any discernable hierarchical structure that directs it; the United States, Great Britain, United Nations, The People’s Republic of China or The European Union are not the power brokers of 21st century Empire, but its pawns.

Technological Empire rules as an all-encompassing, all-pervasive power, shaping human destiny in its own image.

Transvaluation of Man and Machine

A titanic transvaluation (reversal in the meaning of values) between superstructure (intangible ideological system: beliefs, convictions, morality, myth, etc.) and infrastructure

(tangible urban development: roads, buildings, houses, cars, machines, etc.) begun with the Industrial Revolution will finally be complete some time during the 21st century. Infrastructure replaces superstructure. Technology has become our belief, religion and hope, what was once a means (technology) to an end (human progress) has replaced the end with the means. Technology replaces humanity as the goal of progress; technology for technology's sake not for the good of mankind or God's glory.

The reversal of meaning is found everywhere in postmodern society beginning with the death of God and unfolding in lock step to the death of man, progress, democracy and Western Civilization; concomitantly paired with an equal ascendancy of all things technological, until the machine ultimately replaces humanity.

Marxist regimes were fond of calling their systems "democratic" or "republic" such as *the People's Republic of China* despite the fact that the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat* bears the opposite meaning. The majestic word *Liberal*, once meant freedom from government interference and rule by inner light of reason in the seventeenth century, had come to be synonymous with government regulation and planning by the twentieth century.

The cruelest irony in the transvaluation process is that the triumph of mankind over nature and tradition in the modern world has resulted in his replacement by the machine. Humanism of the modern period promoted the Rational as ideal type of Man. This ideal was already adapted to the machine as *1984* and *Brave New World* illustrated through the removal of faith and the attenuation of human nature to mechanical existence. French Intellectual Jacques Ellul argued further that "This type [of man] exists to support technique [technological acceleration] and serve the machine, but eventually he will be eliminated because he has become superfluous . . . the great

hope that began with the notion of human dominance over the machine ends with human replacement by the machine.”[\[4\]](#)

The Devil's Logic

What we fear will happen is already here because we fear it; it will overtake us according to our fears; it will recede according to our love. (1 John 2)

Human Replacement does not necessarily mean total human extinction, a cyborg race that fundamentally alters human nature will cause a pseudo-extinction—meaning part of humanity, the Machine Class, those most fit for technological evolution will ascend to the next stage, leaving the great majority behind. The movie *Elysium* (2011) offers an excellent illustration: the technological elite, who reap all the benefits from technological advance control the earth from an orbiting space station. H. G. Wells in his famous novel *The Time Machine* painted a similar picture of human evolution that branched into two different species: the hideous cannibalistic Morlocks, “the Under-grounders,” their only principle was necessity, feeding off the beautiful, yet docile Eloi, “the Upper-worlders,” whose only emotion was fear.[\[5\]](#)

When fear dominates our thinking, love is absent from our motives. To say, “It is necessary” in defense of technological practice, abdicates choice, giving unlimited reign to technological acceleration, i.e. abortion, government surveillance, or digital conversion. “Fear” and “necessity” are the devil's logic. Necessity imposes itself through fear of being left behind by “technological progress.”

Necessity is not the Mother of Invention, but the Father of Lies! New technology becomes necessity only after it is invented. There is no conscious need for what does not yet exist. Technological need establishes itself through habitual use creating dependence and finally normalcy in the next generation who cannot relate to a past devoid of modern

technological essentials.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," serves as our mandate, if we wish to create a future of universal love and empathy instead of universal speed and memory.

Knowledge without wisdom leads to disaster. "Where is the wisdom lost in knowledge?"[\[6\]](#) Wisdom is the loving use of knowledge. Love counsels limits to knowledge for the liberation of all. Fear dictates limitless necessity, enslaving all.

A choice faces us. Say “yes!” to God and “no!” to *limitless* advance. Otherwise mankind faces replacement by the new digital god: Machinehead!

Notes

1. George Orwell, 1984 [\[New York: HBJ, Inc., 1949\]](#), 17)
2. Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (New York: The Modern Library, 1932), 285.
3. Ibid, 1.
4. Lawrence J. Terlizze, *Hope in the Thought of Jacques Ellul* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 104-105).
5. H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (New York: Bantam, 1982 [1895]).
6. T.S. Eliot quoted in Huston Smith, *The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991, 5).

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Human Enhancement and

Christianity

Dr. Lawrence Terlizze says that our obsession with perfection and improvement drives the human enhancement movement. But the key is to rest instead in Christ's perfection.

Perfection and Human Enhancement

Americans want to be perfect and the science of Human Enhancement promises to deliver that ideal. Perfect looks, athletic ability, intelligence, greater productivity, increased longevity and even moral perfectionism are all within reach or so many think. Human Enhancement is the current fashionable term for all the new ways to alter the body and mind to make people more fit and adaptable to the ever changing pace of progress. Human Enhancement is not an organized school of thought, but a societal-wide trend aimed at achieving perfection. Drugs can be used to enhance an athlete's physical performance in order to perfect his swing or increase a student's intelligence by improving memory and attention span, creating a straight A student. Cosmetic surgeries make women more beautiful and appear younger. The right administration of certain drugs will increase empathy in the brain and help prevent spousal infidelity. Growth hormones given to children make them taller and increase their chances of success. Sex selection is now possible so that you can have the perfect boy/girl balance in your family. Eventually embryos will be screened to remove undesired genes that lead to obesity or genetic diseases and even determine hair, skin and eye color. You will be able to custom order the perfect child.



The crux of the Human Enhancement issue surrounds values of perfectionism that desire the technology necessary to make these things possible. Perfection represents a controlling obsession for many Americans. We demand perfect grades from our children. An A- can question an entire academic career. Why not an A? We demand perfection at work. Americans are the hardest workers in history, who have internalized the Protestant Work Ethic like no other people.

And most of all we want perfect bodies that defy age and sickness, epitomizing youth and vitality. Women suffer the hardest under the burden of perfection. Media is saturated with images of young beautiful blonde bodies selling things. Writer Natalia Ilyin asks in her book *Blonde Like Me* the important questions concerning beauty; “Where does our fetish for measurement come from? How do we decide that one person is more good-looking (and therefore ‘better’) than another? Why do comments made about our fat go to our bone? What happened along the way that made size six beautiful and size twenty a crisis?”[\[1\]](#)

Perfectionism reveals the age old desire of humanity to aspire to divinity. In the past we only had myths to follow, but today enhancement technology brings the realization of perfection ever closer.

Apollo as the Old Greek Ideal

We derive our ideals of perfection from historical precedent and desire to master ourselves and the world around us. Our Puritan heritage is one major source for our obsession with work, thrift, education and industry. Our moral perfectionism has an ancient history we can trace as far back as the fifth

century monk Pelagius who advocated moral perfection and the power of the will and works righteousness. But our obsession with bodily perfection is even older, and like so many things in the modern world it has its roots in the ancient Greeks. Ilyin notes that "Measurement is the apparatus of mankind's search for perfection. We hear all our lives about the 'perfect body,' 'perfect proportion,' 'perfect features.' But what does perfect mean, really? Where do we get the idea of 'perfect?'"[\[2\]](#)

The Greek philosopher Plato taught that perfection exists in an ideal world outside the everyday one. The perfect apple exists as an idea and common apples we come into contact with are pale imitations of that ideal. None of the apples we see can compare but they all derive their nature as apples from the ideal.

Greek religion, too, is still present in striving for perfection. Apollo the sun god was believed to embody the perfect human form: young, blond, athletic and male. A beautiful body meant a beautiful mind. "Your blond hair meant that the purity of the sun lived within you. Apollo's blond symbolized the beauty of the power that could order and control nature. It symbolized the beauty of the rational mind."[\[3\]](#) The burden of physical perfection was not always the concern of women, but was first located in young men. However, because the Apollo Cult was homoerotic the image of perfection was transposed to women in Christian times. The beautiful blonde images that consume our culture, such as the blonde on the cover of *Shape* magazine, are really "Apollo in drag," as Ilyin states.[\[4\]](#)

The burden of female perfection reverberates in a recent song by Pink who sings to her daughter,

*Pretty, pretty please
don't you ever ever feel
like you're less than perfect;*

*pretty, pretty please
if you ever ever feel
like you're nothing,
you are perfect to me.*[{5}](#)

The ideal of perfection has a way of making us feel like we can never measure up.

Perfection represents an unrealistic goal in any area of life and will always produce the accompanying sense of failure. The desire for divinity as imitation of Apollo or the perfect human form, a striving towards an angelic existence, will always let us down.

Eugenics and Human Enhancement

The goal of Human Enhancement is to improve humanity. This sounds like a noble intention, but as we uncover its meaning it appears to be fraught with complications. In the past this was known as *eugenics* or the science of human breeding. Most famously, eugenics is remembered as the basis of Nazi genocide, but it was extremely popular in the United States as well, which served as inspiration and precedent for the Nazi program. Many laws were passed in the 1890's and early 1900's preventing the "feeble-minded," or epileptic, schizophrenic, bi-polar and depressed individuals from marrying and imposing forced sterilization in order to inhibit them from passing on their negative traits.

Eugenics was discredited after the holocaust. Society abandoned it with good cause, yet eugenics is making a comeback. With the advent of biomedical technology it is now possible to continue the goal of trait selection. Prenatal testing for diseases through the procedure of amniocentesis identifies many complications such as Tay-Sachs, Down Syndrome, sickle-cell anemia, hemophilia, and cystic fibrosis, and also tells the sex of the child. Although prenatal testing

can result in early treatment, women may also choose to terminate their pregnancy. This practice has already resulted in an imbalance between male over female children in some regions of India. Ethicists fear the practice will eventually lead to the termination of fetuses believed to carry the genes for obesity, homosexuality, alcoholism and like a ghost from the past, *low intelligence*, even if these genes do not actually exist.[\[6\]](#)

The philosopher Philip Kitcher notes two types of eugenics. The first is known as coercive eugenics and was implemented through state manipulation. Second, he identifies a new kind of eugenics called “laissez-faire eugenics,”[\[7\]](#) also called “liberal eugenics” because it holds the individual choice of trait determination as sovereign. Through sex selection the perfect boy/girl balance may be achieved along with the elimination of perceived birth defects and genetic flaws, sparing parents the anguish of watching children die slow deaths. However, prenatal testing that leads to trait selection does not resolve the quandary of abortion that is currently necessary to achieve parental goals. Eugenics is grounded in values and preferences for a certain type of person justified under the rubric of “improvement.” The new eugenics offers no opposition to market forces from eventually predetermining any physical characteristic thought most advantageous for success in liberal society, and may return us to the Superman ideal. History teaches the dangers of preoccupation with perfect human form, but people have no ears to hear the lessons of history. We appear destined to repeat the mistakes of the past if we do not change our values that prize strength over weakness or curb our desire for perfection in our children.

Cyborgism

Human Enhancement adopts the cyborg image as its ideal. “Cyborg” was a term coined in 1960 by Manfred Clynes and

Nathan Kline, two research scientists wanting to redesign the human body in order to make it adaptable to the inhospitable environment of outer space. It has since come to be applied to the entire human and technological merger. Cyborg is short for *cyber organism*. A cyborg is any living thing that has been adapted to a technological apparatus so that the two are now inseparable. The first animal cyborg was a rat in 1960. It had a Rose osmotic pump attached to its tail which injected chemicals into the body in order to regulate its life support system.[\[8\]](#) Cyborgism is the belief that human adaptation to technology represents the natural development of evolution. Humanity has always used some form of technology, whether fire, knife or arrow, to enhance its existence. The current trend towards our complete absorption into a technological world represents the culmination of a long symbiotic relationship between humanity and its machines. People are, as philosopher Andy Clark says, "Natural-Born Cyborgs."[\[9\]](#) This view argues that we are technological animals, meaning it is human nature to use technology and define ourselves by it.

In her famous essay *A Cyborg Manifesto*, Donna Haraway argues that the Cyborg is the new metaphor or ideal of human existence because it simultaneously transcends and includes all differences.[\[10\]](#)

Both theories argue that the lines of demarcation between humanity, nature and machine are rapidly disappearing. Like a scene out of the movie *Blade Runner* we are rapidly approaching a time where the organic and inorganic worlds will completely merge and the words "natural," "human," and "machine," will no longer mean different things.

This position does not view humanity as either special in some way, or distinct from nature, or possessing a rational soul. It springs from materialism [the worldview that says there is no reality beyond the physical, measurable universe]. Clark argues that this ancient prejudice blinds us from our true technological nature.[\[11\]](#) Clark is right in identifying what

Christians call the *imago dei* or image of God as the primary demarcation between humanity and the rest of nature. If this traditional boundary line is lost, the current ideal of “improvement” and “perfection” that leads to a higher evolutionary form can flourish unimpeded.

Perfection in Christ

Human Enhancement has restored sight to the blind, brought hearing to the deaf, enabled the lame to walk, and healed diseases—things once thought only possible by miraculous powers. It promises to extend our life expectancy and further increase communication. The realm of possibilities does appear limitless to what new technology will accomplish. However, the ideal of perfection driving our technology is based on an overestimation of human powers and the failure to recognize that our perfection has already been accomplished.

Christians can agree that human beings are technological animals. This is no different than when Aristotle said people are social animals. This just means it is human nature to be social or technological; but we disagree with the notion that we are nothing more than that. Although we were made in the perfect image of God (Gen. 1:26), that image was lost in part due to Adam’s sin. We can survive in the harsh conditions of the natural world with technology, which is nothing more than extensions ourselves. But we cannot restore that image without a spiritual rebirth that only God can give us through the work of Christ which we appropriate by faith. Technological enhancement will not lead us to perfection. “Man cannot live by bread alone” (Matt. 4:4). The Bible calls Jesus Christ the “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45) by which it means he was the perfect man sent to restore the human race. “And having been made perfect, He became to all who obey Him the source of eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:10). Humanity constantly strives to recover that lost image through its own good works and religious striving. The technological fetish of our day is

simply another form of that works righteousness or humanity trying to earn its own salvation and perfection. It is the old works righteousness of the Pelagian heresy dressed up in modern garb.

You are called to find your rest in Christ, to accept who you are and not to imitate Apollo (physical form and beauty) or the Cyborg (technology and progress) in reaching for perfection, for they are redeemed in Christ as well. Christ has already accomplished perfection and we are perfected in Him; "you have been made complete [perfect] in Him" (Col. 2:10). And through Christ we can extend his example of perfection to the world. "For I am confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6). Stop striving for a perfect ideal you can never reach. The Psalmist writes, "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10). This is a very difficult task for perfectionists. Our charge is to accept the perfection of Christ, to accept that we have been accepted in Him!

Notes

1. Natalia Ilyin, *Blonde Like Me: The Roots of the Blonde Myth in Our Culture* (New York: Touchstone, 2000), 111.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 112.
4. Ibid., 113.
5. Pink, "Perfect" in *Greatest Hits...So Far!!!* La Face Records, 2010.
6. Philip Kitcher, *The Lives to Come: The Genetic Revolution and Human Possibilities* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 188.
7. Ibid., 19.
8. Andy Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 15.
9. Ibid., 26.
10. Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science,

Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the late Twentieth Century" in *Posthumanism*, ed. Neil Badmington (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 69-84.

11. Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 26.

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Welcome to the Machine: The Transhumanist God

Authorized Dreams Only Please!

Have you ever wondered if scientists could build a giant machine to solve all the world's problems? Or better yet, why not just become machines and get rid of people all together? Imagine it: no more worries, sickness, war, drug addiction, or poverty. We can solve the world's problems by simply getting rid of people. This sounds fantastic but is actually the goal of the new religion of Transhumanism, which wants to replace the human race with machines.

✖ The wisest man once said there is nothing new under the sun (Ecc. 1:9). Despite all our modern innovation and progress, the age-old desire of mankind to become God remains the same. This new religion is steadily gaining ground, perfectly fit for our hyper technological twenty-first century. Transhumanism's beliefs are simple, but their implications will be revolutionary. They want to transcend our mortal bodies and create a super intelligent godlike human and machine hybrid, called a cyborg, or something like the Borg from *Star Trek*. This super machine will solve all our material and spiritual problems by curing disease, extending life

expectancy indefinitely, and providing for a meaningful existence through creating a continual sense of euphoria in the brain. There will be no limits to what this super man/machine will be able to do. *All we need to do* is surrender our wills to achieve universal peace and happiness.[{1}](#)

Pink Floyd used to sing, "Welcome to the machine. What did you dream? It's alright we told you what to dream."[{2}](#) In the brave new world ruled by the cyborg, dreams will all be programmed and peaceful so as not to upset the inhabitants of utopia. With this hybrid technology, someone will make our decisions for us.

All technology expresses its creator's values and represents a certain view of the world, and how things should be. It is anything but value-free. The question for us is, who will decide what the future will be like in a technologically determined age?

You are What You Worship

Technology shapes the human conception of itself and its relation to the world, including our view of God. In a mechanical age, it is not surprising that people conceive of themselves and others as machines.[{3}](#) Human relationships are reduced to efficiency and usefulness or to convenient arrangements. For example, marriage is already largely viewed as an economic contract between two people who may not have anything else in common, rather than as a sacrificial commitment.

Transhumanist philosophy takes the modern mechanistic view to its ultimate level of altering humanity to become a machine. The idea that we become the thing we worship finds greatest expression in the twenty-first century. Those who worship idols become like them (Ps. 115). Those who worship money become greedy. Those who worship drugs become addicted, and

those who worship the machine will become a machine. In the past, philosophers and poets often used the machine as a metaphor of dehumanization and alienation from modern life; modern society was thought to function like a machine.[{4}](#) This means in a machine culture, people feel like numbers or spare parts and therefore entirely expendable. Individual meaninglessness in a mechanistic society will be realized in the very near future, so that individuals will be spare parts and completely assimilated. The future super computer will offer humanity everything, except the freedom not to choose assimilation.

The machine represents the ideal existence, even the ideal being. The idea of “salvation in the machine” derives from modern thought in a deistic and Unitarian God who created a clockwork universe.[{5}](#) Transhumanism has simply transposed that deity into the machine itself and removed the Clock Maker. Now it's the clock they worship.

Transhumanism affirms artificial selection instead of natural selection. They believe that through science and technology, humanity can direct the cause of evolution. Humanity controls its own evolutionary process to reach a perfectible state. Instead of millions of years to evolve a new species, it will be done in decades, maybe even in one generation.

The Singularity Is Near

Transhumanists expect the merger of humanity and machine around 2045 in an event they call the Singularity. This means artificial intelligence (AI) will equal or exceed human intelligence and there will no longer be any discernible difference. Humanity will lose all distinct consciousness and consider itself as one being.[{6}](#)

Humanity then must change itself genetically to keep pace with AI. This will create a giant planetary super organism that

knows no distinctions. Humanity will merge with the rest of nature through genetic engineering, and nature will become indistinguishable from the machine. We will no longer know the difference between organic and inorganic, or natural and artificial, something already prevalent today in cities, weather patterns, and food production.

A super organism looks something like a beehive, anthill, or termite mound; various individual cells work together as one. So by mid-century Transhumanism envisions total global unity, not at the political level between states, but ontologically and biologically. We will have evolved into one massive planet—truly Spaceship Earth, completely interrelated and interdependent, like an anthill. This will be the technological version of the kingdom of God or the Transhumanist version of the millennium.

Ray Kurzweil and the Singularitarians believe people will eventually be able to upload their consciousness into a computer and live forever. [Note: for an intriguing Christian perspective on this idea in a compelling novel, Probe recommends [*The Last Christian*](#) by David Gregory.] The religious nature of this movement is obvious in its millennialism or belief in the coming perfect society, and also in its belief in progress and immortality. Critics call the Singularity “the rapture of the nerds,” indicating its close connection with religious belief and millennial expectations. The Singularity represents religious belief for computer geeks. The acceptance of progress and human perfection makes Transhumanism the heir of modernity, with its ideal of technological utopianism and its mechanistic view of the body. It’s modernism with a vengeance.

The Artilect War

The future may not bring the perfection of the Singularity, but the disaster of the Artilect War. An Artilect is an

artificial intelligence or super computer. AI researcher Hugo de Garis predicts that the Transhumanist vision will be disastrous and will result in gigadeath (the death of billions of people). He hypothesizes that by the end of the century, Cosmists, or technically modified people, will want to build Artilects to join with humanity, but that Terrans, or unmodified people, will oppose their construction because it has no benefit to them. A nuclear war will ensue, probably initiated by Terrans as their only way to stop Cosmists.{7}

Jacques Ellul once remarked that “the technical society must perfect the ‘man-machine’ complex or risk total collapse.”{8} There is no other place to go but up. If the current human enhancement project fails it may prove to have devastating effects for the future of the human race, and if it succeeds the human race faces techno-enslavement or pseudo-extinction by being transformed into another species.

Will the Singularity really happen? It is very possible. Or maybe the Artilect War will happen instead. Perhaps technology will bring the apocalypse instead of utopia. It is all science fiction right now, but science fiction is often correct in the broadest terms. Recall Jules Verne’s vision of space travel to the moon in the nineteenth century when people thought it was pure fantasy and laughed because there was no way to break earth’s gravitational pull. But his work inspired a generation of rocket scientists to find a way to do it, and within a century man was walking on the moon. Something considered impossible was achieved.{9}

A basic principle of futurism states that anything is possible to achieve within twenty years given the resources to do it. And the Bible states that nothing is impossible for humanity in a unified technological society. Gen. 11:6 says “Now nothing that they imagined will be impossible for them.” This of course is talking about Babel, but I think it demonstrates the fact that the discussion of a transhuman transformation should be taken as a credible threat and should be addressed

by the church.

Ethic of Limits

The essence of Transhumanist philosophy revolves around the idea that there are no natural or divine limits to what technology can accomplish. It serves the basic technological imperative that says what can be done should be done! This view unleashes all restraint and frees us from all limits, and is one of the greatest examples of the church's cultural captivity since we do not present a different view of technology from the rest of society.

This maxim is obviously dangerous because any limitless action leads to self-destruction as a natural corrective. Humanity cannot presume to be greater than the natural limits arrayed against it, such as death or the scarcity of resources. Humanity must learn to live within boundaries.

Christians are called to respect limits and the right balance in its use of technology, between its misuse and its non-use. In an age of limitless technology the church must present an ethic of limitation. This means finding limits to technology, such as limiting computer use, limiting driving, electricity, or even not upgrading. This may seem small, but in trying to discover a workable ethic of technology, it represents something we can do right now. The widow's mite (Mark 12:41-43) will not solve the church's budget deficit, but should be given anyway because it was something she could do, so an ethic of limitation remains a course of action open.

An ethic of limitation only becomes obvious when the situation appears desperate, such as with nuclear weapons, where not even one mishap can be afforded. Other examples consist of over-eating, drug addiction, over-fishing or hunting, or any activity that exhausts natural resources. Because people did not practice limits to begin with, they are now faced with a

real possibility of collapse or catastrophe. We must discover the limits to any technology, if we are to use technology correctly and benefit from it. The history of the Tower of Babel teaches that if mankind does not practice self control, God will impose limits Himself in judgment (Gen 11:1-9).

Notes

1. Ray Kurzweil, *The Age of Spiritual Machines When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence* (New York:Penguin, 1999); Gregory Stock, *Metaman:The Merging of Humans and Machines into a Global Superorganism* (New York:Simon and Schuster, 1993); Lewis Mumford, *The Transformations of Man* (New York:Collier, 1956); Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, (New York:Vintage, 1964), 428-436. It was techno critics like Ellul and Mumford that saw the techno future more clearly and soberly than the previously noted Transhumanists. Ellul argued that information would eventually pass from the machine straight to the human brain electronically without being processed through consciousness and that breeding will all be done through artificial means, and natural procreation will be forbidden (432, 433). Whatever problems and disturbances the technology of the future will create will be solved through “a world-wide totalitarian dictatorship” (434). This is exactly what Transhumanist philosophy will bring. Mumford argued that modern technical society will eventually produce a machine replacement for man (100, 117-132).

2. Pink Floyd, “Welcome to the Machine” in *Wish You Were Here*, Capitol, 1975.

3. Cecelia Tichi, *Shifting Gears:Technology, Literature, Culture in Modernist America* (Chapel Hill, NC:The University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 16; David F. Noble, *The Religion of Technology:The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention* (New York; Knopf, 1997), 143-171.

4. Karl Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age* (New York:Anchor Books, 1951); Nicols Fox, *Against the Machine:The Hidden Luddite Tradition in Literature, Art and Individual Lives* (Washington

DC:Island Press, 2002).

5. Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine:The Pentagon of Power* (New York:Harvest, 1970), 33; Noble, *The Religion of Technology*, 146; Mary Midgley, *Science as Salvation:A Modern Myth and Its Meaning* (New York:Routledge, 1992).

6. Lev Grossman, "2045:The Year Man Becomes Immortal", *Time* (February 21, 2011), 43-49.

7. Hugo De Garis, *The Artilect War:Cosmists vs. Terrans:A Bitter Controversy Concerning Whether Humanity Should Build Godlike Massively Intelligent Machines* (Palm Springs, CA:Etc Publications, 2005).

8. Ellul, *The Technological Society*, 414.

9. Howard E. McCurdy, *Space and the American Imagination* (Washington DC:Smithsonian Institute Press, 1997), 9-27.

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Into the Void: The Coming Transhuman Transformation

In the TV show *The Six Million Dollar Man*, Lee Majors played Steven Austin, a crippled astronaut who was rehabilitated through bionic technology that gave him superhuman strength and powers. The show, like so much science fiction, presents us with the dream that technology will enhance all our facilities from sight to memory, hearing to strength, and lengthen our life span to boot. The bionic man represents a fictional forerunner of the transhuman transformation. The Transhumanist school believes that technology will not only enhance the human condition, but eventually conquer death and grant us immortality. Human enhancement technology performs wonders in allowing the lame to walk, the blind to see, the

deaf to hear and the sick to be well, but even immortality is out of the reach of technology. In striving to enhance our physical existence we may lose our souls in the process.

In his famous book, *The Abolition of Man* published in the 1940s, C. S. Lewis wrote that modern society is one step away from “the void”[{1}](#)—“post-humanity,”[{2}](#) a state of existence from which there will be no return. Lewis argues that when we step outside of what he calls the Tao[{3}](#), we lose all sense of value for human life that has always governed civilization. What Lewis calls the Tao, we might call Natural Law or Traditional Morality—that internal moral understanding of right and wrong which God has written on the hearts of all people (Romans 2), the *Logos* by which all things were created (John 1, see especially verse 4).[{4}](#)

In leaving traditional spiritual values behind, Lewis argues, modern technological civilization has reduced human value to only what is natural, and we have lost our spiritual quality. Modern society has striven to conquer nature and largely succeeded, but at a great cost—with each new conquest, more losses in human dignity, more of the human spark extinguished. Lewis offers the example of eugenics from his time in the 1930’s and 40’s.[{5}](#) Eugenics is now a debunked science of racial manipulation and something we know was practiced with particular ferocity in Nazi Germany.[{6}](#) But the driving philosophy of manipulating nature and humanity into something new and final remains prominent. Lewis underestimated the truth of his own prophecy. He thought that maybe in 10,000 years the final leap will be taken when mankind will solidify itself into some kind of inert power structure dominated by science and technology.[{7}](#)

However, the 21st century may prove to be the era of posthumanity that Lewis foresaw in his time. The current movement of transhumanism, or human enhancement, asserts that humanity will eventually achieve a new form as a species through its adaption to modern computer technology and genetic

engineering in order to reach a higher evolutionary condition. Our present state is not final. Transhumanism derives from Darwinian doctrine regarding the evolution of our species. Evolutionary forces demand that a species adapt to its environment or become extinct. On this view, many species experience a pseudo-extinction in which their adaptation gives way to another kind of species leaving its old form behind. Many evolutionists believe this happened to the dinosaurs on their way to becoming modern birds and that humanity faces the same transformation on its way up a higher evolutionary path.[\[8\]](#) Primates evolved into humans so humans will eventually evolve into something higher (posthuman).

Metaman

Our present condition will give way to the cyborg (which is short for cybernetic organism) as we join our bodies and minds to technological progress. Transhumanists believe that because Artificial Intelligence (computing power) advances at such a rapid pace, it will eventually exceed human intelligence and humanity will need to employ genetic engineering to modify our bodies to keep pace or become extinct. Therefore, the cyborg condition represents humanity's inevitable destiny.

The two predominant pillars in transhumanism revolve around Artificial Intelligence (AI) and genetic engineering. One represents a biological change through manipulating genes. The other presents the merging of human intelligence with AI. The biological position (through use of genetic engineering) claims that through transference of genes between species, we eradicate the differences and create a global superorganism that encompasses both kinds of life—the natural and the artificial. Biophysicist Gregory Stock states that once humanity begins to tamper with its genetic code, and the codes of all other plants and animal species, that “the definition of ‘human’ begins to drift.”[\[9\]](#) Through genetic engineering we will transform the human condition by merging humanity with

the rest of nature, thereby creating a planetary superorganism. A superorganism operates like a bee hive or an anthill as a collection of individual organisms united as a living creature. Stock calls this Metaman, the joining of all biological creatures with machines, making one giant planetary life form. This superorganism encompasses the entire globe.

Transhumanism presupposes that no distinction exists between humanity, nature or machines. Metaman includes humanity, all it creates, and also the natural world. It acknowledges humanity's key role in the creation of farms and cities, but includes all natural elements, such as forests, jungles and weather. Metaman includes humanity and goes beyond it.[{10}](#) Stock envisions a greater role for genetic engineering in redefining biological life as different species are crossed. Humanity may now control the direction of its evolution and that of the entire planet.

Stock states that through "conscious design" humanity has replaced the evolutionary process.[{11}](#) This leads us to Post-Darwinism where people have supplanted the natural order with their own technological modification of humanity and the entire ecological system. "Life, having evolved a being that internalizes the process of natural selection, has finally transcended that process."[{12}](#) Humanity may now, through the agency of technological progress, seize direction of its development and guide it to wherever it wants itself to go. No other species has ever controlled its own destiny as we do.

The Singularity

A second transhumanist belief argues for the arrival of an eventual technological threshold that will be reached through the advancement of Artificial Intelligence. The argument goes like this: because AI develops at a rapid pace it will achieve equality with the human brain and eventually surpass it. Estimates as to when this will happen range from the 2020's to 2045. The evolutionary process will reach a crescendo sometime

in the 21st century in an event transhumanists call “the Singularity.”[{13}](#) There will be a sudden transformation of consciousness and loss of all distinction, or Singularity, between humanity and its creations, or the absence of boundaries between the natural and artificial world. Singularity watchers expect that this event will mark the ultimate merging of humans and machines. Renowned inventor and AI prophet Ray Kurzweil states, “The Singularity will allow us to transcend these limitations of our biological bodies and brains. . . . There will be no distinction, post-Singularity, between human and machine. . . .”[{14}](#) As the fictional CEO and mastermind behind a cutting edge AI company in the year 2088 crowed, “My goal is for us to end death as we know it on earth within 50 years—for the essence of every person to live perpetually in an uploaded state. . . . The transhuman age has dawned.”[{15}](#)

Both of these positions, one emanating from genetic engineering that seeks to enhance the body, the other from Artificial Intelligence that seeks to supersede and even supplant the need for bodies, argue for the eventual replacement of humanity with biological-machine hybrids. Metaman and Singularity systems are direct heirs of the modern idea of progress. They present the dawning of a technological Millennium, but they also share a long history dating back into medieval Christendom. In the early Church, technology, or the “mechanical arts,” was never considered as a means to salvation or Edenic restoration. Historian David Noble argues that from Charlemagne to the early Early Modern period technology became associated with transcendence as the means of restoring the lost divine image or *imago dei*.[{16}](#)

Theologian Ernst Benz argues similarly that the Modern technological project was founded on a theological notion in which humanity believed itself to be the fellow worker with God in establishing His kingdom on earth through reversing the effects of the Fall.[{17}](#) We are fellow workers with God;

however, this position overemphasized humanity's role in restoration to the point of becoming a works-based salvation of creation.

Despite the apparent secularity of the super science behind all the technological wonders of our time, the notions of modern progress and transhumanism remain grounded in an aberrant form of Christian theology. Noble summarizes this well when he states, "For modern technology and modern faith are neither complements nor opposites, nor do they represent succeeding stages of human development. They are merged, and always have been, the technological enterprise being, at the same time, an essentially religious endeavor."[\[18\]](#) The theology behind Modern technological progress remains rooted in Medieval and Early Modern notions of earthly redemption when the "useful arts,"[\[19\]](#) which ranged anywhere from improved agricultural methods to windmills, were invested with redemptive qualities and humanity began to assume an elevated status over nature. "In theological terms, this exalted stance vis-à-vis nature represented a forceful reassertion of an early core Christian belief in the possibility of mankind's recovery of its original God-likeness, the 'image-likeness of man to God' from Genesis (1:26), which had been impaired by sin and forfeited with the Fall."[\[20\]](#) Technology becomes the means of restoring the original divine image. Technological development was expected to reverse the effects of the Fall and restore original perfection. This theology also serves as the impetus behind Millennial thought which believes technology helps humanity recover from the Fall and leads to an earthly paradise. Transhumanism extends this Millennial belief into the twenty-first century.

Redeeming Technology

We are faced with the problem of how to redeem all the advances of technology such as human enhancement without losing ourselves in the process. Idolatry preoccupies our

central concern with technology. Biblically speaking, idolatry exalts the work of humanity, including individual human beings, over God; we commit idolatry when we serve the creature rather than the Creator. "Professing to be wise, [we] became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures" (Rom. 1:22-23). Theologian Paul Tillich offers a keen and insightful definition of idolatry when he states, "Idolatry is the elevation of a preliminary concern to ultimacy. Something essentially partial is boosted into universality, and something essentially finite is given infinite existence."[\[21\]](#) Transhumanism presents us with a spiritualization of technology believed to grant us immortality through shedding our bodies and adopting machine ones or through genetic engineering that will prolong bodily life indefinitely. Our Modern age defines technology as a source of material redemption by placing finite technical means into a divine position, thus committing idolatry.

In seeking to reconcile technology with a biblical theology we have three possible approaches. *Technophobia* represents the first position. This view contends that we should fear technological innovation and attempt to destroy it. The Unabomber Manifesto offers the most radical, pessimistic and violent expression of this position, arguing for a violent attack against the elites of technological civilization such as computer scientists in an effort to return society to primitive and natural conditions in hopes of escaping the kind of future transhumanists expect.[\[22\]](#) However, the entire tenor of our times moves in the opposite direction, that of *technophilism*, or the inordinate love for technology. Transhumanism optimistically believes that through technological innovation we will restore our God-like image. A third position asserts a mediating role between over-zealous optimism and radical morose pessimism. [\[23\]](#)

Technocriticism

Technocriticism offers the only viable theological position. By understanding technology as a modern form of idolatry we are able to place it in a proper perspective. Technocriticism does not accept the advances of innovation and all the benefits new technology offers without critical dialogue and reflection. Technocriticism warns us that with every new invention a price must be paid. Progress is not free. With the invention of the automobile came air pollution, traffic and accidents. Computers make data more accessible, but we also suffer from information overload and a free-flow of harmful material. Cell phones enhance communication, but also operate as an electric leash, making inaccessibility virtually impossible. Examples of the negative effects of any technology can be multiplied if we cared enough to think through all the implications of progress. Technocriticism does not allow us the luxury of remaining blissfully unaware of the possible negative consequences and limitations of new inventions. This approach is essential because it demonstrates the fallibility of all technological progress and removes its divine status.

Technocriticism humanizes technology. We assert nothing more than the idea that technology expresses human nature. Technology is us! Technology suffers the same faults and failures that plague human nature. Technology is not a means of restoring our lost divine image or reasserting our rightful place over nature. This amounts to a works-based salvation and leads to dangerous utopian and millennial delusions that amount to one group imposing its grandiose vision of the perfect society on the rest. Such ideologies include Marxism, Technological Utopianism and now Transhumanism. We are restored to the divine “image of His Son” by grace through faith alone (Rom. 8:29). Technology, serving as an extension of ourselves, means that what we create will bear our likeness, both as the image-bearers of God and in sinful human identity. It contains both positive and negative consequences

that only patient wisdom can sort through.

Through criticism we limit the hold technology has on our minds and free ourselves from its demands. We use technology but do not ascribe salvific powers of redemption to it. A critical approach becomes even more crucial the further we advance in the fields of genetic engineering and AI. We do not know where these fields will lead and an uncritical approach that accepts them simply because it is possible to do so appears dangerous. We live under the delusion that technology frees us, but as Lewis warns, "At the moment, then, of Man's victory over Nature, we find the whole human race subjected to some individual men, and those individuals subjected to that in themselves which is purely 'natural'—to their irrational impulses." [\[24\]](#) The famous science-fiction writer Frank Herbert echoes Lewis's sentiments in his epic novel *Dune*: "Once men turned their thinking over to machines in the hope that this would set them free. But that only permitted other men with machines to enslave them." [\[25\]](#) Genetic engineering or merging humanity with AI only exchanges one condition for another. We will not reach the glorified condition transhumanists anticipate. A responsible critical approach will ask, Into whose image are we transforming?

Notes

1. C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 77.
2. Ibid., 86.
3. Lewis, of course, did not originate this ancient Chinese concept but rather applied it to universally accessible principles.
4. Ibid., 56.
5. Ibid., 72
6. See [Darwin's Racists: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow](#) by Sharon Sebastian and Raymond G. Bohlin, Ph.D. Though the German Nazis acted out this hideous ideology to an extreme, eugenics was actually first promulgated in the United States,

- Germany and Scandinavia around the turn of the 20th Century.
7. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 71.
 8. See Dr. Ray Bohlin's article [PBS Evolution Series](#), especially the section entitled "'Great Transformations' and 'Extinction'."
 9. Gregory Stock, *Metaman: The Merging of Humans and Machines into a Global Superorganism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 165.
 10. Ibid., 20.
 11. Ibid., 228.
 12. Ibid., 231.
 13. Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near* (New York: Penguin, 2005).
 14. Ibid., 9.
 15. David Gregory, *The Last Christian*, (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2010), 102.
 16. David F. Noble, *The Religion of Technology* (New York: Knopf, 1997), 9.
 17. Ernst Benz, *Evolution and Christian Hope: Man's Concept of the Future from Early Fathers to Teilhard de Chardin* trans., Heinz G. Frank (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 124-125.
 18. Noble, *The Religion of Technology*, 4, 5.
 19. Ibid., 14.
 20. Ibid.
 21. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Reason and Revelation Being and God*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 13.
 22. FC, *The Unabomber Manifesto: Industrial Society and Its Future* (Berkeley, CA: Jolly Roger Press, 1995).
 23. See Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 5.
 24. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 79, 80.
 25. Frank Herbert, *Dune* (New York: Ace, 1965), 11.