

Transhumanism - prepared for UCForum Group 15-06-2017

Resource site please see: <http://crafters-circle.com/craft4.html> P Wildman paul@klalgrove.com No 6 10-06-2017

Christianity (for me Jesusianity) if it is about anything is about being able to explain/help us understand and practice 'what it is to be fully human'.

TransHumanism (TH) may be defined as *the movement to use technology¹ (mainly in the areas of life sciences, alternative energies, and computer science) to challenge our biological limitations and eventually find solutions to such limitations in effect replacing evolution with techvolution.*

It is often linked with the 'techno-utopian' idea that science and technology can be used to continually improve the human condition while enhancing its intelligence and ultimately through the singularity merging the human first with AI then with the transhuman to give us the Post-Human. This comes out of the Progressive aspect of the modernity movement coming out of Enlightenment of 18C Europe.

Examples of TH include human augmentation, artificial intelligence, cryogenics, space colonisation, cloning, medical implants, cyborgs, cognitive enhancement, E/IVF, life extension, defect elimination (form of eugenics), autonomous drones and so on. With its current momentum, TH will directly impact our grandchildren well before 2030. This is the time zone for the much anticipated **Singularity** (S) <https://su.org/> which is when **Artificial Intelligence** (AI) computing intelligence equals all that of all humans combined. *The S is a hypothetical moment in time (circa. 2030) when artificial intelligence and other technologies have become so advanced that it exceeds that of humanity and both merge thereby undergoing a dramatic and irreversible change.*

TH leading to the Singularity then synergises and produces **Post Humans** (PH) by mid this century. The huge concern here is that as the Singularity approaches and technology becomes in some regards sentient viz. the Turing test then PHAI and will need to be imbued with a **Logic Base** (LB) just as driverless cars, and predator drones, are being programed as I type this. With the rate of technological change several hundred thousand times that of social change and that millions of times faster than biological change (evolution) Humans become obsolescent well before 2050. **Human Obsolescence** (HO).

Organisms now being engineered as, I argue, a precursor to us, are those with the weakest political lobbies such as plants, fungi, bacteria and insects. So just as it can be argued that the Gospel of John leads to the 'arbeit macht frei' gates of Auschwitz, Christianity's focus on its sky king god etherealised through Greek valorisation of abstract philosophising has led, in part, to Transhumanism.

¹ Further the **TH** revolution sits on top of two primary component revolutions viz. **CI** combined with **GNR** (**Computer and Info Technology** combined with **Genetics, Nanotechnology and Robotics**). This has nothing to do with the spiritual take that some Xtians have in trying to play catch up and saying 'Xtian was always TH' that's like saying 'same as' yet another typical blocker to creative ideas. TH as outlined here is about hard hard science Western, objective, empirical experimental science it is not and never was about Spirituality. It is crucial we do not conflate or confuse the two or 'if only' will become 'same as' and the Xtian church will have yet again lost the ability to contribute proactively to this crucial debate on 'what it is to be human' just has it has lost the agenda in IVF.

In this piece TH has been abstracted somewhat from the other range of crises facing humanity from global warring & warming, overpopulation (by several billion), species extinction, perfidious income inequalities, Islamic terrorism & the like.

Jesusianity is, if anything, about what it is to becoming fully human here and now before we seek to become trans and ultimately post-human. Teilhard de Chardin recognised this (see abstract below) **this is the issue that Geoff Thompson from Trinity basically dismissed our concerns in his article on this piece and his and my discussions on TH.**

In Western Anglo countries this **Logic Base** will likely include the following principles drawn, in part, from Paul's recent handout: 1 The world is a bad and dangerous place, 2 (My) Might is (your) right, 3 A saviour (Me/\$) is needed, 4 Simplistic either/or thinking is all that is required, 5 Obedience to the centre is key, 6 Violence by me is ok, 7 Prejudice is necessary for my triumph, 8 Our earth is dispensable, 9 Exclusive self-interest is morally superior, 10 Arts and Crafts (humanities) are not worth supporting, 11 Commodification of human relations and indeed our planet is inevitable and good, 12 Free trade is a necessity, 13 Capital is free to roam the planet; Labour padlocked to the Nation State, 14 Growth is Go(o)d, 15 Technology trumps Nature, 16 few to many (whereas democracy is many to few), 17. Only the global, centrally (read US!) defined, news etc. matters the periphery and 'others' such as women, the indigenous, GLTI and local etc. are dispensable.²

We need to explore intelligently and critically assess a wide range of issues directly and indirectly related to TH.....and the above issue of CRAFT aims to do precisely this.

Here we have, to my mind, the greatest challenge of what it is to be human of all time (in my view) and one that the Xtian church and incredibly PC is all but silent on.

What to do? 1 recognise the importance of analysis (e.g. my CRAFT issue), 2 move this to pedagogy/extension (Paul's point), 3 workshop this in congregations (Rodney's point), 4 Look to Engage progressive congregations e.g. Caloundra and lastly if necessary, (5) theological **engagement** – though in the UCA in Qld this is to all intents and purposes a lost cause. This is what I have sought to do with my Action Learning Circles study circles in Community Economy Development, and Biochar. I fear, deeply fear, its decades too late and the race is lost as is our globe.

Steinhart on Teilhard on Transhumanism brilliant – Abstract

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (a Jesuit paleontologist) was among the first to give serious consideration to the future of human evolution. His work advocates both biotechnologies (e.g., genetic engineering) and intelligence technologies. He discusses the emergence of a global computation-communication system (and is said by some to have been the first to have envisioned the Internet). He advocates the development of a global society. Teilhard is almost surely the first to discuss the acceleration of technological progress to a **Singularity** in which human intelligence will become super-intelligence. He discusses the spread of human intelligence into the universe and its amplification into a cosmic intelligence.

More recently, his work has been taken up by Barrow and Tipler; Tipler; Moravec; and Kurzweil. Of course, Teilhard's Omega Point Theory is **deeply Christian**, which may be difficult for secular transhumanists. But transhumanism cannot avoid a fateful engagement with **Christianity**. Christian institutions may support or oppose transhumanism. Since **Christianity** is an extremely powerful cultural force in the West, **it is imperative for transhumanism to engage it carefully and vice versa**. A serious study of Teilhard can help that engagement and will thus be rewarding to both communities.

Steinhart, E. (2008). Teilhard de Chardin and Transhumanism. *Journal of Evolution and Technology*. 20(1): pgs1-22. See: <http://jetpress.org/v20/steinhart.htm> and also: <https://soundcloud.com/officialsxsw/the-future-history-that-hasnt-happened-yet-sxsw-2017>

² <http://www.alternet.org/election-2016/trumps-worldview-mirrors-most-archaic-and-apocalyptic-christian-beliefs> . All this sounds like US Exceptionalism/President Trump's philosophy doesn't it?

TRANSHUMANIST ARTS STATEMENT



A World of

Inspiration - Innovation - Ideas

The human futures lab for the transformative person

H-Art is on the "BRINC" - bio-robo-info-nano-cogno **Transhumanist Arts & Culture**

We are transhumans - Our art integrates the most eminent progression - of creativity and sensibility - merged by discovery.

<http://www.transhumanist.biz/transhumanistartsmanifesto.htm>

Transhumanist Arts represent the aesthetic and creative culture of transhumanity.

Transhumanist Artists are developing new and varied modes of art.

Our aesthetics and expressions are merging with science and technology in designing increased sensory experiences.

Transhumans want to improve and extend life.

We are designing the technologies to improve and extend life.

Emotions are integral to our senses and understanding.

We are designing the technologies to enhance our senses and understanding.

The transhumanist ecology and freedom exercises self-awareness and self-responsibility.

If our art represents who we are, then let us choose to be transhumanist not only in our bodies, but also in our values.

Transhumanist Artists embrace the creative innovations of transhumanity.

We are ardent activists in pursuing infinite transformation, overcoming death and exploring the universe.

Transhumans want to improve and extend life.

We are designing the technologies to improve and extend life.

Emotions are integral to our senses and understanding.

We are designing the technologies to enhance our senses and understanding.

As Transhumanist Arts come into focus

As more artists join our efforts

As more designs are produced

As more music is composed

As more stories are written

As the tools and ideas of our art continue to evolve,

So too shall we.