

3084

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The Transhumanistic Second Curve

## Preface

It was a cold and grey morning, the sky metallic looking as always. Chronos my telescreen AI powered "companion" interrupts my reverie, in a pseudo humanlike voice saying "Good morning HS1673 (my homo sapiens ID and name) it's May the thirty second and it's a beautiful morning". You see Chronos was one of the mandatory "companions" who broadcasts all the news and entertainment I need to know, Chronos also doubles as a "wellness partner" to ensure my "safety" at all times. For more context the year is 3084 in the beautiful paradisiac world of Babel. Where the quest to develop the human condition is key and progressive an exemplification of this is the illustrious Homo Deus stricto sensu and Homo Deus omniscius . Homo Deus stricto sensu is basically biology meets technology, people who have technologically enhanced abilities. I know someone who is on the higher echelons of this group , he has almost all search engines built up in him. I can never take a knowledge based examination with him and win. Back to our initial description of Homo Deus at the very top of the value chain is the Homo Deus Omniscius, humans who have attained a level of immortality having uploaded their consciousness into the cloud, they have entered the realms of the gods and can therefore function in any device they please. The closest classic old school movies to depict this are Transcendence and Lucy both 2014 science fiction movies. In Babel the Homo Sapiens (people like me) with no technological enhancements on our biological makeup, we live wondering for how long can we continue to race in this race

*for human superiority till we become extinct. But as it stands we have been resilient. With this thought lingering in my mind, I drag myself to my no technology banker, one space Chronos does not have access to, the rule is to spend an hour and half here , before Chronos becomes "anxious" and reports my case to the authorities.*

# The revolutionary Genesis

Let's take a moment to explore the genesis of what might be called humanity's "second curve" , the transhumanist horizon. Throughout history, major societal shifts have rarely been spontaneous; instead, they often trace their roots to deep philosophical thought. One striking example is the French Revolution, a seismic political transformation whose momentum was generated not merely by material conditions, but by the force of Enlightenment thought.

The ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity that powered the revolution did not arise in a vacuum. They were the intellectual inheritance of Enlightenment philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose notion of the "general will" demanded that sovereignty reside with the people<sup>1</sup>; Montesquieu, who championed the separation of powers as a safeguard against tyranny<sup>2</sup>; Voltaire, with his sharp critique of institutional dogma<sup>3</sup>; and Diderot, whose *Encyclopédie* sought to democratise knowledge itself<sup>4</sup>. These ideas inspired a sequence of revolutionary governments: the National Convention (1792–1795), which dismantled the monarchy and established the First Republic; the Directory (1795–1799), a fragile attempt at balanced governance;

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1 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Social Contract*. 1762.

2 Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat. *The Spirit of the Laws*. 1748

3 Voltaire. *Philosophical Letters*. 1734

4 Diderot, Denis, and d'Alembert, Jean le Rond, eds. *Encyclopédie*. 1751–1772

and the Consulate (1799–1804), which set the stage for Napoleon’s imperial ascent<sup>5</sup>. Each regime, despite its flaws, reflected a struggle to instantiate philosophical ideals in political reality.

Today, as we stand at the brink of the transhumanist era, marked by artificial intelligence, genetic enhancement, and bio-digital integration, a similar philosophical groundwork is being laid. Thinkers like Nick Bostrom<sup>6</sup> and Yuval Noah Harari<sup>7</sup> probe the ethical and existential implications of post-biological futures. What does it mean to be human when our cognition, longevity, and even consciousness are no longer bound by biology? How should we structure societies when the lines between human and machine begin to blur?

Just as the Enlightenment provoked a radical reconsideration of authority, rights, and identity, so too does the current moment demand a reexamination of our collective purpose and direction. The “transhumanist second curve” is not merely technological, it is fundamentally philosophical. And if history is any guide, the revolutions to come will not be powered solely by innovation, but by the ideas that give that innovation meaning

## **The scramble for human gods status**

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<sup>5</sup> Doyle, William. *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*. Oxford University Press, 1989.

<sup>6</sup> Bostrom, Nick. *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies*. Oxford University Press, 2014

<sup>7</sup> Harari, Yuval Noah. *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. Harvill Secker, 2015

Forgive the melodramatic tone of my preface. Perhaps it is the result of an overactive imagination, one sharpened by an appetite for philosophy, literature, history, and the uncharted future. What I offer here is but a synthesis of accumulated thought, shaped almost subconsciously by a recurring nightmare. Permit me, then, to explore the source of this unrest.

We are currently witnessing a global race to define a “second curve” for humanity, one that encompasses not only the transformation of human biology and identity but also the restructuring of the institutions that govern our collective lives. This moment echoes the space race of the 1960s, powerfully captured in the film *Hidden Figures*<sup>8</sup> which reminds us that “the one who gets there first makes the rules”. The race to space was not merely a scientific pursuit, it was a contest of ideological and geopolitical power. Similarly, the rush to pioneer the second curve of human evolution, whether through artificial intelligence, biotechnology, or human augmentation, is driven by the ambition to dominate emergent terrains and influence how these developments cascade to others particularly those with fewer resources or less global leverage.

One might reasonably ask: is this truly the time to envision a second curve for humanity, given the persistence of war, inequality, climate crises, and other systemic global challenges? My answer is twofold. First, it is precisely these

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<sup>8</sup> *Hidden Figures*, directed by Theodore Melfi, 20th Century Fox, 2016. The film highlights the U.S. urgency to dominate space as both a technical and political frontier

challenges that compel a shift in imagination. The urgency of the present has forced thinkers, technologists, and ordinary citizens alike to break with convention and dare to invent. Philosophies of decentralisation and openness have gained ground resulting in innovations such as cryptocurrencies, open-source artificial intelligence, and collaborative platforms<sup>9</sup>. The inequality of access across global systems has ironically popularised the idea of democratising technology itself.

Second, while technological advancement is often framed as a means to address global suffering, it has also, perhaps unintentionally, ignited a competitive push toward a redefinition of what it means to be human. This momentum is not merely scientific it is philosophical. The mainstreaming of transhumanism, for instance, reflects a growing cultural readiness to imagine futures in which biology is malleable, mortality negotiable, and consciousness, perhaps, transferable<sup>10</sup>. Such propositions, once considered fringe, are now entering serious discourse and policy planning. In this sense, the second wave is already in motion not because we are prepared, but because we are provoked.

Let me probe further and ask, is this truly a second curve or a reaction to a crisis? Charles Handy suggests that second curves must begin while the first is still ascending<sup>11</sup>. Reinvention

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9 Tapscott, Don, and Alex Tapscott. *Blockchain Revolution: How the Technology Behind Bitcoin Is Changing Money, Business, and the World*. Penguin, 2016

10 Bostrom, Nick. "A History of Transhumanist Thought." *Journal of Evolution and Technology*, vol. 14, no. 1, April 2005

11 Handy, Charles. *The Second Curve: Thoughts on Reinventing Society*. Random House, 2015.

should happen in strength, not decline. Peter Drucker echoes this in his belief that organisations must "innovate in their prime"<sup>12</sup>. Aristotle's *golden mean* also reminds us: the right action must come at the right time, for the right reasons<sup>13</sup>.

These philosophies underline the central argument: timing is everything. The 21st century presents paradoxical conditions: poverty, political unrest, and democratic backsliding, yet also unprecedented innovation, global connectivity, and opportunity<sup>14</sup>. It is in this tension that the transhumanist second curve begins to form. C.S. Lewis warned that our powers, if misused, could unmake us rather than elevate us<sup>15</sup>. Likewise, today's technological momentum is driven not just by hope, but fear, fear of being left behind, or of collapse. The race toward transhumanism is both a response to crisis and an assertion of agency. Whether it is timely or too late remains uncertain but its emergence seems inevitable.

## **Is my melodrama justified?**

Back to the justification of my dystopian presuppositions, forgive me for snailing my way to this moment. Transhumanism, as earlier discussed, aspires toward transcendence: the augmentation of body and mind, the surpassing of natural limits,

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<sup>12</sup> Drucker, Peter F. *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. HarperBusiness, 1985

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. Terence Irwin, Hackett, 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Schwab, Klaus. *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*. World Economic Forum, 2016

<sup>15</sup> Lewis, C.S. *The Abolition of Man*. HarperOne, 1944.

even the dream of human godhood. Yuval Noah Harari points out ,  
“Now human beings are developing powers like never before... the  
power to reengineer human beings”<sup>16</sup>.

The “powers” of the transhumanistic second curve namely AI, biotechnology, surveillance have revealed current horrors in usage and ethical volatility. The same technologies that promise liberation AI, biometric data, neural interfaces can be redeployed to surveil, control, and subjugate. Manifestations of this in our current realities is the existence of AI-enhanced biometric systems, facial recognition, and behavioral tracking feed into a vast social credit infrastructure that rewards obedience and punishes dissent in China<sup>17</sup>. Additionally, the Uyghur people of Xinjiang have endured mass biometric registration, predictive policing, and reeducation, an authoritarian deployment of the transhumanist toolkit<sup>18</sup>. These are not speculative futures; they are present realities.

Charles Handy, in *The Second Curve*, reminds us that institutional reinvention must be guided by values, not merely innovation<sup>19</sup>. Without this moral compass, the second curve risks becoming a descent into managed obedience rather than an ascent toward human flourishing. Professor John Lennox, in *2084*, echoes this concern, warning that in the pursuit of “godlike” abilities, we may compromise the very autonomy and dignity that define

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16 Harari, Yuval Noah. *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. Harvill Secker, 2015.

17 Mozur, Paul. “Inside China’s Dystopian Dreams: AI, Shame and Lots of Cameras.” *The New York Times*, 8 July 2018.

18 Zenz, Adrian. “Break Their Roots: Evidence for China’s Parent-Child Separation Campaign in Xinjiang.” *Journal of Political Risk*, July 2019.

19 Handy, Charles. *The Second Curve: Thoughts on Reinventing Society*. Random House, 2015.

us<sup>20</sup>. Even C.S. Lewis, writing in the mid-20th century, foresaw the danger of scientific idealism stripped of ethics. In *That Hideous Strength*, technological aspiration morphs into a regime of cold, calculated dominance, a fictional warning that feels uncannily prophetic today.<sup>21</sup> So, while transhumanism projects an evolutionary leap for humanity, its realisation depends not only on technological capacity, but on philosophical clarity. The tools of the second curve, AI, biotechnology, surveillance must be governed by principles of freedom, justice, and human dignity. Without such safeguards, we do not ascend, we merely extend old oppressions with more efficient tools.

Moreover, in my dystopian conception of the transhumanistic second curve is the question of the essence of humanity. If there is to be a meaningful second curve for humanity, it must not be one that abandons our essence but one that deepens our understanding of it. The vision proposed by Yuval Noah Harari, that “we must re-engineer *Homo Sapiens* so it can enjoy everlasting pleasure” and that we should now seek to “upgrade humans into gods”<sup>22</sup>, is seductive, but profoundly flawed. It reduces the human condition to a biochemical equation and equates transcendence with pleasure and control.

To re-engineer human nature in pursuit of godlike status is to risk stripping humanity of the very traits that define it, namely vulnerability, moral freedom, relational depth, and

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20 Lennox, John. 2084: *Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity*. Zondervan, 2020.

21 Lewis, C.S. *That Hideous Strength*. Geoffrey Bles, 1945

22 Harari Yuval Noah. *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. Harvill Secker, 2015.

finitude. The human condition is not a bug to be fixed but a mystery to be understood. Our limitations are not errors, they are the context in which meaning emerges. C.S. Lewis warned against this temptation in *The Abolition of Man*, arguing that in trying to master nature completely, we do not elevate humanity, but dissolve it<sup>23</sup>. A human being who cannot suffer, age, or doubt may be powerful, but they are no longer truly human.

John Lennox, in *2084*, reinforces this critique by reminding us that turning humans into programmable pleasure seeking entities undermines agency and robs life of moral substance. If we remove struggle, we do not create a utopia, we create numbness. True connection, empathy, and growth require the possibility of pain. In fact, the very essence of love and friendship is predicated on the vulnerability of persons, not the perfection of engineered minds.

Charles Handy's *Second Curve* also carries a warning here, which suggests that real transformation must begin with values, not technologies. It is tempting to believe that innovation itself is progress, but the preservation of what it means to be human, our moral instincts, our need for connection, our spiritual hunger is not obsolete, it is essential. The second curve must not be a leap into artificial perfection, but a return to humane imperfection, reinvested with dignity.

The human story is not one of conquering mortality through machinery. It is one of finding meaning despite it. In a world

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23 Lewis. C.S., *The Abolition of Man* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944

obsessed with control, perhaps what we need most is to preserve spaces where uncertainty, presence, and human contact are still sacred. The future of humanity does not lie in erasing our humanity, but in embracing it more attentively, more courageously, and more ethically.

The prospect of engineering a new species, what Harari calls *Homo Deus* raises existential concerns not just for the trajectory of human evolution, but for the fate of humanity itself. Lord Martin Rees, in contemplating the advance of superintelligence, remarks that “we have zero confidence that the dominant intelligence of a few centuries will have any emotional resonance with us even though they may have an algorithmic understanding of the way we behaved”<sup>24</sup>. This sobering observation underscores the ethical fracture in transhumanist aspirations, the post-biological future may be intelligible, but emotionally alien. The so-called “upgrade” may not be an ascent, but a displacement. Harari himself declares, “Now humankind is poised to replace natural selection with intelligent design and extend life from the organic realm into the inorganic” a claim that reveals both the hubris and the danger of divorcing human continuity from biological, emotional, and moral grounding.

What is framed as progress may in fact be a species-level obsolescence. This ideological pivot finds an apt analogue in C.S. Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength*, particularly in the figure of Professor Filostrato and the technocratic elite of the N.I.C.E.

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<sup>24</sup> Rees, Martin. *On the Future: Prospects for Humanity*. Princeton University Press, 2018,

(National Institute for Coordinated Experiments). Obsessed with overcoming the “limitations” of organic life, they seek to purge humanity of flesh, emotion, and mortality, dreaming of a disembodied, perfected intelligence. The result is not a higher form of being, but a grotesque parody of it. Filostrato’s dream of preserving only the head, detached from the body, chillingly parallels Harari’s vision of inorganic life intelligent, perhaps, but no longer human.

This critique does not merely oppose innovation it demands that innovation remain tethered to human meaning. To replace natural selection with intelligent design is not neutral; it is a radical shift in the moral architecture of life. If emotional resonance, ethical judgment, and intergenerational continuity are abandoned in favor of precision and pleasure, then the second curve of humanity becomes a severance, not a synthesis. In the race to become gods, we may fail to remain persons.

## **The hidden evil twin of long termism in the transhumanist second curve.**

*Nick Bostrom once argued that “Priority number one, two, three and four should be to reduce existential risk... We must not fritter away our infinite resources on feel-good projects of suboptimal efficacy such as alleviating global poverty and reducing animal*

*suffering, since neither threatens our long-term potential, and our long-term potential is what really matters*"<sup>25</sup>.

Here, long termism reveals its most ethically disquieting feature, a utilitarian calculus that displaces the moral urgency of love and charity. It sidelines the present poor for the hypothetical future rich. It forgets the face of the neighbour in its obsession with the shadow of the future. This is not simply a philosophical oversight; it is a radical inversion of moral priorities. As *Homo Deus* seeks to ascend, *Homo Sapiens* is left to languish.

Such reasoning is not merely abstract, it mirrors the dehumanising logic seen in C.S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength*, where the technocratic elite sacrifice the weak and the poor on the altar of future greatness, in pursuit of a sterile, controlled perfection. The poor are not merely forgotten, they are seen as inefficiencies, interruptions to the grand narrative of post-biological progress. But this is precisely where transhumanism's moral architecture begins to collapse. In Christian ethics, and indeed in many humanist traditions, the measure of moral civilisation has never been its speculative future, but its concrete compassion. As the Gospels remind us, *"whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me"*<sup>26</sup>

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25 Bostrom, Nick. Existential Risk Prevention as Global Priority. *Global Policy*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2013

26 Matthew 25:40, The Holy Bible, NIV.

In this context long termism may couch its cold calculus in the language of cosmic duty, but without compassion for the present, it is a hollow creed. The second curve for humanity must not be defined by theoretical utility but by lived dignity. The true future worth building is not the one where we survive at all costs, but the one where we care deeply, presently, and personally.

## **Fiercely Human**

I will resist the temptation to close with melodrama. Having unburdened my nightmares into your patient silence, it is only just that I now offer something like a resolution, a gesture, however small, toward hope. If the transhumanist "second curve" threatens to dissolve the essence of our humanity in its pursuit of post-biological perfection, then we must respond not with passivity or retreat, but with deliberate, grounded action. Peter Drucker, in *Managing Oneself*, reminds us that responsibility begins with self-awareness, that we are not merely products of systems, but agents capable of self-definition. This, then, is the ethical counter to the algorithmic tide, to manage self not as a cog in some vast techno-utopia, but as a moral center, rooted in discernment, memory, and care.

In a world increasingly shaped not by Orwell's tyrant but by Huxley's seductions, the threat is not overt repression but willing surrender. "Orwell warns that we will be overcome by an externally imposed oppression," wrote Neil Postman, reflecting on our prophetic novelists. "But in Huxley's vision, no Big Brother is required to deprive people of their autonomy. As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think." We are watching this unfold not in dystopian fiction, but in the quiet erosion of attention spans, the passive hypnosis of doomscrolling, and the disintegration of sustained thought under the weight of infinite feeds. It is not that we are being ruled, it is that we are being numbed.

Against this, the task before us is neither technophobic rejection nor blind embrace, but ethical vigilance. To be human in the age of a possible transhumanist second curve is to think while others scroll, to care while others optimize, to remember while others delete. The future worth building is not one that evades death at the cost of meaning, but one in which we remain awake, deliberate, present, and fiercely human.

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The End