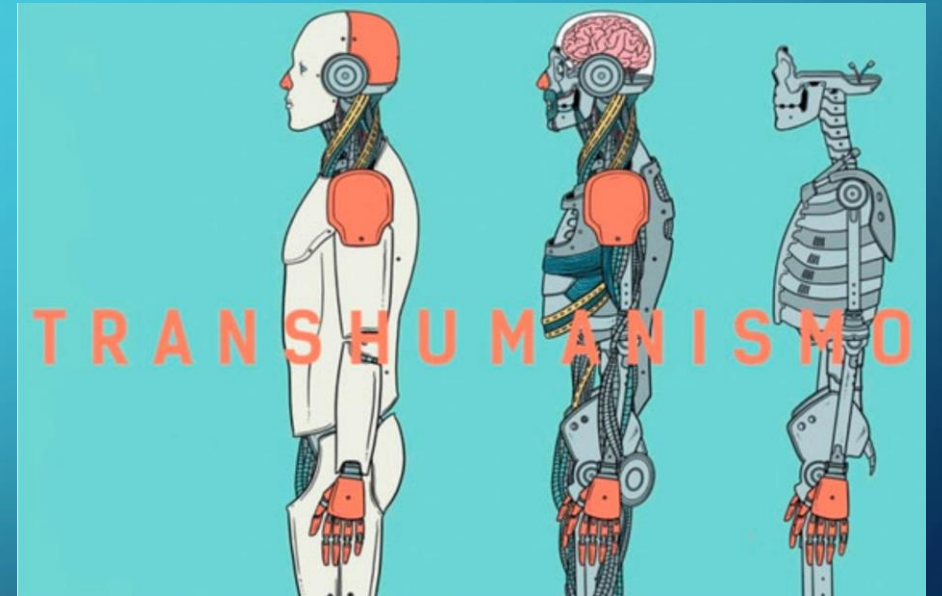


WHAT IS TRANSHUMANISM?

INPUT BY
TUĞBA KARA
MASTER OF ISLAM & SOCIETY





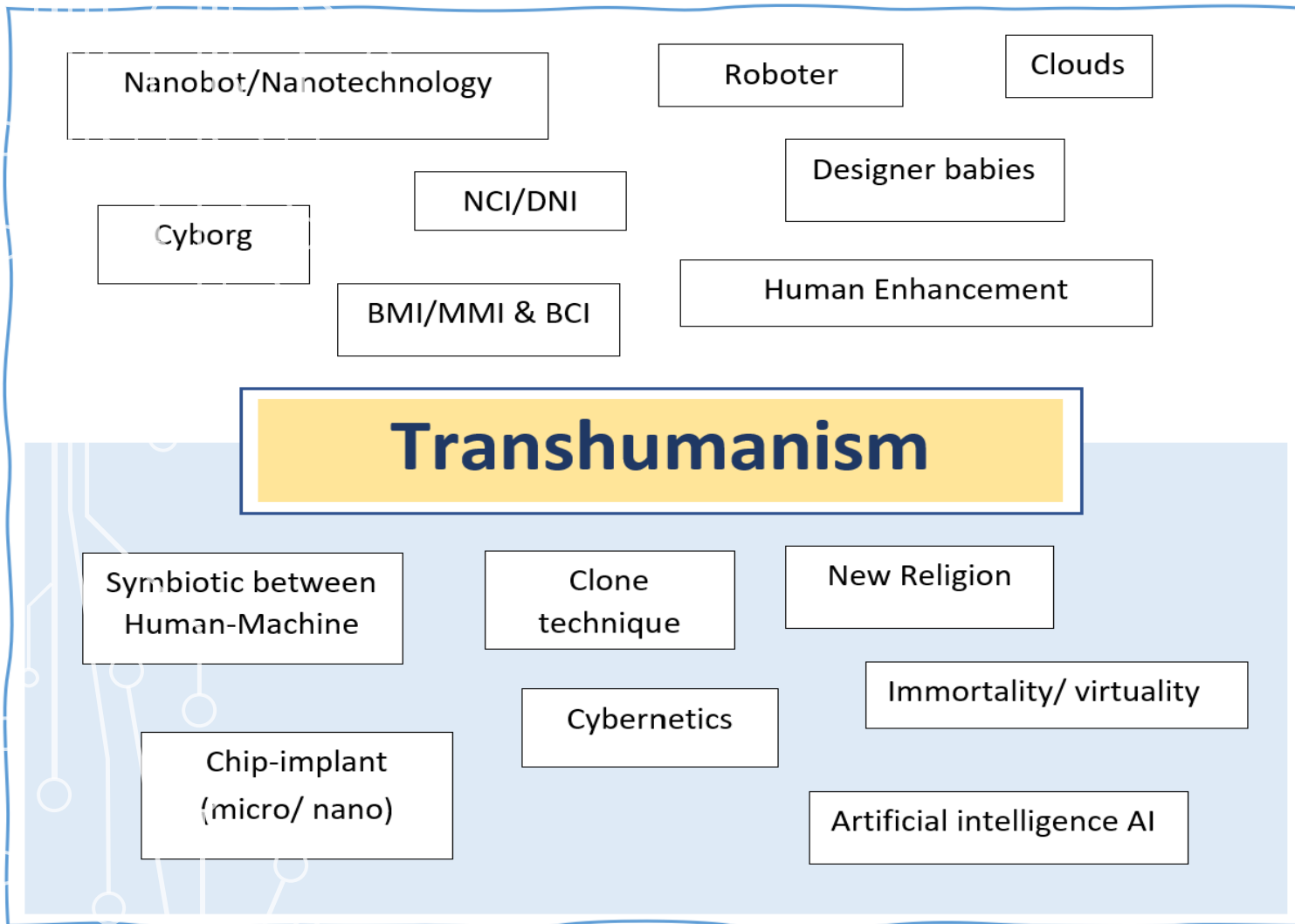
AGENDA

- Definition of Transhumanism
 - Definition of Posthumanism
 - Definition of Singularity
 - Institutionalization and the most important actors and players
-
- Islam and Transhumanism
 - Problems which coming up with transhumanism and Islam
 - Criticism & Appreciation



What comes up to your mind, when you think about Transhumanism?

→ Any Ideas?



The prefix "*Trans*" describes in the term "*Transhumanism*" the efforts of *humans* for improvement in the area of the (*meta*)*physical spheres* .

BMI (brain/mind-machine interface)
BCI (brain-computer interface)

BCI (brain-computer interface)
DNI (direct neural interface)

JULIAN HUXLEY

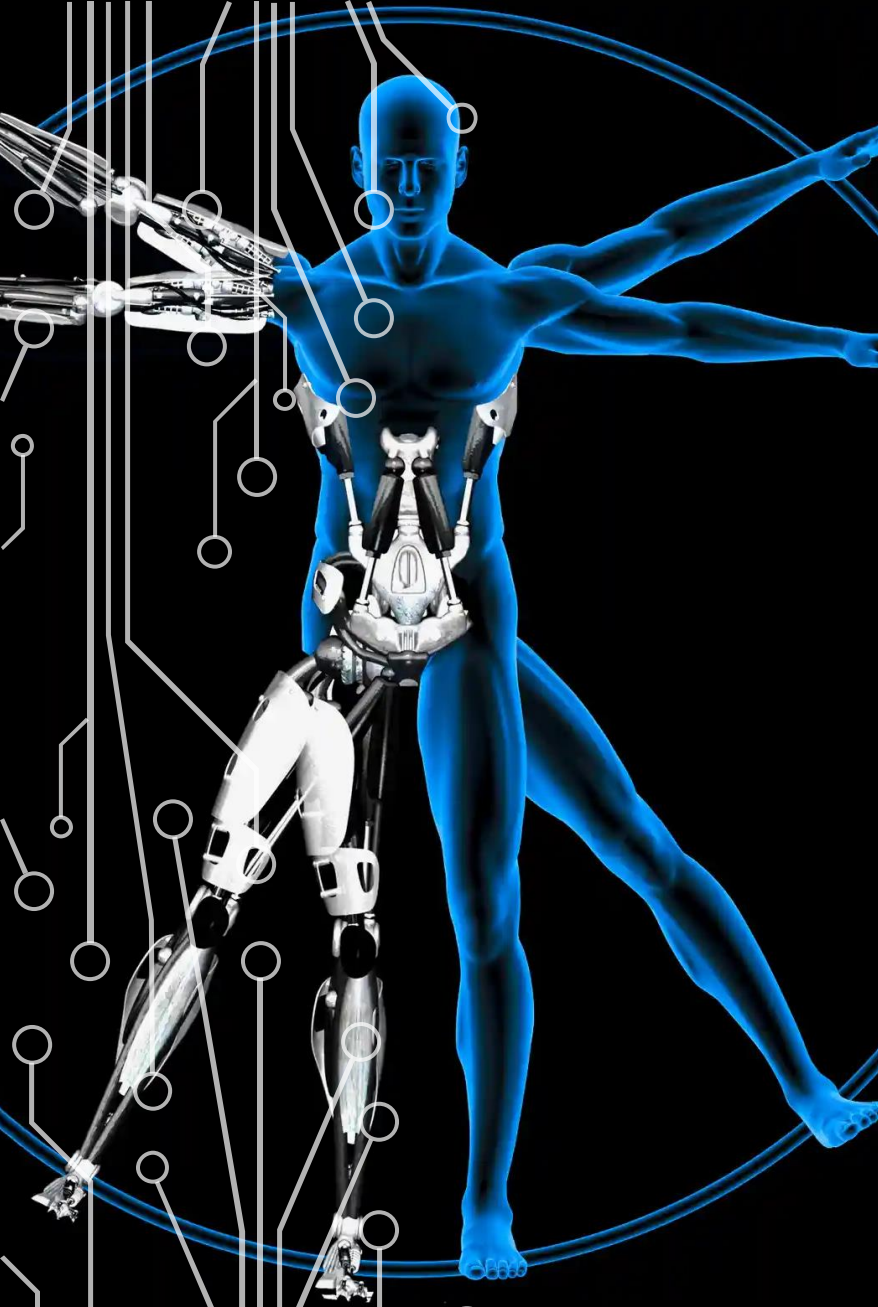


If you think that the TH is completely new, you are wrong, because it has been a companion philosophy **for almost 100 years**. Like the efforts of Julian Huxley, who was already intensively engaged in *scientific humanism in 1931*.

Oliver Krüger differentiates in his book between **transhumanism, technological posthumanism and posthumanism in art and cultural studies**.

Source: Richard, Hell (2018): Man as a design object in earlier transhumanism, technofuturism. Freiburg: Herder, p. 61 - 62.

Source: Oliver, Krüger (2019): Virtuality and immortality. God, evolution, and the singularity in posthumanism and transhumanism. Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag, p. 75.



DEFINITIONS OF TRANSHUMANISM

- The **intellectual and cultural movement** that affirms the possibility and desirability of **fundamentally improving the human condition through applied reason**, especially by developing and making widely available **technologies** to **eliminate ageing** and to greatly **enhance human** intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities.
- The **study** of the ramifications (impacts), promises, and **potential dangers of technologies** that will **enable us to overcome fundamental human limitations**, and the related study of the **ethical matters** involved in developing and using such technologies."

Source: *humanity+* (the successor organization of the *World Transhumanist Association*), <https://www.humanityplus.org/transhumanism>

Picture: *The guardian* (<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/may/06/no-death-and-an-enhanced-life-is-the-future-transhuman>)



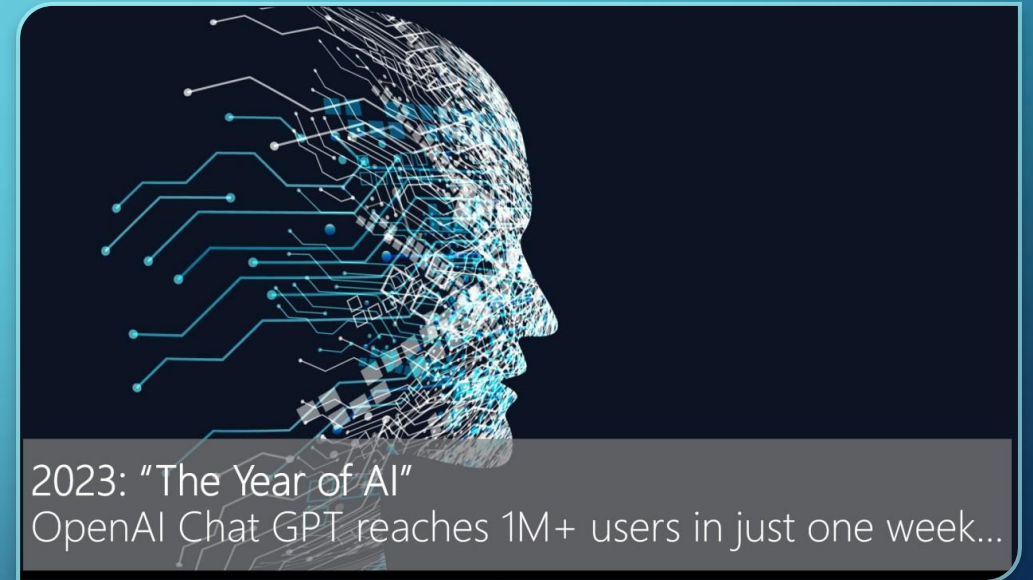
DEFINITIONS OF TRANSHUMANISM

- TH is a movement that **seeks to promote the evolution of the human race** beyond its present **limitations** through the use of science and technology.

Source: Harrison/Wolyniak 2015

- Transhumanism is the belief in using science and technology to **enhance and improve human abilities and characteristics** beyond **what is considered to be biologically normal** or desirable.

Source: ChatGPT (April 23)



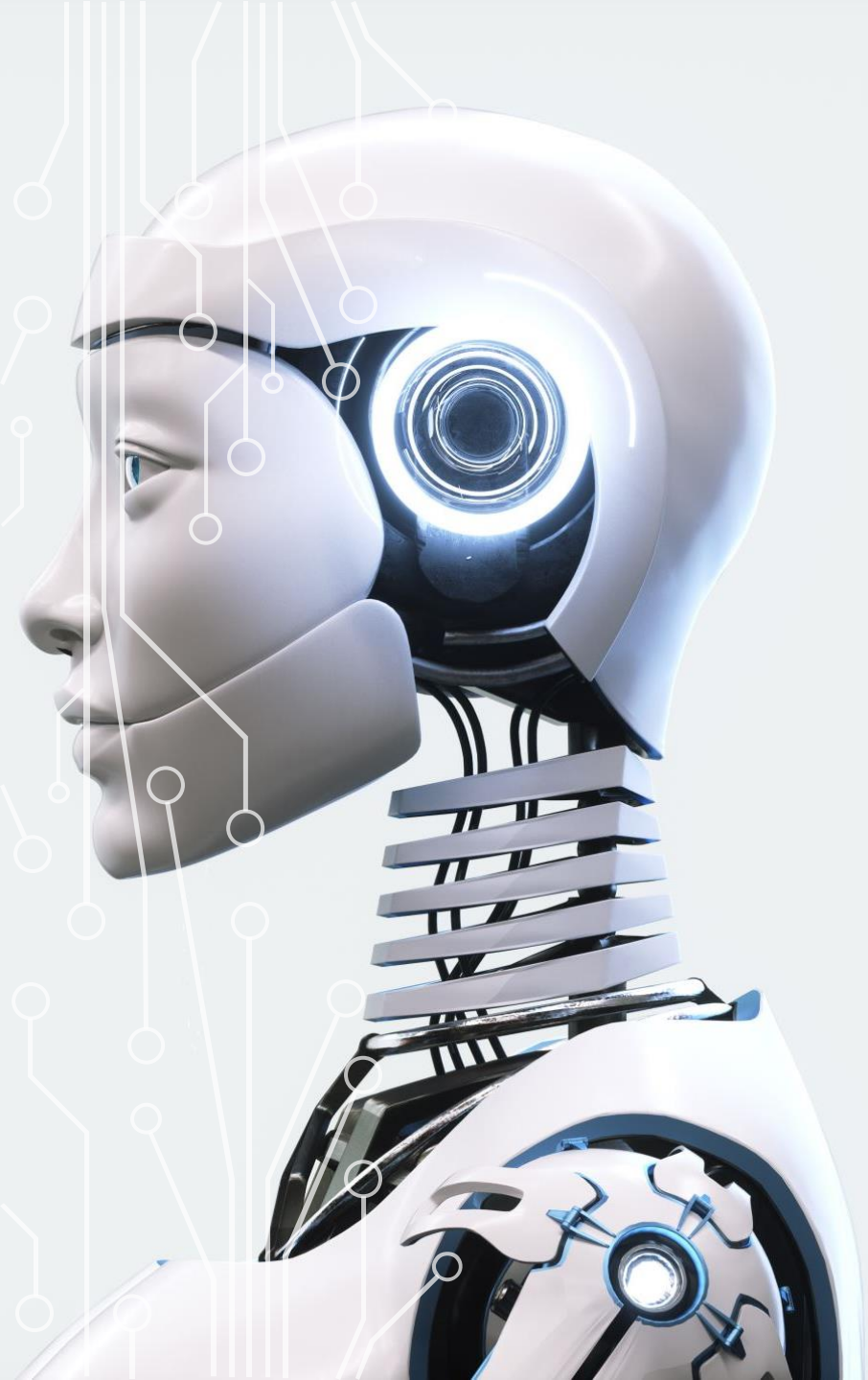
Picture: <https://emag.medicalexpo.com/chatgpt-has-the-power-to-change-healthcare/>



DEFINITION OF POSTHUMANISM

- **Posthumanism is a broader philosophical and cultural movement that questions and challenges traditional human - centric views of the world.**
- **Posthumanism challenges the idea that humans are the center of the universe and that everything in the world exists for human benefit.**
- **It explores the possibility of non-human agency, intelligence, and consciousness, and considers how we might interact with and understand non-human entities.**

Source: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/it-moral-values/>



DEFINITION OF POSTHUMANISM

- **Posthumanism and transhumanism are related but distinct concepts.** Transhumanism is a philosophical and cultural movement that advocates for the use of science and technology to enhance human capabilities and transcend the limitations of human biology.

includes:

- Ideas - such as human enhancement through genetic engineering;
- Cyborg technology;
- Mind uploading.

Source: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/it-moral-values/>



DEFINITION OF SINGULARITY

- **Singularity refers to a hypothetical event in the future** when technological advancements have progressed to a point where they can no longer be understood by human intellects.
- It is believed that this could be achieved through a combination of artificial intelligence, advancements in robotics, nanotechnology, and other fields.
- The idea of singularity is often associated with transhumanism and the idea of a posthuman future.

Source: Oliver, Krüger (2019): *Virtuality and immortality. God, evolution, and the singularity in posthumanism and transhumanism*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag. S. 98 ff.



INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTORS AND PLAYERS

- Transhumanism research was institutionalized for the first time in 1991 with the foundation of the *think tank in the US*
- The *Extropy Institute* (ExI) in the USA, by Max More, who also financed these projects and thus strengthened the research in this field

Source: Cf. website www.extropy.org/

- but activities stopped by 2016 members now went over to the supporters of the Singularity.

Source: Oliver, Krüger (2019): *Virtuality and immortality. God, evolution, and the singularity in posthumanism and transhumanism.* Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag. p. 98.



INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTORS AND PLAYERS

- In 2006, however, two institutes were founded at the same time that has since facilitated academic engagement with TH: **the Singularity Institute for Artificial Intelligence at Berkley and the Singularity Summit at Stanford**
- With the Singularity Summit's name changed to the Machine Intelligence Research Institute (MIRI), the institute committed itself to mathematical and computational science research, exists to this day, and its researchers are actively and publicly advocating for beneficial AI research.

Source: Oliver, Krüger (2019): *Virtuality and immortality. God, evolution, and the singularity in posthumanism and transhumanism*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag. p. 98.





INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTORS AND PLAYERS

- Raymond Kurzweil founded *Singularity University* in 2008 and is currently the best-known representative of posthumanism and transhumanism.
- Of course, there were and still are platforms (also virtual ones) that are also dedicated to the ethical perspective of TH.
- For example, the American Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies IEET, founded by James Hughes and Nick Bostrom (2004), should be mentioned here, which addresses transhuman processes within the framework of think tanks.

Source: Oliver, Krüger (2019): *Virtuality and immortality. God, evolution, and the singularity in posthumanism and transhumanism.* Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag. p. 77 & 108.

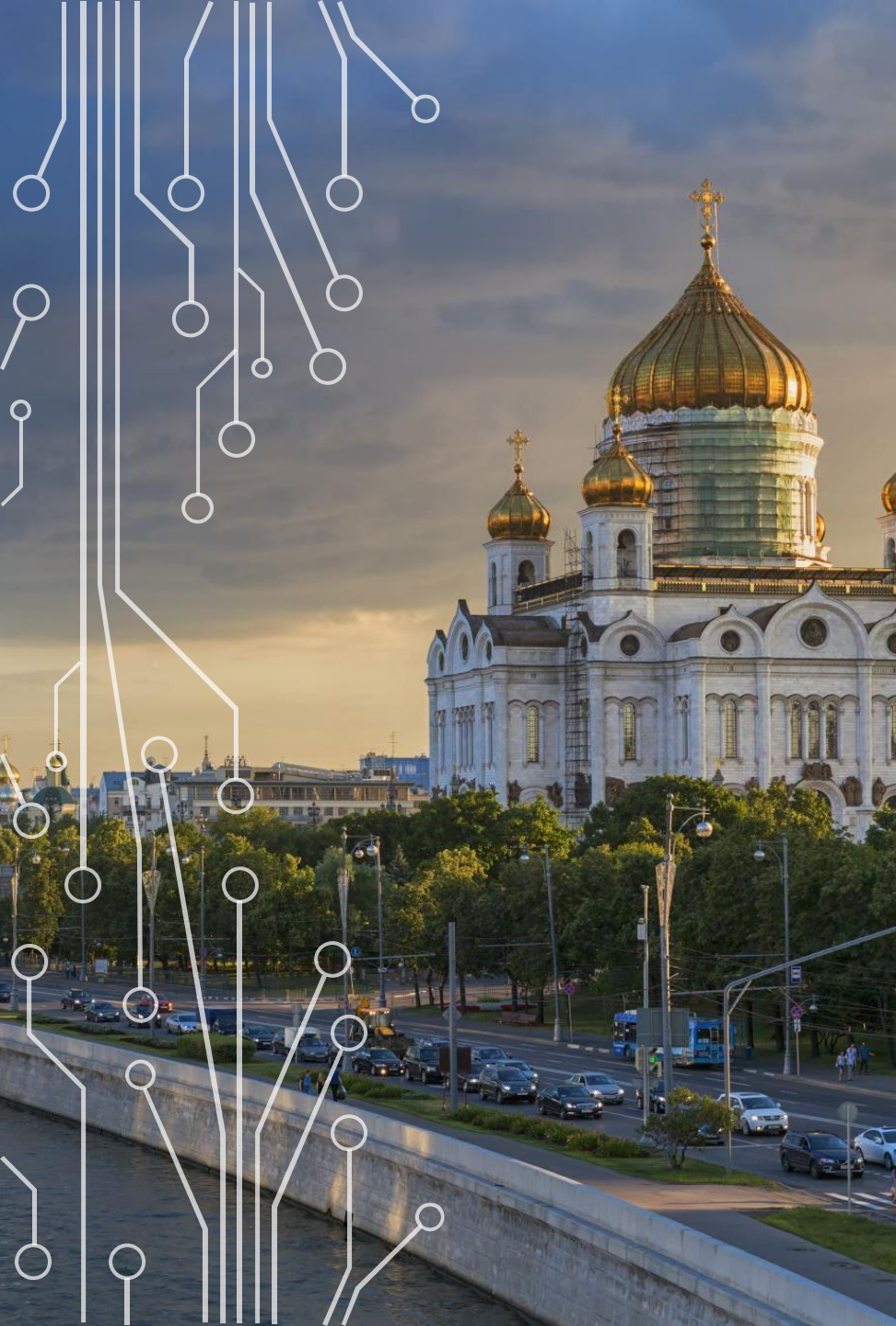


INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTORS AND PLAYERS

Nowadays there are well-known companies like *Neuralink*, which currently advertise e.g. with neurochip implants in the front line (with a monopoly position in the *brain/mind-machine interface technology*) and present themselves on their website as trend-setting, especially in the healing of diseases.

Source: Website www.neuralink.com





ISLAM AND TRANSHUMANISM

Is
transhumanism
a western
idea/movement
?

Is
transhumanism a
threat or a
blessing to
Islam?

Do we play
God?



ISLAM AND TRANSHUMANISM

Religion of Islam :

→ Great importance in the lives of Muslims

→ Muslims are according to religious norms and try to legitimize their actions with the help of Islamic legal sources

→ Muslims must learn about new topics/fields and compare them with existing Islamic knowledge.

→ Tools: Quran (main source), Sunna and Islamic science and Scholars



WHAT IS ALLOWED AND FORBIDDEN IN ISLAM?

<p><i>Wajib & Fard (mentioned in the Quran) = mandatory</i></p>	<p><i>sunna = recommended</i></p>	<p><i>mustahabb = advised</i></p>
<p><i>mubah = permitted/exempted</i></p>	<p><i>makruh = advised against</i></p>	<p><i>haram (mentioned in the holy Quran) = forbidden</i></p>

- The most terms are made by humans (scholars), the only words which are mentioned in the holy Quran are: fard and haram
- “Sunna” is not mentioned as “sunna” in the holy Quran, but as “sunnatullah”, the Laws or Procedures of God)
- “mustahabb” is not mentioned in the holy Quran, only the source of the word – “hub” from the word love)





PROBLEMS WHICH COMING UP WITH TRANSHUMANIST ACTIONS IN ISLAM

Problems:

- 1) danger of “shirk” (the sin of associating partners with Allah or worshiping anything or anyone other than Allah / idolatry)!
- 2) Tearing/erasing of kinship (family) bonds
- 3) manipulation, arrogance and abuse by humans with technique
- 4) danger of technocratic communism (no individualism)
- 5) Resurgence of misanthropy and eugenics/race
- ...

TRANSHUMAN ACTION ADAPTED TO ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES



Picture:

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3341271/The-world-s-largest-cloning-factory-one-day-clone-HUMANS-Scientist-claims-technology-ready-public-opinion-isn-t.html>

Example 1:

Cloning technology – cloning animals for consumption or organs for humans

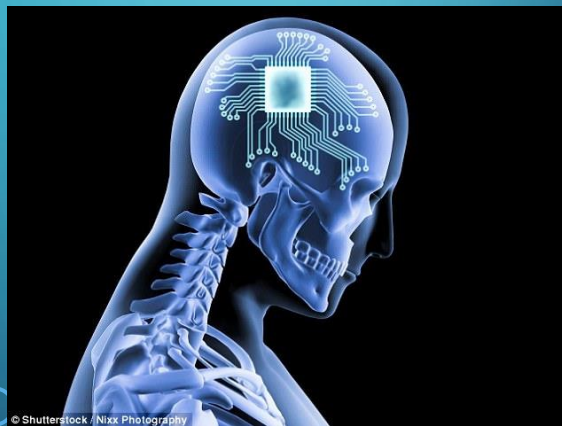
→ ***Makruh & haram***

A justification: Tearing/erasing of kinship (family) bonds

→ ***haram***

- ***wagib/fard*** = mandatory
- ***sunna*** = recommended
- ***mustahabb*** = advised
- ***mubah*** = permitted/exempted
- ***makruh*** = advised against
- ***haram*** = forbidden

TRANSHUMAN ACTION ADAPTED TO ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES



Picture:

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/>
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-5120441/Mind-control-AI-chips-alter-persons-moods.html>

Example 2:

Chip implants in human boddies,
(also for new
resources/opportunities for sick
people, like Parkinson)

→ *mubah*

(in case of interference with creation
and human enhancement) →

Makruh & haram

A justification: manipulation,
arrogance and abuse by humans
with technique

→ *haram*

- *wagib/fard* = mandatory/
- *sunna* = recommended
- *mustahabb* = advised
- *mubah* =
permitted/exempted
- *makruh* = advised against
- *haram* = forbidden

TRANSHUMAN ACTION ADAPTED TO ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES



Picture:
<https://medium.com/anth374s18/designer-babies-and-society-2e0866b7fdcf>

Example 3:

Designer babies - through genome modification (intervention in Creation)

→ *Makruh & haram*

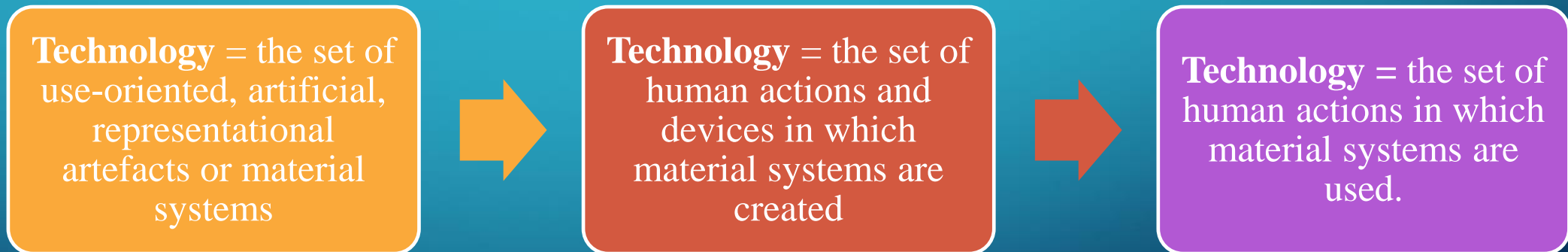
A justification: Resurgence of misanthropy and eugenics/race
Also, we have no Idea what creation it will be... Is it a human being?

- *wagib/fard* = mandatory/
- *sunna* = recommended
- *mustahabb* = advised
- *mubah* = permitted/exempted
- *makruh* = advised against
- *haram* = forbidden

CRITICISM & APPRECIATION

Transhumanism is assigned to different subfields, (still) uses normative ethics (technology ethics) and clearly deserves more attention, which was at least cushioned with the emergence of STS (*Science & Technology Studies*) since the 1970s.

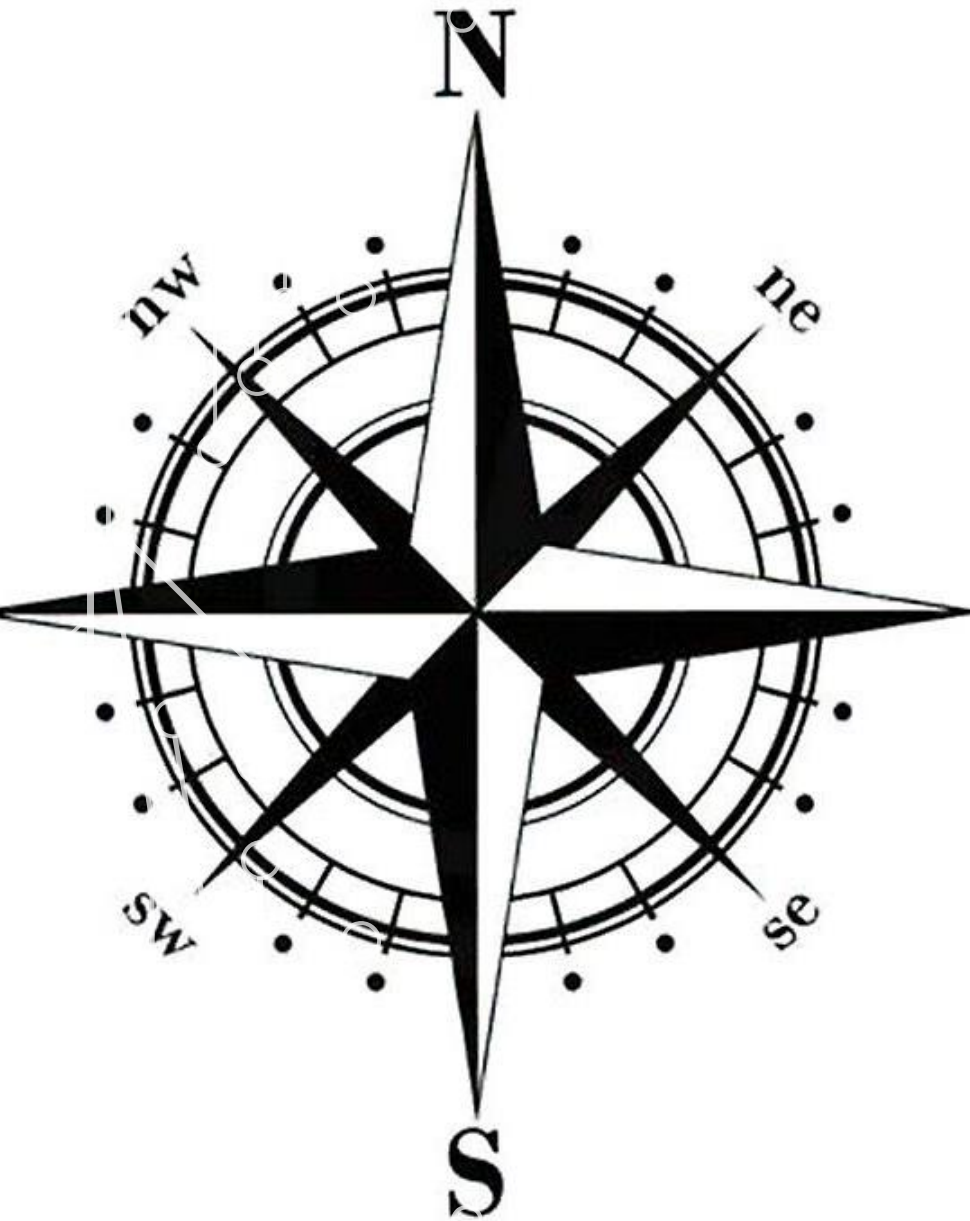
TH is a legacy of the concept of technology, which the Association of German Engineers (VDI) tries to define as follows:



→ It is not for nothing that the guiding question of technology ethics is: "*What happens when we are absolutely unable to assess what terrible things can happen with technology?*"

CRITICISM & APPRECIATION

- From this attempted definition of technology, it can be deduced from the TH that the production of technical innovations is about human actions that go hand in hand with the creation and use of material systems and that can also be produced artificially.



IN SUMMARY

It can be concluded that the addressees are primarily the developers and researchers, and thus the engineers, on whose ethical compass we have to rely. However, they pursue their own values, goals and visions.





CRITICISM & APPRECIATION

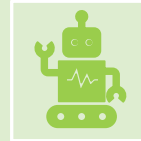
- There is a great lack of transparency in the development, communication and implementation of transhuman innovations and above all in the goals to be achieved by them.
- For the individual as well as for the society these innovations can certainly bring advantages, but also disadvantages
- For the transhumanists, one could formulate Darwin's generally known principle based on the goals: "*Survival of the fittest*" (especially when you compare competences in the field of using/owning technique)



CRITICISM & APPRECIATION



Can data misuse by intelligent body recognition take place due to the non-transparent use of *biometric data* as well as *biometric codes*?



Is a takeover of control by robots, AI or quantum computers of human thoughts, actions, knowledge etc. and their reprogramming to be feared? Can these then independently write new programs so that previous knowledge could be overwritten?



In the future, will the real world combine with a virtual one to create mixed realities (inside and outside the network)



Who are the profiteers of knowledge, if "*knowledge equals power*"? (Internet)? Will it still be possible to escape technology in principle?





QUESTIONS?