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#### The 1ac puts forth time and energy towards a telos that isn’t transhumanism and actively disrupts a technological focus. Those resources are zero-sum – *all of our collective energy* must be devoted to realizing the transhumanist dream – it’s the *only existential imperative*.

Leo Stevenson 18, Brown University, citing Nick Bostrom, PhD, founder of the Future of Humanity Institute, “THINKING IN BIG HISTORY: Nick Bostrom, transhumanist visions, and the rise of macrostrategy”, <http://www.theindy.org/1535>, \*language edited, ellipsis in original

There’s so much hope for what humanity could be in Bostrom’s poetic view, and fear, and precarity. You can see his attempts at strategic planning hanging in uncertainty, as small as the old “blue speck” photo of earth hanging in the void. But that precipice also comes with serious urgency: given where humanity stands at present, there’s no time to waste. Another of his poems (titled “Göttingen”) articulates that, opening:

the rush the rush the rush

the fuse that’s burning down

information glitters

rain of idea sparks

the thing is sprinting

sipping, taking off

to the waiting black powder

That poem is his most recent, from 2017, and it carries the rush of his current work: it’s serious now, there’s more at stake, the risk of apocalypse in a potentially impending “intelligence explosion” so neatly symbolized by actual explosives. And out of that comes the sense of moral urgency: you’d better run to deal with the problems this precipice presents if you have any kind of resources to do so. If our historical moment is so precarious, at this place where our acceleration could take us to utopia or the abyss, it’s no time to be sitting around. A trace of that outrage shows in an excerpt from “Juicy Exceptions”:

the young ones glimmer briefly

like fourth of july firework [sic]

then fall to dust

[…]

strut on you arrogant ~~pricks~~ [people]

shine on you daughters of ivy

occupy your privilege like a desert garden

fig-nude amongst almonds and apricots

let us feast our eyes on your impudence

as you slurp that rough-shelled coconut with a pastel straw

After meditating on the finitude of youthful pleasure, this poem breaks into pure moral outrage at the very thought of elite students enjoying their vacations. It only makes full sense in the context of the previous two; this is no time to be lounging around. If you’ve been granted the power, the privilege, of that kind of education, given the precipice we stand on, how could you use it for yourself, even for a moment? When our species might be at stake?

At the end of the bio on his website, Bostrom writes, “I am in a very fortunate position—having no teaching duties, being supported by a staff of brilliant research colleagues and assistants, and facing no restrictions on what I can work on. Must try hard to be worthy of such privilege!” It’s “Juicy Exceptions” that shows how deeply Bostrom means that. He’s not just humbly saying he’s lucky—he’s saying that privilege gives him a duty to pull his weight for the greater good, hurrying to keep up with the urgency of this strange historical moment. Which makes sense of how Bostrom is leading his life, basically locked in a room coming up with the best arguments he can for why people should listen to his apocalyptic/utopian message, publishing and running between speaking circuits and parliamentary panels, doing his best to right the course of history before it’s too late.

Bostrom’s worldview, as you dive into the visionary corners of his mind, is compelling: it draws you in, makes you think in big history, makes you and your concerns start to look very, very small. I trust Bostrom’s intentions more after reading his poetry; his vision of the long future seems like a genuine hope for what he calls (in the last line of Superintelligence) “a compassionate and jubilant use of humanity’s cosmic endowment.”

I’m also worried by the implications of his ideas. If you follow his logic completely, then putting our energies towards the highest-priority issue of our age (AI strategy) should mean dropping our other, immediate projects of world-fixing and world-making, as any suffering we might alleviate now is secondary to the possibility of extinction. I have too many reservations about Bostrom’s strategic ideas, his thoughts on how change gets made, and his ability to consistently distinguish sci-fi from reality, to buy that fully.

Big-history thinking raises questions, though, that go beyond Bostrom’s exclusive focus on AI scenarios. What if, to have any hope of building the world we want, the first step is to prioritize catastrophic threats, even others like climate change or biosecurity? Maybe the state of tech does place us at a unique moment in history, with the unique urgency Bostrom feels. Which would mean we ought to think more strategically about where to apply that urgency. Terrifying as it is, Bostrom might have a point.

#### Transhumanism is vital to achieving singularity and immortality, which ends all human suffering and trauma and creates a glorious post-human future free of all pain. Otherwise, we’ll face inevitable extinction.

Dr. John Messerly 18, PhD, former Chair of Philosophy Department @ Ursuline College, lecturer at the University of Texas at Austin, where he taught in both the philosophy and computer science departments, “Transhumanism – How Science Will Make Us Immortal”, http://churchandstate.org.uk/2018/06/transhumanism-how-science-will-make-us-immortal/

A Glorious Future? Once one adopts an evolutionary perspective it is easy to see that the future will not be like the past. Twenty-first century technologies—especially nanotechnology, genetics, artificial intelligence and robotics—will transform reality. And if we survive, humans and their post-human descendants will understand and control matter, life, and mind. These developments are part of cultural evolution, itself is a part of cosmic evolution, with both processes producing more complex forms of life and mind. However at the moment the above is science fiction, and subject to trillions of variables which will lead to an unimaginable future, or to no future at all—as multiple extinction scenarios might doom humanity. And evolutionary progress isn’t inevitable; technology can be used for good or ill. It may lead to a glorious future, but the future could also be halted by terrestrial or celestial disasters, or by dogmatists, zealots, or religious fanatics who oppose progress. The opponents of progress may have legitimate fears about future technologies, or they may be guided by ignorance and irrationality. They may long for an imaginary past paradise, fear what they don’t understand, believe they possess a monopoly on the truth, or think humans subservient to gods. But for whatever reason some oppose change, preferring stagnation to progressive evolutionism. They prefer to prevent the initiative, creativity, perseverance, and hope that drive evolution forward. They are fearful that a new world will render them and their beliefs, anachronistic. They are the enemies of the future. How Science Will Make Us Immortal If death is our end, then all we can do is die and hope for the best. But perhaps we don’t have to die. Many scientists now believe that humans can overcome death and achieve immortality through the use of future technologies. But how will we do this? The first way we might achieve physical immortality is by conquering our biological limitations—we age, become diseased, and suffer trauma. Aging research, while woefully underfunded, has yielded positive results. Average life expectancies have tripled since ancient times, increasing by more than fifty percent in the industrial world in the last hundred years, and most scientists think we will continue to extend our life-spans. We know that some jellyfish and bacteria are essentially immortal, and the bristlecone pine may be too. There is no thermodynamic necessity for senescence—aging is a presumed byproduct of evolution —although why mortality was selected for remains a mystery. Yet some scientists believe we can conquer aging altogether—in the next few decades with sufficient investment—most notably the Cambridge researcher Aubrey de Grey. If we do unlock the secrets of aging, we will simultaneously defeat other diseases as well, since many of them are symptoms of aging. Many researchers now consider aging itself to be a disease which progresses as you age. There are a number of strategies that could render disease mostly inconsequential. Nanotechnology may give us nanobot cell-repair machines and robotic blood cells; biotechnology may supply replacement tissues and organs; genetics may offer genetic medicine and engineering; and full-fledge genetic engineering could make us impervious to disease. Trauma is a more intransigent problem from the biological perspective, although it too could be defeated through some combination of cloning, regenerative medicine, and genetic engineering. We can even imagine that your physicality could be recreated from a bit of your DNA, and other technologies could then fast forward your regenerated body to the age of your traumatic death, where a backup file containing your experiences and memories would be implanted in your brain. Even the dead may be resuscitated if they have undergone the process of cryonics—preserving organisms at very low temperatures in glass-like states. Ideally these clinically dead would be brought back to life when technology is sufficiently advanced. This may now be science fiction, but if nanotechnology fulfills its promise, there is a good chance that cryonics will succeed. In addition to biological strategies for eliminating death, there are a number of technological scenarios for immortality which utilize advanced brain scanning techniques, artificial intelligence, and robotics. The most prominent scenarios have been advanced by the futurist Ray Kurzweil, who argues that the exponential growth of computing power, combined with advances in other technologies, will make it possible to upload the contents of one’s consciousness into a virtual reality. This could be accomplished by cybernetics, whereby hardware would be gradually installed in the brain until the entire brain was running on that hardware, or via scanning the brain and simulating or transferring its contents to a sufficiently advanced computer. Either way we would no longer be living in a physical world. In fact we may already be living in a computer simulation. The Oxford philosopher and futurist Nick Bostrom argues that advanced civilizations may have created computer simulations containing individuals with artificial intelligence and, if they have, we might unknowingly be in such a simulation. Bostrom concludes that one of the following must be the case: civilizations never have the technology to run simulations; they have the technology but decided not to use it; or we almost certainly live in a simulation. If we don’t like the idea of being immortal in a virtual reality—or we don’t like the idea that we may already be in one—we could upload our brain to a genetically engineered body if we like the feel of flesh, or to a robotic body if we like the feel of silicon or whatever materials comprised the robotic body. Along these lines MIT’s Rodney Brooks envisions the merger of human flesh and machines, whereby humans slowly incorporate technology into their bodies, thus becoming more machine-like and indestructible. So a cyborg future may await us. An evolutionary perspective underlies all these speculative scenarios. Once we embrace that perspective, it is easy to imagine that our descendants will resemble us about as much as we do the amino acids from which we sprang. Our knowledge is growing exponentially and, given eons of time for future innovation, it is easy to envisage that humans will defeat death and evolve in unimaginable ways. Remember that our evolution is no longer moved by the painstakingly slow process of Darwinian evolution—where bodies exchange information through genes—but by cultural evolution—where brains exchange information through memes. The most prominent feature of cultural evolution is the exponentially increasing pace of technological evolution—an evolution that may soon culminate in a technological singularity. The technological singularity, an idea first proposed by the mathematician Vernor Vinge, refers to the hypothetical future emergence of greater than human intelligence. Since the capabilities of such intelligences are difficult for our minds to comprehend, the singularity is seen as an event horizon beyond which the future becomes impossible to understand or predict. Nevertheless, we may surmise that this intelligence explosion will lead to increasingly powerful minds that will solve the problem of death. But why conquer death? Why is death bad? It is bad because it ends something which at its best is good; because it puts an end to our projects; because the wisdom and knowledge of a person is lost at death; because it harms the living; because it causes apathy about the future beyond our short life-span; because it renders fully meaningful lives impossible; and because we know that if we had the choice, and if our lives were going well, we would choose to live on. That death is generally bad—especially for the physically and intellectually vigorous—is nearly self-evident. Yes, there are indeed fates worse than death, and in some circumstances death may be welcomed. Nevertheless for most of us most of the time, death is one of the worst fates that can befall us. That is why we think that suicide and murder and starvation and cancer are bad things. That is why we cry at funerals.