



Transhumanism:
Creating the
'ideal' human
through
augmentation



Overview of Transhumanism

- Transhumanism - the belief or theory that the human race can evolve beyond its current physical and mental limitations, especially by means of science and technology.
- An intermediary form between human and post-human, a transhuman resembling a human in most respects but who has powers and abilities beyond those of standard humans.
- Based on idea that biological evolution will eventually be overtaken by advances in genetic, wearable and implantable technologies that artificially expedite the evolutionary process.
- The term transhumanism was coined by English biologist and philosopher Julian Huxley in 1957.
- Transhumanists must study and examine the potential dangers of these technologies and their ethical considerations.
- Some examples of transhumanism include anti-ageing and artificial intelligence.



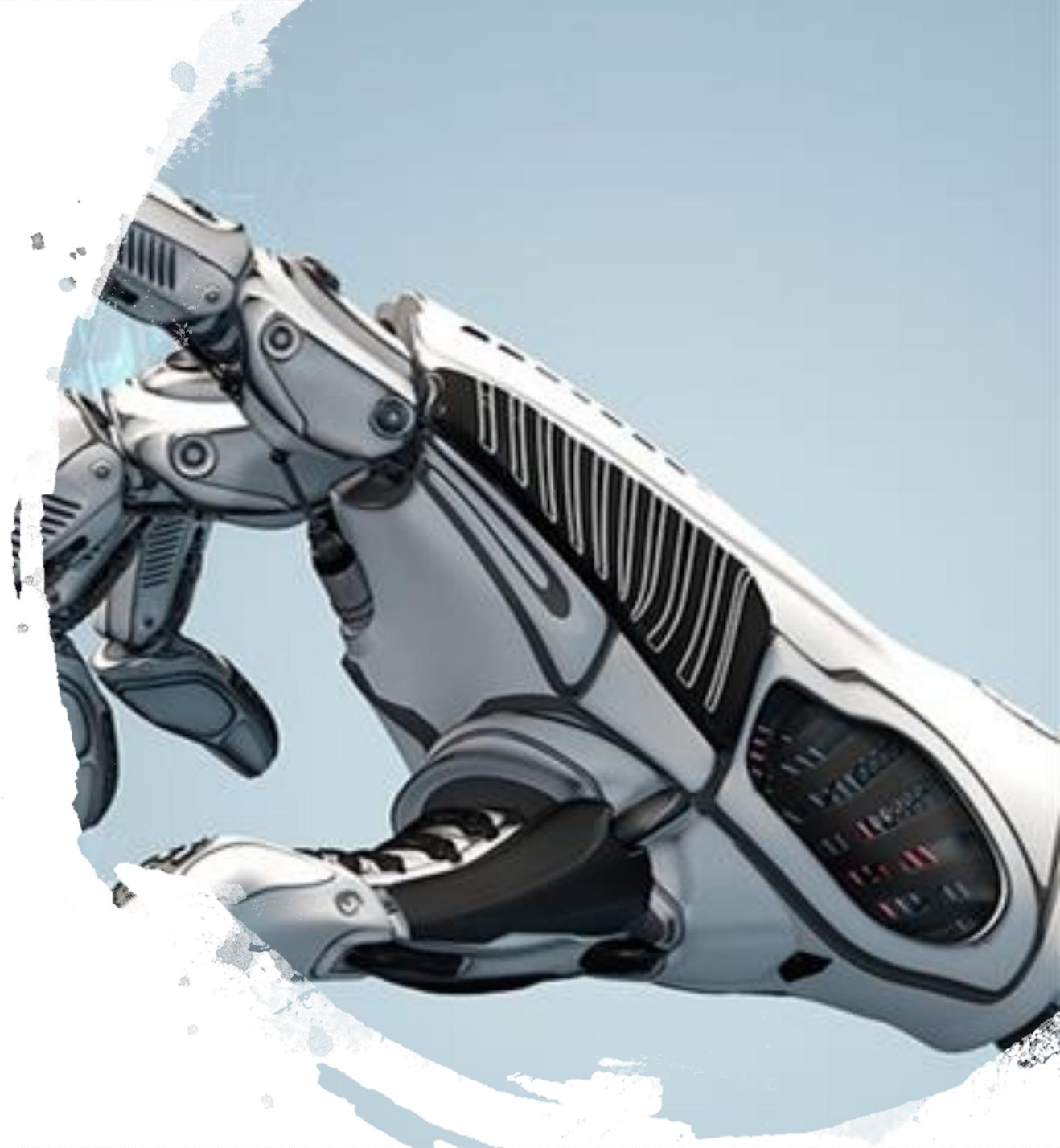


Examples of Use in Popular Culture

- Transhumanism often represented in films as a negative aspect of humanity - shown as “mad scientists” where there is a negative plot twist causing damage e.g. Incredible Hulk.
- However, also positives , e.g. Limitless – a struggling writer is given a nootropic allowing him to have perfect recollection, and is expressed as a positive biological enhancement.
- Films such as Divergent highlight the potential issues with transhumanism due to the mind control that is used in the film through a special serum.
- Another example is Black Mirror, episode titles: The Entire History Of You - shows an enhancement that gets rid of the issue of forgetting (help with diseases like dementia and Alzheimers) but also asks, would someone really want to be able to replay/relive everything?
- Science fiction films - assumption that all humans are defective and therefore the entire population of the world to be wiped out and started anew with the perfection that Transhumanism supposedly creates.
- Transhumanism in pop culture brings up the question of perfection as in each different film or show there are different way in which the modification makes the person perfect.

Augmented Humans and implications for the individual

- Technological and/or artificial alterations or additions to the human body
- Usually uses techniques such as human-machine integration and human genetic engineering, to restore, improve or enhance physical or mental capability and productivity.
- Can be considered as an improvement on the limitations of the natural human body.



Pros and Cons of the Tool

| Pros | Cons |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More equality – help those with disabilities, level out social class/race/ethnicity differences through personalised drugs – also enhance those in poverty-stricken areas so lack of resources has less impact. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extending Human life could put a greater strain on healthcare facilities, especially in poorer countries that already lack basic health services. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More efficiency – quicker working, potential for humans to not need to work altogether, already using AI to improve lives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher unemployment due to people living longer? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less need/reliance on pharmaceuticals – long-term economic savings and proactive approach to healthcare | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance class divide and big impact on economy due to lack of work/jobs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Longer life expectancy – more time to spend with loved ones, with better health – wouldn't have to rush through life | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Might not be particularly sustainable – resource/electricity/environmental impact |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater knowledge base – keep great thinkers/minds around for longer | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Could be a step towards eugenics |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potentially ordained by God | |

Conclusions

- Definite benefits to using augmentation, and potential for closing inequalities that exist today, and allow people to live longer, and better lives.
- Also could make it so that there is less dependence on finding pharmaceutical solutions by using all-encompassing augmentations to prevent disease.
- However, still issues around how equal this could be - could there be a cost barrier therefore perpetuating rather than closing social divide?
- Also, how ethical is this? What makes someone the 'ideal'?