Many trends never catch on. They remain thoughts without a future. It is a lexicon of culture that takes hold and finds its way across generations and circumstances. Thus is the story of human nature, as it is diced and sliced over the millennia by theoreticians, philosophers, artists and scholars. With theories tripping effortlessly onto blank slates, the cyclic changes of social progress move proudly forward and humbly backward judging our passions—the causes and effects of existence.

Human nature and its metaphorical attribution toward the evolution of humanity play a leading role in the identity of society. Worn like a badge reflecting how we see ourselves, our nature prescribes what we want others to see in us as well. Humans have gone so far as to impose on human nature, that they have even written a "treatise" to its cause. [Hume, 1739] Others develop new biosocial fields advancing the methodological investigation of biology and society which underlie human behavior. One thing can be certain, no matter the erudition invested in capturing its essence human nature changes over time, as will the image of how we see ourselves.

The Form.

The human form is one of the predominant themes in art throughout history. Its image symbolizes the core of individual identity and human nature. Michelangelo's "David" and da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" reflect the deep-rooted sentiment of philosopher Pico della Mirandola when he said that "...there is nothing to be seen more wonderful than the image of man." [Fleming 1966, p. 284]

Renaissance art's tangible human figures caused artists to think in scientific terms, becoming familiar with anatomical studies, mathematics, and the concept of space. Giotto's painterly life-like expressions led the way to restoring monumentality and dignity to the human figure, and the philosophy of humanism indicated the power of reason in which "man" developed broad intellectual interests of the social science and humanities.

Moving into the third millennium, we see the human form in state-of-the-art developments of humanoid robotics, such as Toyota's "Asimo"—the world's most advanced humanoid robot. Rendering focus on humanoids, the field of robotics facilely merges with scientific ingenuity to aid social needs. Designers build smart prosthetics, robotic limbs, digital eyes, and enhanced audio and cognitive processes. Bit by bit manufactured parts are replacing the human form in becoming the ideal of "man."

Changing Values.

Affected by this state of progress, human nature is at a crossroads. The bonds that tie us to nature’s biological ancient, accidental design are rapidly dissolving. We are questioning our
human biology and challenging what it means to be biological. Aristotle set a precedent in describing the human as a rational "animal" subject to change, "natural things are some or all of them subject to change." [Aristotle, 350 B.C.E.] The original nature of man, which was shaped by the genome, is being replaced by biotechnological maxims.

As human biology changes, human values change. Assessing the technologies and sciences available to us today, we can identify possible myths, symbols and stories that represent our ever-changing nature and, as inevitable to our species, wrap them around the image of ourselves—the human form.

The mythic Icarus tested his limits in an exhilarated winged-flight to the sun but suffered the consequences. [Bulfinch, 1998] Yet, mythic stories of man overcoming his limits are becoming a reality. Today people question the desirability of allowing the infiltration of technology into the human body and whether to restrict or encourage futuristic views and technological innovations. As a contested location of technologically enhanced humans, the new body will be a lightening rod for today's futurists.

**Classical, Cyborg and Transcendent Images.**

As a predominant theme in art, the human form is currently expressed in three different image-based styles: the classical image, the cyborg, and the transcendent entity.

The classical image which is based in the Greek and Roman classic artistic renderings and sculpture symbolizes stasis in human nature. An example is the early classical period's "Kritios Boy" [Unknown, 490-80 B.C.] which exemplifies the ideality of physical perfection and defeating all odds. Further examples of classical ideals span centuries of the arts, from Rembrandt’s subtle portrayal of human emotions, and later to Warhol's brilliantly colorful larger than life images. Most recently in science fiction, 23rd and 24th Century images look like humans surrounded by high technology. The stasis is keenly apparent in Star Trek characters that still grow old, develop rounded bellies, and balding scalps. However, regardless of the medium or method, the classical image remains depicted as human.

Beyond the human form, the stylized cyborg combines the ideal of perfection with the machine, coined Manfred E. Clynes and Nathan S. Kline as a foremost human mythic archetype, comprised of robotics and electronics for survival in extraterrestrial environments. Clynes and Kline concluded their seminal article with the comment that cyborg developments "will not only make a significant step forward in man's scientific progress, but may well provide a new and larger dimension for man's spirit as well." [Clynes and Kline, 1960, p. 33] Other interpretations of a cyborg approximate the human, but encourage machine-images with superhuman powers. Donna Haraway's interpretation of the cyborg [Haraway, 1991, pp. 149-181] differs from the original ideal, and is more of a "transhuman" [Vita-More, 1983] in scope than actual cyborg. Yet, in most instances the cyborg lacks social consciousness and suggests a grim and dire nature by impersonalizing humanity.

Placing an evolved nature over the machinery of form, transcendent entities provide an illusionary, abstract concept of theological or spiritual ideals. The transcendent’s otherworldly nature is removed from the classical perfection and the superhuman power by a refined, evolved, consciousness as depicted in many religious stories. Arthur C. Clark’s ideal of a transcendent entity is futuristically illustrated in his book *Childhood's End* [Clarke, 1987] wherein human-like forms merge together and, while losing their human form, becoming a collective mind.
Regardless of the artistic skill and high-tech vision used in depicting these image-based styles, none reflect an achievable image for human nature. An inspiring and realistic image can only be accomplished by agreeing that human nature is not static; that it changes over time.

**Primo Posthuman.**

I suggest a fourth approach to the artistic search for a new image, founded on scientific probability and inspired by technological prowess. This approach is a disciplined rationalism of the modernist’s enlightenment of progress and naturalism, and the multi-perceptual character of postmodernism which opens up pathways to express humanity in novel forms. It is the hypermodern approach of “Primo Posthuman,” as a future body prototype, that combines design with biotechnology, resulting in a new symbol for artistic themes.

Unlike the classical human form, Primo takes the ideal of "man" and incorporates it in its transhumanist values of improving the human condition. Unlike the cyborg, Primo’s unfolding nature is based on expanding choices. Unlike the transcendent, Primo is driven by the rational rather than the mystical.

Engineering the new human form of Primo Posthuman will occur, but not in one fell swoop. The design will come to pass sequentially by replacing the human body bit by bit with generated parts. Despite the fact that Primo is a huge undertaking, the sequential process is already taking place. From electronic prosthetics and cochlear implants to neurological pharmaceuticals, we are realizing the full potential of the human form, its skeletal system and the brain, with innovative technologies that will reduce the vulnerability of our body and mental processes.

Primo is engineered like a finely tuned machine and displayed visually like a biological body to mirror the human shape for cognitive association, visual recognition, and aesthetic appeal. Yet, the Primo body does not age, is easily upgraded, has meta-sensory components, 24-hour remote Net relay system, and multiple gender options. Its outer sheath is primed with smart skin which vanguard practical designs purposes for communication. The model structure is composed of assembled massive molecular cytes or cells connected together to form the outer fabric of the body. The smart skin is engineered to repair, remake, and replace itself. It contains nanobots throughout the epidermal and dermis to communicate with the brain to determine the texture and tone of its surface. It transmits enhanced sensory data to the brain on an ongoing basis. The smart skin learns how and when to renew itself, alerts the outside world of the disposition of the person; gives specific degrees of the body’s temperature from moment to moment; and reflects symbols, images, colors and textures across its contours. It is able to relate the percentages of toxins in the environment and the extract radiation effects of the sun.

The Primo prototype addresses certain biological traits as design and engineering problems, and solves them with possible solutions. When comparing Primo to the human form, it is essential to take into account that design objectives are intended to accommodate illness and degeneration. For example, the human form has a limited lifespan, legacy genes and is gender restricted. By contrast, Primo is ageless, has replaceable genes, and gender variegation. (Table 1.)

By its very nature, the ideal of Primo Posthuman relies on a new human nature, one that continues to change over time and is driven by social changes that are progressive, yet critical, in relying on a reasonable approach to applied technological modifications.

**Complex Issues.**
Human nature is a complex issue. Simply adding gadgetry to our bodies will not make us modern or evolved. As we grow more diversified, we will still want to learn, to experience, and to feel. The all too rare cross-pollination of ideas that occur among disciplines fosters a conjectural, multidimensional process for addressing complex issues. New images in art will not evolve alone, but be enriched by smart sciences and biotechnologies, affecting human nature.

Today we talk about digital art as integral to our nature. Yet digital forms resemble the cell structure within our bodies. The algorithms that we send into space, resemble the neurological activities within our brains. The 24/7 communications we have grown to expect will also reflect the nanotech grid inside our bodies, alerting and informing us of our inner and outer networks.

As time moves on and human nature experiences a variety of provocations that drive its framework, intelligent observation will adapt to the reoccurring changes in its appearance. While Primo Posthuman is a conceptual future body design, it is just one of many possibilities of image modification techniques that may be incorporated into human-like designs that simultaneously interface with intelligent agents. Today we communicate in all sorts of pseudo-personality types through the Internet. It is our current "nature" to take on a different name, personal profile, and even gender. Primo’s use of abstract reality is in pace with customized and ubiquitous product design, and in keeping with Net developments and mobile identities.

Social and Ideological Conflicts.

There is a tendency to see new human forms as radical, and even subversive or disruptive, manifestation of the image. Possible fervor in public sentiment, escalating toward conflicts among ethical views and social standards could arise. Many will cling to their "humanness" while others rush forward to pioneer new forms and environments.

The fundamental design patterns for the full contour of the new body will become a resounding public issue, which may inhibit and restrict futuristic philosophical views and technical innovations. The public wants to be involved in the arts and will certainly want to be involved in the shape of their own future. Even today, the public viewing of such art forms as painting, sculpture, symphony or dance can affect the prosperity of the artist. Consider the effect on society when it is the artist designing the look of Primo: this new art medium, the transhuman to posthuman body, will not be the sole design problem or creative resolve of the artist. The new human body will be looked at as every person's design challenge. The mounting public sentiment and rising conflicts of ethical views must be addressed by the artistic conceptualizes and designers of the new human body. Primo’s designers will have to work hard answer the many questions and concerns mounting from society’s views on human augmentation.

The design community, comprised of fine artists with technological prowess and technicians with an aesthetic sensibility may face head-on collision with sub-cultures that foresee sweeping alterations to the human psychology. Transhumanists who encourage physical or psychological improvement may press designers to push further than what social standards can accept. Likewise, Individuals with disabilities may push science to develop alternatives for their handicaps; and the wealthy and adventuresome may pay a high price to commission technological enhancements that they want rather than need. Regardless of why, when, or how biotechnological advancements come about, it is an individual choice and people have the right to make a choice as long as it does not harm others. Herein, it is paramount to support critical assessment of the technologies that can and will improve and enhance the human form and human nature and, perhaps, even necessary in light of attempts to block progress.
The retro movements attempting to impediment progress, are doing so not necessarily by reasonable means, but by personal ethics, such as religious beliefs, that may not be shared by others. We see instances of this happening through organizations such as the Foundation for Economic Trends and the Bioethics Council in the United States. Attempting to counter biological fundamentalists, organizations such as Extropy Institute, Advanced Cell Technology, and the highly visible Christopher Reeves Paralysis Foundation are making a stand. Biological hegemony will meet resistance, and people, no matter their ethical views, are likely to support biotechnology if it is done cautiously and saves lives or improves the quality of life.

**Future Image of Human Nature.**

Multidisciplinary talents will explore augmenting the human form, and society will question if it truly represents an ideal of human nature. Futurists will reason with progress and culture will anticipate major ideological shifts culminating in a somatically privileged class. Scientists will want to discover, artists to create, technicians to invent, and philosophers to reason. A renewal of the Renaissance ideals combining design and precision engineering with intellectual and philosophical finesse will emerge. The human form as a classical concept depicts the evolving art reflecting the ever changing elements that comprise human nature—from mosaics to machines, from Mirandola toward neoteric times.

Understanding images produced by artists during an era of biotechnology, proposed longer life spans, extraterrestrial travel, and the potential to improve the human condition can never be complete unless we frame the modern image within the continuum that began with the most predominant image—the human form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Body</th>
<th>21st Century Primo Prototype</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited lifespan</td>
<td>Ageless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legacy genes</td>
<td>Replaceable genes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wears out</td>
<td>Upgrades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random mistakes</td>
<td>Error correction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of humanity</td>
<td>Enlighten transhumanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence capacity 100 trillion synapses</td>
<td>Intelligence capacity 100 quadrillion synapses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender restricted</td>
<td>Gender changeability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prone to environmental damage</td>
<td>Impervious to environmental damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrosion by irritability and depression</td>
<td>Turbocharged optimism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination of messy gaseous waste</td>
<td>Recycles and purifies waste</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. "Primo Posthuman Prototype Comparison Chart"*
Bibliography


