

12

ETERNAL FUTURES

12.1 THE QUEST FOR ETERNAL LIFE

12.2 BIOTECHNOLOGY

12.3 NANOTECHNOLOGY

12.4 CRYONICS

12.5 ARTIFICIAL LIFE

12.6 FROM IMMORTALITY TO OBSOLESCENCE

I can visualize a time in the future when we will be to robots as dogs are to humans.

Claude Shannon

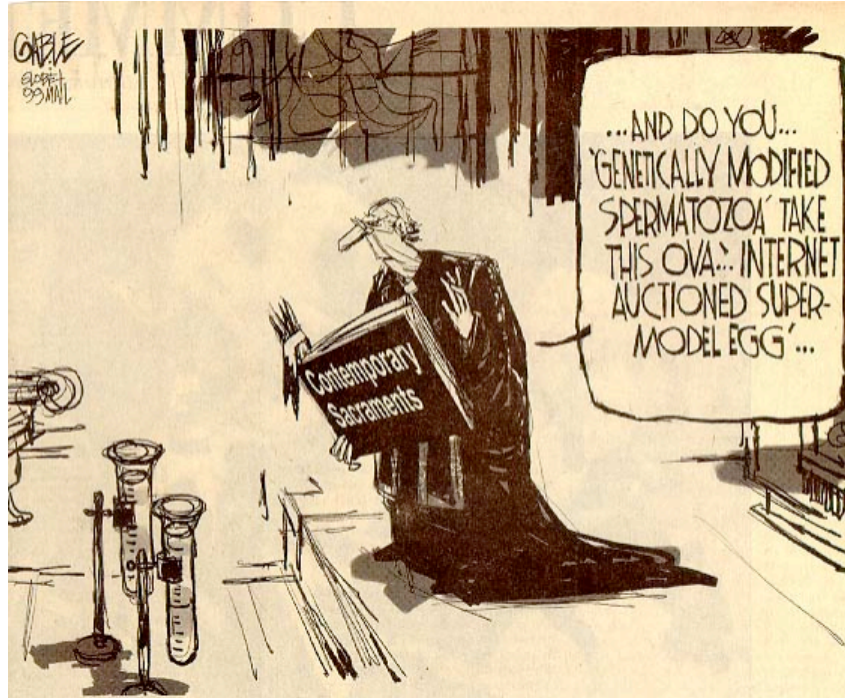
THE MATHEMATICAL THEORY OF COMMUNICATION, 1949

The aim of this book is to argue that Huxley was right; that the most significant threat posed by contemporary biotechnology is the possibility that it will alter human nature and thereby move us into a "posthuman" stage of history. This is important, I will argue, because human nature exists, is a meaningful concept, and has provided a stable continuity to our experience as a species.

Francis Fukuyama, THE POSTHUMAN FUTURE, Page 7

Within fifty to a hundred years, a new class of organisms is likely to emerge. These organisms will be artificial in the sense that they will originally have been designed by humans. However they will reproduce and "evolve" into something other than their original form; they will be "alive" under any reasonable definition of the word. These organisms will evolve in a fundamentally different manner --- the pace --- will be extremely rapid --- The impact on humanity and the biosphere could be enormous, larger than the industrial revolution, nuclear weapons, or environmental pollution. We must take steps now to shape the emergence of artificial organisms.

Dayne Farmer & Alletta Bellin, 1992



12 REFERENCES

- BECKER Ernest Becker
The Denial of Death
New York: Free Press, 1973
- FJERMEDAL Grant Fjermedal
**The Tomorrow-Makers:
A Brave New World of Living-Brain Machines**
New York: Macmillan, 1986
- REGIS 1994 Ed Regis
Meet the Extropians
Wired, 2.10, October 1994
- RIDLEY Matt Ridley
Genome: The Autobiography of a Species in 23 Chapters
New York: HarperCollins, 2000
- SOMERVILLE Margaret Somerville
The Ethical Canary: Science, Society, and the Human Spirit
Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2003