



Transhumanism Followup

By

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We recently published a book review about **Transhumanism**. What I didn't mention in the review is that I wrote about the topic almost 15 years ago. I didn't think it would be appropriate to mention my book while reviewing someone else's book.

What I'd like to do is a brief followup about this subject because it deserves more for us to consider.

I researched and wrote *A History of Man's Quest for Immortality* from 2005 – 2007 with the final publication date in May 2007 (Fifth Estate Publishing). It was definitely a labor of love. The book is 784 pages long and is divided into four sections:

1. The Elixir of Immortality
2. The Body of Immortality
3. The Science of Immortality
4. The Soul of Immortality

I wrote about **transhumanism** in the section about the *Science of Immortality*. As an author I would, of course, like you to purchase the book and hope you will. It contains a great deal of historical information about humanity's quest to be immortal.

History of Transhumanism

You may remember from our previous article that *Transhumanism* is defined by Cambridge Dictionary as “the theory that science and technology can help human beings develop beyond what is physically and mentally possible at the present time.” The definition I used for *Transhumanism* in my book 15 years ago was: “international movement that supports Immortality Science and technology geared toward the ending of disease and aging.”

The history of *Transhumanism* goes back to at least the fifth century BC with the Hippocratic Oath. We can follow the initial concepts through Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Arabian medical traditions to the Scholastic and Humanistic Periods to the present time.

Behind the growth of Western scientific medicine were dedicated professors and scientists in European medical universities. One of the first medical schools was started in the 11th century A.D. in Salerno, Italy. Other schools were built in Bologna, Paris and Padua. A HISTORY OF MAN'S QUEST FOR IMMORTALITY, FIFTH ESTATE PUBLISHING, 2007, P 394

The section on the Science of Immortality names scores of scientists who were involved in the development of the science through the centuries. Many of the scientists I wrote about who were alive when we published *A History of Man's Quest for Immortality* in 2007 have since died. However, some are still alive. They include Ray Kurzweil, Edward Feigenbaum, Brian Morris, Bruce J. Klein, Aubrey de Grey, John Harris, Stephen Van Sickle, Robert A. Freitas Jr., Steen Willadsen, Panos Davos, Paul Billings, S. Jay Olshansky, Bruce Carnes and Michael West. Dr.

West is a personal friend from more than 40 years ago when we attended the same church.

These scientists and futurists worked on many aspects of *Transhumanism* during the second half of the 20th century into the first part of the 21st century, including:

- artificial intelligence (AI)
- intelligent machines
- ascribing mental qualities to machines
- AI to to medicine and biology
- applications of AI in organic chemistry
- artificial intelligence and advanced automation
- robotics
- making robots conscious of their mental states
- semantic information processing
- future of the human mind
- gene control by messenger RNA
- transfection and transgenic studies

- dietary restriction and aging
- the 120 year diet
- strategies for engineered negligible senescence
- cloning and immortality
- genetic immortality
- cryopresevation and immortality
- anti-aging medicine
- medical nanotechnology
- stem cell therapeutics

I did an experiment in *A History of Man's Quest for Immortality* for the month of October in 2006 where I recorded all of the news stories from each day that dealt with some aspect of the science of immortality. You'll find it under the heading of Immortality Science in the News from pages 455 – 468. We could do the same thing now and look back on it in 15 years to see how the science of immortality progresses and whether scientists can reach

their goal of extending both the length and quality of life of humans on earth.

I'll close with my introduction to the section on Science and Immortality. I encourage you to purchase the book and look deeper into humanity's quest for immortality. There is an answer to our quest.

The Science of Immortality

Thousands of years of searching for immortality through elixirs, exercises, incantations and mummification brings us to today and tomorrow. The Science of Immortality has become a multi-billion dollar industry with the stated goal of lengthening life until the human race can attain immortality. The stated goal goes beyond just lengthening human existence. Improving that existence is paramount to the overall purpose of life extension. One organization stated its goal this way: “extension of the fully functional human life” (Science of Longevity Foundation).

Hundreds of thousands of scientists and researchers are working around the world every day for the purpose of finding the “cure” to aging. Some scientists believe mankind may be within 10 to 20 years of unlocking the secrets to immortality and that babies born during this century (21st century A.D.) may be able to live to be a

thousand years of age or older! The average life expectancy of a person born in the United States in 1900 A.D. was about 47 years. The average life expectancy for Americans now is about 78 years (latest government figures from the Centers for Disease Control). That's a big increase in just one century. Experts believe the combination of better health care, nutrition, immunization and sanitation during the 20th century played a major role in keeping people alive longer. Many believe current and future scientific advances could double or triple that life expectancy by the end of this century (160 to 240 years of age!) and some believe true physical immortality is now within reach.

We read about Immortality Science every day in newspapers, magazines and on the Internet. We hear about it on the radio and see it on television. We can no longer keep up with the new information coming out every day. Immortality Science has added thousands of new words to our language, for example: cryonics (cryopreservation), nanotechnology, genetics, cloning, microglial senescence, cognitive architecture, stem cell therapy, deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), genetic code (ATGC), double helix, T-cell subset values, combinatorial chemistry, transhumanism, experimental gerontology, cellular immortality, caloric restriction mimetics, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, cybernetics, bioenergetic disease, biodemography, accelerated change, gerontomodulation through hormesis, anti-aging medicine, disposable soma theory, regenerative therapies, biomorphic robotics, telomerase gene, genome, paradigm shift, microbial catabolism, autosome, chromosome, pegylation, high throughput screening (HTS), cytogenic

mapping, gel electrophoresis, life- extension therapy, transgenic, microarray technology, chemotherapy, bioinformatics, technological singularity, gene translocation, protein engineering and autoradiography.

It is far beyond the purpose of this section about the Science of Immortality to explain every detail of the science and research that concerns achieving physical immortality. Rather, our purpose is to briefly lift the cover off the history of Immortality Science so we can better understand its beginning, growth and future for the human race. pp 391-392

A History of Man's Quest for Immortality by Mark McGee
(Fifth Estate Publishing, 2007, 784 pages)