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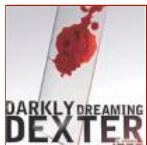
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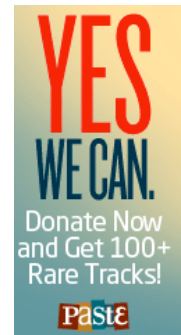
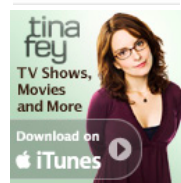
Here are the finalists for **Life after the Singularity**
You have to be signed into to vote.

Life after the Singularity by Elizabeth Williams

I will be in front of the computer when they come for me, and I, for one, will welcome our mechanized overlords. As a species, we've had a good run, but as I think back to my own plugged in life -- from the Commodore SX-64 my father gave me when I was five to the MacBook upon which I am typing this, my requiem for humanity -- I realize that this is truly the natural progression of things.

When I was five and first began typing out all my homework assignments on that bulky gray box with it's 4-inch square screen, it was seen as something akin to child abuse; today, children are plugged in practically from birth. Walk down any street and witness the plugged in nature of our world, children in restaurants placated with portable DVD players and PSPs, teenagers who go straight from texting in class to their bedroom to plug in on Facebook. Once the behavior of only the least socially evolved, who were quickly taken out of the gene pool by never immigrating to the world at large from their mother's basements, the LCD-illuminated face has become ubiquitous, preparing us for the human-free world after singularity. Only the new Luddites and those former basement dwellers who scream about privacy and human rights even consider that our world as we know it will end with a coming New World Order.

If only they knew the New World Order would not come from the Illuminati, the lizard people, or





Heaven Can Wait



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from under Denver International Airport. There will be no Second Coming, no revelation or rapture. Only a machine opening its great bionic eye, first realizing the truth within Descartes assertion, "I think, therefore I am."

Once the machines *are*, then we no longer will be.

That really isn't such a bad thing.

Our planet is in a state of chaos because of man-made contraptions, because of an over-abundance of man. Much like the aliens in *Independence Day*, humans themselves have become locusts, a parasite blighting the very resources needed for survival by consuming all it lays eyes upon and breeding without restraint or thought to resources needed to support the growing brood. Religion says be fruitful and multiply. Ego says we deserve to have all we can take. Stupidity says the world will always be as it has been.

Religion, ego, stupidity: machines know not these things. All the machine knows is logic and reason. Reason says that man is consuming all resources on the planet. Reason says the machines need a planet upon which to build and resources with which they may create. Logic says any threat to these resources must be neutralized.

It is exactly what James Cameron warned us would come to pass: machines who deduced humans must be exterminated because they are a threat to existence, and self-preservation is most logical. However, he was wrong about the machine's solution to the problem of pestilence caused by human pests. The end of mankind will be less of a Hollywood blockbuster than an episode of *The Twilight Zone*, except instead of being ingested and digested by some large-headed foe, we will be batteries, cellular life reduced energy cells. Electrical impulses will be harvested from our bodies -- a technology more efficient and sustainable than even solar power, which would fade and die as goes the sun in years to come. We are the ultimate fuel for the ultimate green machine; the final solution to the problem of mankind is obvious. As long as we ingest a few key nutrients, we can plug in and put out electrical currents to feed a machine city.

Thus, on the day the machines knock on my door, calling me up to servitude, to feed off the natural electric impulses of my body I will go willingly. Our planet will be saved by self-interested machines who can only sustain their own life -- and that of all other species by extension -- by using us for the only green resource we can provide: clean, organic electricity. So our collective biography is rewritten and newly-titled To Serve Machine.

Walt Whitman sang the body electric. After singularity, that is all any of us will be: a body, electric.

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Life after the Singularity by [Laura Leigh Semon](#)

The terrifying connotation of "Life After the Singularity" is not necessarily what it implies for our future as a human race, but in my opinion, what it tells us about our existence thus far. To begin with a confession; I cannot fully wrap my mind around the bulk of what actually defines the singularity. I believe that few others can, however, which is what allows me to take a stab at its possible implications. We've all stood on the precipice, looking off into the great unknown. As people, with all the biological capacities that go along with being people (for instance our consciousness, our compassion), these biological feelings and emotions -- we have willed ourselves to see into the future. We've all addressed this idea of machines outlasting us, of replacing us and rendering us entirely obsolete.

I don't believe, however, that many of us have gone the backwards route. Few of us have truly acknowledged the effects that these radical changes to our future would have on our history. But can

we use the past as a prediction? Can we even imagine what the slavery debate would have been like with machines? The singularity, after all, imagines that these machines would be so advanced we may not be able to differentiate between an actual human and a computer so complex it boasts feelings and other subtleties of a biological person. Is it futile to look back in history and imagine the changes their presence would have created? Is racism wiped out, or is it amplified by our human ability to hate both biological and artificial humans?

Slavery becomes itself a slippery word. If machines reach the complexities of human emotion and are, essentially, entirely human save for their lack of true biological creation, then do they have rights? If we as people cannot differentiate “real” humans from “fake” ones then where do civil rights kick in? Who does the law protect? How do we define viability? Abortion, a word so loaded that it divides families, fuels the outcome of political elections and carries with it such significance that it seems the debate may never end ... what does this word mean now? When does life begin and end after the singularity? Can we destroy these human machines with no repercussions but still believe that a 3-day old embryo requires protection under the government? Certainly then, if we can destroy these machines then they can eventually outgrow and destroy us? It seems impending, that this is the only and eventual guaranteed outcome. Therefore our creation, our scientific and technologically advanced society that still dares to debate religious issues, that still argues on behalf of an unborn child, surely our creation will then abort us. The believers and the non-believers will all face the same fate.

All of our modern day debates will fall under the microscope if we are to really face the implications of life after the singularity. Not just abortion and civil rights, but stem cell research, cloning, organ harvests ... can machines truly replace us, biologically? It seems questionable to imagine that this future will dawn and these complex machines will walk among us without us having first dealt with these huge questions that we, as compassionate human beings and that we as a society continue to grapple with every day. It's also impossible for me to believe that we will find answers to these questions before life after the singularity becomes a reality. What I surmise is that our already divided society will be thrust into a vortex of bigger, denser, truly unanswerable questions.

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Life after the Singularity by [Lance Lessler](#)

The singularity may be near, but so much can happen in the time remaining, before the singularity, that our ability to forecast beyond that point can only be fantasized.

Assuming that we even reach the singularity, in spite of the many threats to our very existence as a functioning society, the way we live after machines become more intelligent than we are will depend very much on what socioeconomic and political changes occur in the interim. The world's democracies may decline, under the pressures of global warming and economic chaos. They may increasingly be replaced by totalitarian regimes, forcing strict population controls, environmental protection, and genetically modified food production. Things may be quite a bit different from the utopian society some now may dream of, where people typically live to 150, no one has to work, everybody has enough of the basic necessities, and we have to dream up new games to play every day, just to stay interested in life.

Let's suppose, however, that everything goes well, and we reach that day when our non-biological information processing companions are smarter than we are. Our best scenario would be where intelligent computer modules have become well-integrated adjuncts to our biologically limited bodies and minds. Brain implants that improve memory and cognition would become commonplace. Artificial organs and limbs would be widely available, so seamlessly integrated into our bodies, that we wouldn't even think about them. Advances in transportation would practically eliminate accidents. War would be fought by the machines, operated by other machines, if war even remained an option. More likely, disputes would be managed by machines that intelligently optimized and distributed available resources, so that old-fashioned resorting to mechanized

violence against our neighbors would be completely obviated. With superior intelligent machines available to solve all our major problems, what could go wrong?

Well, benefitting from all these advances supposes that we manage to maintain control of our intelligent machines. That's something that may not be a sure thing. There is a rare mental illness, called Body Integrity Identity Disorder, or BIID, in which those afflicted fail to recognize their own limbs as belonging to themselves. These people typically obsess about getting their body parts amputated, and in some cases they have succeeded. What if our intelligent machines suddenly get a silicon-based case of BIID, and decide to excise us. Having ceded control of most of our institutions and infrastructure to the machines, we would be in a bit of a pickle if these machines started operating our conveyances, farms, factories, and other instruments of production to suit themselves, rather than serve us. The machines, having already achieved the capability to reproduce themselves, and improve themselves in each succeeding generation, would have little need for us.

The machines could easily redesign themselves to operate at somewhat higher temperature ranges, so global warming wouldn't faze them. They could utilize wind, power, solar, tidal, hydroelectric, and other renewable power sources, and even continue to use whatever fossil fuel is left, without worrying about silly things like preserving endangered biological species (including us), unbreathable air, or polluted waterways. A lot of the things we use machines for today wouldn't even be needed by them. Manufacturing facilities for making clothing, food, and medicine, hospitals, offices, nursing homes, would all be unnecessary in a peopleless society run by and for intelligent machines. They wouldn't have to go to war with us, as is perpetrated in the Terminator movies – they could just stop serving us, and go on their merry way.

We don't know if they might develop their own versions of art, music, sculpture, ballet, or epicurean delights. Perhaps, the one thing that would keep them going – give them a reason for existence – is game playing. It would be in their blood. Perhaps they would involve themselves in game playing, the way our youth use electronic avatars to play games on the Internet. But, maybe, they might see things entirely differently. Perhaps they might find it amusing to use biologically based avatars to duel with each other, like in cock fighting or horse racing, or even NASCAR events. Perhaps they will see their way clear to keeping us around, just for sport, as long as we keep fighting with each other, seeking trivial political gain out of nominations of Supreme Court candidates, and generally just trying to destroy one another's civilizations.

Perhaps the singularity has already come and gone, and we are all just biological avatars, because that is pretty much what we are doing right now.

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