



WEF Transhumanists will fail to hack humans because of the complexities of human nature such as free will

Description

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Transhumanists believe “humans are hackable animals” therefore democracy is impossible and we need to be hacked for our own good. But their ignorance is their Achilles’ Heel and they are certain to fail.

The World Economic Forum (“WEF”) Transhumanist movement is more or less open about the fact that they want to trade our self-governed and representative democracies in for AI-managed surveillance systems that will ration resources and keep tabs on individual performances. And from the various promotional videos and speeches made by the WEF, we can gather that an Internet of Things and Internet of Bodies is slated to replace the functions of community and social and political structures.

But, in the essay below V. N. Alexander argues that WEF members have simplistic views of, not only human nature but also of ecosystems and societies.

One of the complexities that WEF members have failed to grasp is free will. Yuval Noah Harari, for example, seems to think free will is merely an output of what has been input into the “machine” – the machine is us. There is nothing in the machine to transform what is input. Instead, there is an algorithm in the machine that can be decrypted and reprogrammed – that can be hacked. How wrong they are.

By V.N. Alexander

“Liberalism tells us that the voter knows best, that the customer is always right, and that we should think for ourselves and follow our hearts. Unfortunately, ‘free will’ isn’t a scientific reality. It is a myth inherited from Christian theology. Theologians developed the idea of ‘free will’ to explain why God is right to punish sinners for their bad choices and reward

saints for their good choices.”

– Yuval Noah Harari

Although World Economic Forum (“WEF”) transhumanists may not have a unified ideology *per se*, we may look to Yuval Noah Harari, a WEF member who is a prolific writer and voluble frontman, to get a general sense of the assumptions held by that coterie of financial elites who think they can alter the course of human civilization, human evolution, and re-codify human rights. While their grandiose narcissism verges on the cartoonish-ness of the comic book villain seeking world domination, we must, nevertheless, take their words and their plans seriously because their claims to ownership and/or control of monetary systems, communication infrastructure and natural resources do, unfortunately, lend them quite a bit of power over us – at the moment.

What is the WEF Transhumanist movement? Although their stated objectives are cloaked in tones of benevolent concern, they are more or less open about the fact that they want to trade our self-governed and representative democracies in for AI-managed surveillance systems that will ration resources and keep tabs on individual performances. The proposed tools for this include, Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), Social Impact Investing, and [gamified](#) software for education, health monitoring, welfare recipient monitoring, and job skills training. As Harari argues in an [essay](#) in *The Guardian*, liberal democracy and the belief in free will are “dangerous,” because governments and corporations that have access to everyone’s digital histories will soon “know you better than you know yourself” and they will be able to “hack” you, put ideas in your head, get you to buy bad things and vote for bad people. Without supplying a rationale, he adds, “the easiest people to manipulate will be those who believe in free will.”

In contrast, the ones who know they can’t think for themselves, Harari further argues, will be saved by their personalised AI babysitters. In Harari’s future world, there will be no God dangling the carrot or brandishing the stick, but there will be an all-seeing AI that does. What “we need,” he goes on, is “an antivirus for the brain. Your AI sidekick will learn by experience that you have a particular weakness...and would block [it] on your behalf.” The obvious alternative solution, fully protecting privacy and making data collection by governments and corporations illegal without full informed consent,¹ seems not to have occurred to Professor Harari.

From the various promotional videos and speeches made by the WEF, we can gather that an Internet of Things and of Bodies is slated to replace the functions of community and social and political structures. In the future, researchers will develop Brain-Machine-Interfaces (BMI) that will monitor, and eventually help cause, our thoughts and actions as well as diagnose and treat any mental health conditions. We will be ushered into Smart Cities (think luxury Borg condos). While the countryside is left to [re-wild](#) (for the pleasure of oligarchs on safari), agriculture will move into laboratories, and we will be fed [synthetic chicken](#), [wormburgers](#) and LED-grown medicated lettuce in exchange for doing some kind of work that will probably involve operating mining robots or drones using Virtual Reality (VR) headsets. I wish I were exaggerating for comic effect, but these are the kinds of programs being promoted by the WEF and in Klaus Schwab’s book, [The Fourth Industrial Revolution](#).

Despite the Transhumanists’ claim that they strive to augment human abilities with new technologies, the kinds of hacks they’ve offered so far are mostly negative. It’s relatively easy to maim, disable, block, traumatise, and propagandise; it will be a little difficult to figure out how to use a BMI to make us

smarter or to read our thoughts so we don't have to type or speak. As Neuralink's recent "[show and tell](#)" revealed, the company's progress is so far underwhelming. As human trials near, the infection risk associated with implanting a device into a paraplegic's brain to help him operate a smartphone does not seem justified to me. Why go through all the trouble (and brain surgery!) to detect brain activity of motor control (e.g., moving the eyes), then to use AI to pick out the signal from the noise, and then turn the signal into clicks on a screen, when the person could more easily operate a computer interface with voice commands?

It may be that the architects of the Transhumanist revolution actually believe that AI-augmented and AI-managed society will be a big improvement, more efficient, more objective, equitable and inclusive, free from the biases and prejudices that plague the human species. But it's worth noting that these kinds of plans have never turned out well in any of our culture's science fiction explorations. Perhaps none of the WEF members have ever read Mary Shelley or Orwell and have never seen a Black Mirror episode.

A Historical Perspective on the Idea of Free Will

Harari promotes himself as an innovative and modern thinker, working to free us from medieval superstitions.

It's 2022.

Medieval theology was revised with the de-centering discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo and that theology was adapted to fit Newton's findings and that was adapted even to Darwinism (in [New England Transcendentalism](#)) and that to the Big Bang theory (*Fiat lux!*), and so forth, on down to the [Vatican Observatory](#) exploring the idea of divine *quantum* cosmology and *etc., etc.* Theologies are quite capable of adapting to every new scientific conception of determinism and chance that comes along. I am not religious, but I have respect for the many scholars who have grappled valiantly over the millennia with the difficult question of how we do seem to have free will even in a universe that is determined by either fate, God, physics, natural selection, or quantum foam.

Because Harari is still trying to debunk medieval theology, the closest conceptual relative to his notion of free will is found among 18th-century Enlightenment *philosophes*, who critiqued the medieval church and thought that free will is an illusion. I note that Harari rejects the liberalism birthed by the Enlightenment, mainly because he thinks technology has made their approach to safeguarding individual rights (e.g., elections, free markets) obsolete.

One of the most exemplary figures of that period is mathematician [Pierre Laplace](#), who famously said that – I'm paraphrasing here – if we knew the position and velocity of every atom at the beginning of time, we could predict every event that follows, even human actions, which are just the outcomes of chemical interactions ruled by the laws of physics.

Echoing Denis Diderot's fictional hero, [Jacques the Fatalist](#), Harari tells us:

"Every choice depends on a lot of biological, social and personal conditions that you cannot determine for yourself. I can choose what to eat, whom to marry and whom to vote for, but

these choices are determined in part by my genes, my biochemistry, my gender, my family background, my national culture, etc.”

Harari seems to be saying that a human body is like an instrument through which forces pass without being transformed by the organisational structure of the body. Input = output and nothing is interpreted by the “machinery” that is you. Harari seems to assume that living organisms are like computers and can be manipulated (“hacked”) in predictable ways. Repeatedly in talks, articles and books, he suggests that a person’s cognitive program can be altered—by external forces, information, or chemistry—because there is nothing “inside” the person to counter or alter those forces. There is no ghost in the machine. Instead, there is an algorithm in the machine that can be decrypted and reprogrammed.

While Laplace lamented that a human consciousness did not exist that could calculate the mind-boggling number of interactions that would be necessary to predict human actions, today’s Transhumanists are hopeful that supercomputers—equipped with AI that is fed with mountains of Big Data on every digital move we’ve ever made—are now close to possessing the processing power to predict outcomes precisely. If those with access to such computers can predict what people will do, they can control them. (Cue the maniacal laughter sound effect.)

Maybe not.

In 1961, Edward Lorenz was using a computer to make predictions about the weather, and he found that if he made a tiny “insignificant” change to the input, the output changed drastically, all out of proportion to the small change. To model the weather is to try to model a *complex system*, whose dynamics are non-linear; your ability to predict such a system’s outcome does not improve in proportion to the amount of data you input. So Bigger and Bigger Data and faster and faster processing isn’t going to improve prediction and control as much as the Transhumanists hope. Biological systems are infinitely more complex than weather systems, so with Lorenz’s discovery of “deterministic chaos,” any hope that one would ever be able to accurately predict and thereby precisely control a human being’s actions had to be abandoned. In 1986, non-linear dynamic systems researchers, Crutchfield, et al. published a watershed [article](#) entitled, “Chaos,” in *Scientific American*, in which they expanded on Lorenz’s findings, arguing that, even if the universe were entirely deterministic (and it most likely is not), complex biological processes are inherently unpredictable—due to the way they internally process information—and thus, ultimately, they are uncontrollable, except in trivial ways.

In the article, Crutchfield et al., like theologians before them, also grapple with the question of free will and how it relates to determinism and chance. They conclude:

“Innate creativity may have an underlying chaotic process that selectively amplifies small fluctuations and moulds them into macroscopic coherent mental states that are experienced as thoughts. In some cases, the thoughts may be decisions, or what are perceived to be the exercise of will. In this light, chaos provides a mechanism that allows for free will within a world governed by deterministic laws.”

There followed many decades of research investigating free will in the terms of self-organisation and

complex systems science. As I have noted [elsewhere](#), many neuroscience researchers describe how chaotic attractors and/or emergent travelling waves provide the differentiation in spatial patterns that underlie working memory and attention. Such findings by no means settle the question of free will. Science is never settled. Arguments about the nature of free will will continue as long as humans are around.

Even as I claim that human beings very likely do have some kind of capacity for making their own idiosyncratic choices, I also note that it is painfully obvious that people can be manipulated. In the last couple of years, with horror, we vaccine apostates have witnessed people lose the ability to think for themselves.² At a chemical level, [what has probably happened](#) to these traumatised people is that the vagus nerve, which was activated in a state of fear, triggered the release of norepinephrine, which flooded the amygdala and locked in memories. Whatever kinds of associative memories are formed in such a situation, for example, the repeated claim that an experimental “vaccination is the only solution” to a virus with a [relatively low fatality rate](#), will be a strong persistent memory, even if irrational. This process of strengthening memories associated with dangerous situations is a very useful tool of our evolved biology that has been hijacked (hacked) by those applying false information under a kind of torture. But the fact that people can be manipulated with something immaterial like false information just shows how people’s thoughts are not wholly determined by material reality. *We can be deceived.* We can also be physically forced into doing things we don’t want to do; we can be coerced, bribed or drugged. Our mental capacities can be damaged by illness. We can become addicted to our own habits. There are many ways in which our ability to think and act reasonably and for our own good can be compromised. This in no way means that free will has no scientific reality. It just means that we are part of the world we live in and we are affected by it.

Free will is not about not having any constraints. Free will is more about being responsible for your actions. Being free is not an all-or-nothing property. It’s a constant negotiation. The term we want is really *agency*, not *free will*. Not thinking can even be part of how we exercise agency. Most of the time, during our daily activities we’re on autopilot. We can drive our cars without really thinking, even react intelligently in a split second by putting on the brakes when we see red lights ahead. Subconscious auto-thinking can also switch off when we encounter a new situation that we don’t have a mental habit for, which allows us to learn something new.

Maybe the tragedy that we are currently suffering through is due to the fact that too many people put themselves on autopilot, outsourcing the responsibility of making decisions for themselves and their children to trusted authorities. Unfortunately, thinking for yourself requires a lot of work. *And no one else can do it but you.*

Whenever I find myself in a crowd of protesters who are all yelling, “freedom, freedom, freedom!” I yell, “responsibility!” My cry doesn’t work as well as a chant, but IMHO, it does work better as a description of what we probably all want. We don’t want the freedom to do whatever the hell we like, selfishly. We want the personal responsibility that comes with being free to question, research, discuss, decide and act. Likewise, we don’t have the *right* to do with our children whatever we want; we have the *responsibility* to protect their health and wellbeing.

In a word, the phenomenon of free will is today understood as *emergent* from biological constraints, relations, and, what I would call, self-made luck.³ Harari claims that the concept of free will has only

ever been based on the notion of a pre-existing essentialist nature that is “independent of all physical and biological constraints.” Although Professor Harari is a historian, he has apparently only read the CliffsNotes for Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas, and even less of complex systems science.

Conclusions

The objective of this essay is not to win a philosophical debate against Harari. In fact, it's better for us if all the WEF members continue in their simplistic views of, not only human nature but also of ecosystems and societies. Their ignorance is their Achilles' Heel. It allows them to believe it is possible to achieve top-down control over a complex system like the planet and all its inhabitants. They are certain to fail. The danger is, of course, that they will take us down with them. Catastrophic change is already underway with regard to our food supply and health systems. We have limited time to position ourselves to save as many people as possible. But we do have a chance.

A complex system like human society, interconnected in so many ways, maintains itself to a great degree automatically by self-organisation (and to a lesser degree by conspirators). The role of habit in maintaining the system and suppressing change cannot be overstated. To implement technocratic totalitarian rule, the Fourth Industrial Revolutionists won't be able to just fine-tune the present system; they will have to take down the system that they have corrupted and abused to get to their positions of power. That will leave them vulnerable. If they want us to become dependent on their lab-grown food rations, they will have to sink shipping, lose food processing plants to suspicious fires, outlaw fossil fuel agriculture and slaughter the herds in factory farms. So many aspects of the economy and society hinge upon the present system that when it is disassembled, it will be a devastating shock. We can expect chaos. The outcome will be impossible for them to control, even with all their economic powers. During that time of chaos, we will have as much of an opportunity as the WEF, if not more because there are so many more of us, to pivot to local food production, regenerative grazing and permaculture farming.

Many of us have already switched to local foods, decentralised education (like home schooling for kids and IPAK-EDU for adults) and have left the industrial-pharmaceutical-medical complex. The people's revolution has already begun. Don't look for any leaders to think for us or to tell us what to do.

Sign up for V. N. Alexander's course at [IPAK-EDU: *The Perils of Coding Humanity: A Response to Transhumanism*](#). The 15-week interactive online course begins on 9 Jan 2023.

About the Author

[V. N. Alexander](#), PhD, works on the philosophy of creativity and art-science topics. She is a member of the distinguished group of researchers, the Third Way of Evolution. Her work on novelist Vladimir Nabokov's contributions to the theory of insect mimicry has been widely recognised, and her award-winning literary fiction novels include, 'Smoking Hopes' (1996), 'Naked Singularity' (2003), and 'Locus Amœnus' (2015). Alexander is currently writing a political satire novel, 'Covid-1984, The Musical'.

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