

HU-MAN:

1: OF, RELATING TO, OR
CHARACTERISTIC OF HUMANS,
2: CONSISTING OF HUMANS,
3: HAVING HUMAN FORM OR
ATTRIBUTES.

AN-DROID:

1: A MOBILE ROBOT USUALLY
WITH A HUMAN FORM,
2: A ROBOT RESEMBLING A
HUMAN,
3: AN AUTOMATON THAT
RESEMBLES HUMAN BEINGS.

ANDROIDS ARE AUTOMATONS THAT RESEMBLE HUMANS. THEY ARE MACHINES THAT HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO LOOK AND ACT LIKE US. IN THE FILM, *BLADE RUNNER* (1982), ANDROIDS APPEAR IN THE FORM OF REPLICANTS, OR GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CREATURES COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF ORGANIC SUBSTANCE. SET IN THE YEAR 2019 IN DYSTOPIC LOS ANGELES, THESE LIFE-LIKE ANDROIDS ARE PRODUCED IN MASS-QUANTITY BY A HIGH-TECH BIOCORPORATION, THE TYRELL CORPORATION. THE FIRST ANDROIDS PRODUCED WERE CALLED ANIMIDS, OR ANIMAL REPLICANTS, DEVELOPED FOR USE AS PETS AND LABOR AFTER MOST REAL ANIMALS BECAME EXTINCT. HUMANOID REPLICANTS WERE NEXT. CREATED PRIMARILY FOR MILITARY PURPOSES, HUMANOID REPLICANTS WERE DESIGNED FOR THE EXPLORATION AND COLONIZATION OF SPACE. THE NEWEST MODEL, NEXUS-6, IS THE SUPREME REPLICANT—MUCH STRONGER AND FASTER THAN, AND VIRTUALLY INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM, REAL HUMAN BEINGS. THIS GENERATION OF REPLICANTS IS PROGRAMMED WITH A FOUR-YEAR LIFESPAN TO PREVENT THEM FROM DEVELOPING HUMAN EMOTIONS. THEY APPEAR HUMAN; THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED TO *FEEL* HUMAN.

THIS BRINGS UP TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMAN? AND, AS THE LINE BETWEEN HUMAN AND MACHINE BECOMES MORE AND MORE BLURRED, CAN WE REDEFINE THE DEFINITION OF HUMAN TO INCLUDE THIS CYBORGIAN INTERACTION? I APPROACH THESE QUESTIONS THROUGH THE EYES OF PRIS, THE REPLICANT I EMBODIED FOR THE IN-CLASS PANEL. SHE IS THE "BASIC PLEASURE MODEL" OF THE NEXUS-6 REPLICANTS, CREATED TO SEXUALLY SATISFY AND ENTERTAIN HUMANS. I EXPLORE HUMANITY THROUGH HER EYES AND OFFER UP A NEW DEFINITION OF "HUMAN" ACCORDING TO PRIS.



If I Only Had A Brain



Gender:	Female
Designation:	Pris
Model:	NEXUS-6 N6FAB21416
Incept. date:	February 14, 2016
Function:	Military/Leisure
Phys. Level:	A
Ment. Level:	B

MY RESEARCH:

The various definitions of "human" all seem to revolve around one concept—to be human means to be a human.

Human embodied in human form, "a person," "characteristic of humanity." The definitions can go on and on and never reach a solid conclusion, always with an underlying indication of hierarchy. To be human means to be **better** and **smarter** than that non-human thing over there.

Humanity, however, depends largely on non-human entities. Why? Because the human form is "extremely limited," claims Hans Moravec, Research Professor in the Robotics Institute of Carnegie Mellon University. The human brain, for instance, has to undergo "all kinds of unnatural training" to get it suited to perform, and even when it seems to have figured something out, it's actually only half way there. "And then, you die." Moravec has a solution for this, "...enhance your abilities via artificial intelligence, and extend your lifespan, and improve on the human condition." He believes that a machine can and will be truly human, and that by 2040, robots will be as smart as we are. This will lead to a

sort of "robotic evolution" that will "render us extinct in our present form."

It is currently 2019, however, and human form is not extinct, though robotics has greatly improved. I am an example of this advancement. I am a mixture of reality and fiction, of human and machine. I am Moravec's "Superhuman," though the law does not wish to define me this way. I am not "what can be reproduced, but that which is already reproduced...the hyper-real...which is entirely in simulation" (Bruno 67). I am more than human physically, yet allowed no human rights or protection. I am given a four-year lifespan so that I cannot develop the emotions that will make me human. There is fear in my potential—fear that my mechanical body, combined with human emotions, will make me superior. I am still inferior as I lack the latter.

In the panel I attended last Wednesday, I was asked why I valorize the human side of myself, when the machine part of me can do so much more. I would like to address that statement, for I am not asking to be completely human. I believe humans and machines are interchangeable. The human brain is constantly compared to a computer; there are

even theories that inherently imply this relation, such as the "computer processing approach." Humans and machines interpret information. As Katherine Hayles states, "humans create the programs, implement them, and interpret the results." Machines, in turn, help to organize this sea of data.

I am fascinated by her argument that humans partake in machine-like behaviors. "Machine-reading" is an adaptation of human form and learning. Digital technologies allow humans to "open new lines of inquiry and new theoretical possibilities" (12). They are "not just tools but tools that we think through" (11). To extend on this idea, there are new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) that exemplify the human-machine interaction. AI is the area of computer science that focuses on creating machines that can engage in behaviors that humans consider intelligent. Even newer is ambient intelligence (AmI). AmI takes this ability even further, so that machines aren't just "tools with ideas" but rather interactive beings that engage with the world environment.

As a replicant, I am an interpretation of programmed information, of which I use to interpret my surroundings. I

am a physical representation of the exchange between humans and non-humans. I am an internalization of "real" and "imaginary." I question the line that our verbal repertoire uses to separate me from humans. It is important that one envisions "human identity" as "an informational pattern rather than an embodied enaction" (Moravec).

HU-MAN:

- 1: A FUNCTIONING "BEING," ORGANIZED WITH INFORMATIONAL PATTERNS THAT SIGNAL AND RECEIVES RESPONSES,
- 2: AN INFORMATIONAL PATTERN THAT OPERATES ON THE TRANSFERENCE OF DATA,
- 3: A "HALLUCINATORY RESEMBLANCE" OF "REALITY," FUNCTIONING AS A SIMULATION AND INTERPRETATION OF "BEING."

Works Cited

Bruno, Giuliana. *Ramble City: Postmodernism and "Blade Runner"*. October. 1987. Vol. 41. 61-74.

Hayles, Katherine. *How We Think: Transforming Power and Digital Technologies*. Duke University. 1-44. Print.

Moravec, Hans. Interview by Charles Platt. *Superhumanism* 12 Oct. 1995: 1-9.