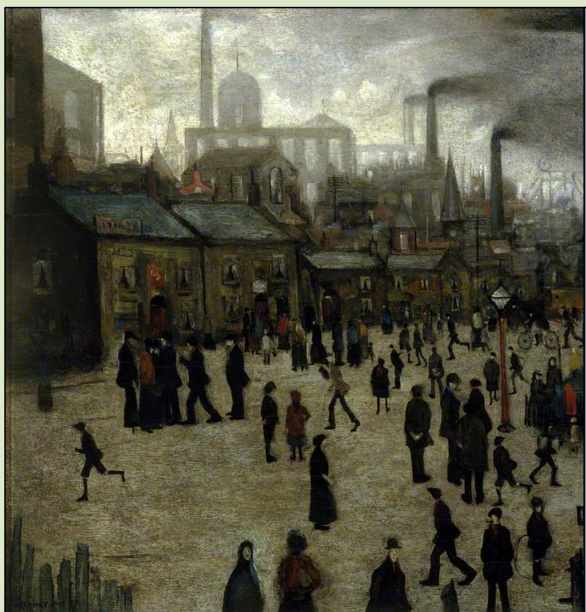# From scientific to social progress ?

Imagine a motto or slogan encapsulating the ambivalence of the human-machine relationship in the industrial age.

LS Lowry's *A Manufacturing Town*

Pay close attention to LS Lowry's painting A Manufacturing Town.

1. **When do you think it was painted?**
2. **Does it positively or negatively engage with industrial times?**
   Analyzing the painting, make a list of the arguments that could support each side of the question and decide accordingly.

Positive elements	Negative elements
Heroic image of working-class pride (painted at last)	Failure
	A political commentary on the social impact of industrialization
Modern technologies, modern infrastructures > development and comfort for more people	Fog of the chimneys
Ex. electric telegraph wires strung over the rooftops, electric or gas-mantle lighting, sewers.	Largely faceless workers as elements of that industrial machine > dehumanization
	Trapped in modern technologies
A bicycle > a marker of freedom for many people	Repetition, routine and regularity of workers' lives > reflect the mechanisms, as workers are enslaved to the machine
Liberation through modern technologies	Uniform rows of mill windows and terraced houses > reflect the workers' loss of identity and individuality
	Time like a master dictating their lives > they do not own their own time

From scientific to social progress ?

"Love the Machine, Hate the Factory"

From scientific to social progress ?

Adapted from the research article **"Re-assembling the Victorians: Steampunk, Cyborgs, and the Ethics of Industry"** by **Helena Esser**:
https://journals.openedition.org/cve/3480

More comprehensively, steampunk is understood as a popular retro-speculative aesthetic which has its origins in 1980s cyberpunk, but has experienced a new, internet-fuelled popularity and reach since around 2007. It views the nineteenth century through the lenses of Neo-Victorianism, technofantasy and retrofuturism. It has generated an active subculture whose participants utilise a perceived Victorian technophilia to fuel their own anachronistic explorations.

Steampunk is neo-Victorian insofar as it assembles Victorian architecture, fashion, music or literature into an inter-textual, hyper-Victorian collage and infuses it with anachronistic, implausible or fantastical technologies. It draws on the broad and multifaceted fictional legacy of the nineteenth century, for example Dickens's social criticism, the urban Gothic of Wilde, Stevenson, or Stoker, or the fantastic speculations of Verne and Wells. Therefore its re-stagings are often infused with romance and adventure, but may also focus on the downsides of industrial or colonial practices. Whereas the element of technofantasy may lead to the creation of airships, proto-computers or automata, steampunk's retro-futurist element imagines the alternative futures of a past that never was from the socio-cultural vantage point of the twenty-first century.

Steampunk recognises and actualises a widely-felt kinship with the nineteenth century as an age of accelerated technological development. It employs Victorian hopes and anxieties in order to reflect back our own concerns about human identity in the age of digital technology and fabricate more flexible alternatives.

Its counter-cultural core philosophy is built around a yearning for re-humanised technology that promises accessibility, vulnerability and individuation, following the credo 'Love the machine, hate the factory.' While its machines, hailed as 'real, breathing, coughing, struggling and rumbling parts of the world', become humanised, humans may in turn become mechanised or fused with technology.

In this quest to re-inject a sense of individuality and spontaneity into the machine, which involves 'imperfection' and 'chaos', steampunk responds to Marx's claim that the industrial factory drains human skill and intellect from the worker, and Ruskin's call for the return to manufacture. In accordance with this, steampunk partisans also reject the de-humanizing homogenization of technology and the consumer culture, in which only an elite of experts can operate, beneath the impermeable surfaces of digital devices, and where the user is denied access to and understanding of his or her computer, smartphone, navigation system, etc. In this way, steampunk makers mobilize a re-imagined Victorian aesthetic to resist 'the factory' as a symbol of the dominant capitalistic culture at production level and re-craft their identities as users with more agency. Much like Marx or Ruskin, steampunk buffs seek to be less alienated from the technology they use and produce.

1. 'What then, is steampunk?' asked the Catastrophone Orchestra and Arts Collective in *SteamPunk Magazine*'s first issue in 2007. Since then, the answers have been manifold and vividly discussed, but many have agreed that its core philosophy might be the following: '**Love the machine, hate the factory**'.
Read the article and come up with your own definition of the movement and its various elements.

What could you say about…

1. … Steampunk's specific relation to time?

2. … Steampunk and criticism?

3. … Steampunk's focus on Victorianism? Is it only about Victorians?

4. … Steampunk's particular vision of technology?

From scientific to social progress ?

1. 'What then, is steampunk?' asked the Catastrophone Orchestra and Arts Collective in *SteamPunk Magazine's* first issue in 2007. Since then, the answers have been manifold and vividly discussed, but many have agreed that its core philosophy might be the following: **'Love the machine, hate the factory'**.

Read the article and come up with your own definition of the movement and its various elements.

To do so, you may **highlight** the different aspects of steampunk mentioned in the text, before **summarizing** them in **simple terms**. Your definition should not be more than 150 words.

Steampunk is an aesthetics that started developing in the 1980s and reached a new popularity in 2007.

It is based on the idea that Victorians loved technology, and that the nineteenth-century was a moment of increased technological development similar **in this regard** to our contemporary digital age.

Thus, it resorts to an anachronistic re-imagining of Victorian culture **to** echo our own twenty-first century anxieties regarding human identity in the age of digital technology.

As a result, it is not just an aesthetic movement, but a social and political one.

It establishes a mirror relation between humans and machines: machines are humanised and humans fused with technology. Making machines more concrete, imperfect and chaotic may be a way to denounce the alienating effect of the industrial factories on humans, **as well as** to reject the contemporary de-humanizing impact of a capitalist technology that deprives people of individuality and agency.

2. Pick one sentence in the passive voice and turn it into the active voice.

....

Then select one clause in the active voice to turn it into the passive voice.

....

From scientific to social progress ?

1. 'What then, is steampunk?' asked the Catastrophone Orchestra and Arts Collective in *SteamPunk Magazine's* first issue in 2007. Since then, the answers have been manifold and vividly discussed, but many have agreed that its core philosophy might be the following: **'Love the machine, hate the factory'**.

Read the article and come up with your own definition of the movement and its various elements.

To do so, you may **highlight** the different aspects of steampunk mentioned in the text, before **summarizing** them in **simple terms**. Your definition should not be more than 150 words.

Steampunk is an aesthetics that started developing in the 1980s and reached a new popularity in 2007.

It is based on the idea that Victorians loved technology, and that the nineteenth-century was a moment of increased technological development similar **in this regard** to our contemporary digital age.

Thus, it resorts to an anachronistic re-imagining of Victorian culture **to** echo our own twenty-first century anxieties regarding human identity in the age of digital technology.

As a result, it is not just an aesthetic movement, but a social and political one.

It establishes a mirror relation between humans and machines: machines are humanised and humans fused with technology. Making machines more concrete, imperfect and chaotic may be a way to denounce the alienating effect of the industrial factories on humans, **as well as** to reject the contemporary de-humanizing impact of a capitalist technology that deprives people of individuality and agency.

2. Pick one sentence in the passive voice and turn it into the active voice.

its re-stagings are often infused with romance and adventure (ll.10-11) > romance and adventure often infuse its re-stagings

Then select one clause in the active voice to turn it into the passive voice.

It has generated an active subculture (l.4) > An active subculture has been generated

From scientific to social progress ?

Adapted from the research article **"Re-assembling the Victorians: Steampunk, Cyborgs, and the Ethics of Industry"** by **Helena Esser**:
https://journals.openedition.org/cve/3480

More comprehensively, steampunk is understood as a popular retro-speculative aesthetic which has its origins in 1980s cyberpunk, but has experienced a new, internet-fuelled popularity and reach since around 2007. It views the nineteenth century through the lenses of Neo-Victorianism, technofantasy and retrofuturism. It has generated an active subculture whose participants utilise a perceived Victorian technophilia to fuel their own anachronistic explorations.

Steampunk is neo-Victorian insofar as it assembles Victorian architecture, fashion, music or literature into an inter-textual, hyper-Victorian collage and infuses it with anachronistic, implausible or fantastical technologies. It draws on the broad and multifaceted fictional legacy of the nineteenth century, for example Dickens's social criticism, the urban Gothic of Wilde, Stevenson, or Stoker, or the fantastic speculations of Verne and Wells. Therefore its re-stagings are often infused with romance and adventure, but may also focus on the downsides of industrial or colonial practices. Whereas the element of technofantasy may lead to the creation of airships, proto-computers or automata, steampunk's retro-futurist element imagines the alternative futures of a past that never was from the socio-cultural vantage point of the twenty-first century.

Steampunk recognises and actualises a widely-felt kinship with the nineteenth century as an age of accelerated technological development. It employs Victorian hopes and anxieties in order to reflect back our own concerns about human identity in the age of digital technology and fabricate more flexible alternatives.

Its counter-cultural core philosophy is built around a yearning for re-humanised technology that promises accessibility, vulnerability and individuation, following the credo 'Love the machine, hate the factory.' While its machines, hailed as 'real, breathing, coughing, struggling and rumbling parts of the world', become humanised, humans may in turn become mechanised or fused with technology.

In this quest to re-inject a sense of individuality and spontaneity into the machine, which involves 'imperfection' and 'chaos', steampunk responds to Marx's claim that the industrial factory drains human skill and intellect from the worker, and Ruskin's call for the return to manufacture. In accordance with this, steampunk partisans also reject the de-humanizing homogenization of technology and the consumer culture, in which only an elite of experts can operate, beneath the impermeable surfaces of digital devices, and where the user is denied access to and understanding of his or her computer, smartphone, navigation system, etc. In this way, steampunk makers mobilize a re-imagined Victorian aesthetic to resist 'the factory' as a symbol of the dominant capitalistic culture at production level and re-craft their identities as users with more agency. Much like Marx or Ruskin, steampunk buffs seek to be less alienated from the technology they use and produce.

1. 'What then, is steampunk?' asked the Catastrophone Orchestra and Arts Collective in *SteamPunk Magazine's* first issue in 2007. Since then, the answers have been manifold and vividly discussed, but many have agreed that its core philosophy might be the following: 'Love the machine, hate the factory'.
Read the article and come up with your own definition of the movement and its various elements.
To do so, you may **highlight** the different aspects of steampunk mentioned in the text, before **summarizing** them in **simple terms**. Your definition should not be more than 150 words.

Steampunk is an aesthetics that started developing in the 1980s and reached a new popularity in 2007.
It is based on the idea that Victorians loved technology, and that the nineteenth-century was a moment of increased technological development similar in this regard to our contemporary digital age.
Thus, it resorts to an anachronistic re-imagining of Victorian culture to echo our own twenty-first century anxieties regarding human identity in the age of digital technology.
As a result, it is not just an aesthetic movement, but a social and political one.
It establishes a mirror relation between humans and machines: machines are humanised and humans fused with technology. Making machines more concrete, imperfect and chaotic may be a way to denounce the alienating effect of the industrial factories on humans, as well as to reject the contemporary de-humanizing impact of a capitalist technology that deprives people of individuality and agency.

2. **Pick one sentence in the passive voice and turn it into the active voice.**
its re-stagings are often infused with romance and adventure (ll.10-11) > romance and adventure often infuse its re-stagings
   Then select one clause in the active voice to turn it into the passive voice.
It has generated an active subculture (l.4) > An active subculture has been generated

From scientific to social progress ?

Thème grammatical: *habitude dans le passé, forme fréquentative et traduction de l'imparfait*

1. Le patron avait l'habitude de nous faire faire beaucoup d'heures supplémentaires et je me suis peu à peu habitué à suivre un programme de travail.

....

2. Les citoyens romains regardaient le commerce et les arts comme des occupations d'esclaves : ils ne les exerçaient point. (Montesquieu)

....

3. Il passe son temps à faire des remarques malveillantes, alors je ne le vois plus aussi souvent qu'avant.

....

Adapté depuis *Optimum : Le thème anglais grammatical en fiches*, Cécile Loubignac
et *Exercices de thème grammatical anglais*, Wilfrid Rotgé, Michèle Malavieille et George Mutch

From scientific to social progress ?

Thème grammatical: *habitude dans le passé, forme fréquentative et traduction de l'imparfait*

1. Le patron avait l'habitude de nous faire faire beaucoup d'heures supplémentaires et je me suis peu à peu habitué à suivre un programme de travail.
The manager **was used to** mak**ing** his employees work overtime and I gradually **got used to** work**ing** to a schedule.
2. Les citoyens romains regardaient le commerce et les arts comme des occupations d'esclaves : ils ne les exerçaient point. (Montesquieu)
Roman citizens regarded trade and arts as occupations for slaves: they **would** not practise them.
3. Il passe son temps à faire des remarques malveillantes, alors je ne le vois plus aussi souvent qu'avant.
He **will** make spiteful remarks, so I don't see as much of him as **I used to (do)**.

Adapté depuis *Optimum : Le thème anglais grammatical en fiches*, Cécile Loubignac
et *Exercices de thème grammatical anglais*, Wilfrid Rotgé, Michèle Malavieille et George Mutch

From scientific to social progress ?

2019 BBC TV series *Years and Years*

Transhumanism and Human enhancement
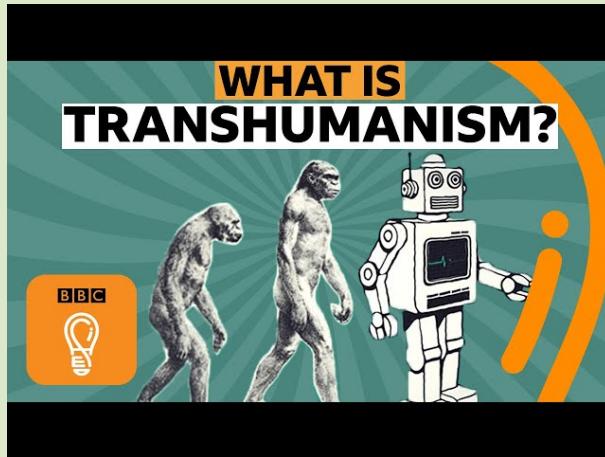
2019 BBC TV series *Years and Years*

1. How would you define transhumanism?

2. What reasons could drive us to it?

Transhumanism and Human enhancement
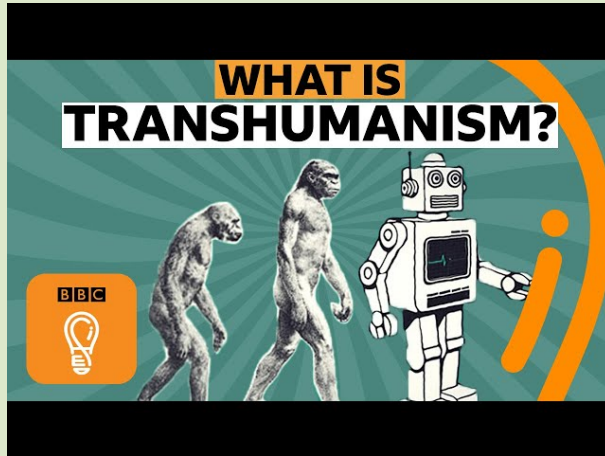
Transhumanism

1. How would you define transhumanism?

2. What reasons could drive us to it?

Transhumanism and Human enhancement

Transhumanism

- Humans cause huge damage to the environment.

- They can't feed themselves even though there is enough food.

- Humans fight countless wars costing millions of lives.

- Humans must surely benefit from an intelligence upgrade > enhancements could dramatically raise our IQs.

- Humans' lifespans are short (final years with diminishing health and vitality, and a drop off in cognitive capacity)
> Ageing could be stopped and even reversed, people could be stronger and fitter; humans might even be able to leave their fragile bodies behind, and upload themselves to computers, living forever in virtual worlds.

- We might be approaching "the singularity" (Ray Kurzweil) – the point at which computers become smart enough to learn for themselves > the future belongs to AI.

- Homo Sapiens being replaced by a ==new form of humanity, humanity 2.0==, would be part of evolution.

Transhumanism and Human enhancement

Transhumanism

Posthumanism

Antihumanism

Transhumanism and Human enhancement

Transhumanism

Transhumanism is the position that human beings should be permitted to use technology to modify and enhance human cognition and bodily function, expanding abilities and capacities beyond current biological constraints.

Posthumanism

Posthumanism (meaning "after humanism" or "beyond humanism") is an idea in philosophy and critical theory responding to anthropocentrism. Posthumanism decenters the placement of humans above other life forms, and at the same time rejects the view of humans as autonomous and fully defined individuals. Instead, it treats "the human itself as an assemblage, co-evolving with other forms of life, enmeshed with the environment and technology."

Antihumanism

Antihumanism is critical of the beliefs, principles, or assumptions of humanism. Anti-humanists are not necessarily against human beings; they merely assert that a humanistic conception of life is untenable and may be morally dangerous. Central to antihumanism is the view that philosophical anthropology and its concepts of "human nature," "man," or "humanity" should be rejected as historically relative, ideological or metaphysical.

Transhumanism and Human enhancement

Terrific Machines:

Humans' ambivalent relations to inventions, innovations and technology

Week 1: **Techno-pessimism**

Week 2: **From Distance to Interrelations**

Week 3: **Inventions and Innovations**

Week 4: **Does Science Need War?**

Week 5: **From Scientific to Social Progress?**

Week 6: **Transhumanism and Human Enhancement**