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Religion, Technology, Future
Midterm Essay

Generating Genesis

In the story of Babel, post-flood humanity collaborates to construct a tower to the heavens — the tower of Babel. In working together, the humans begin to construct a great tower, but, before they can complete it, God eviscerates their common language and their plans are foiled. God fears that the humans, through collaboration, will challenge his divine rule and deviate from his command. Furthermore, God fears that the humans have amassed great power with the sole purpose of manufacturing; with hubris they have built a tower and are ignorant of the moral consequences. In colloquial terms, the humans could build it so they said, "why not?" Ultimately, God scatters the people to save them from their own inevitable collapse and to ensure his unique, omnipotent status.

In understanding the development and future of religion in an increasingly technological age, we can look to the story of Babel as a warning. In modern times, global unity through technology in the pursuit of modernization and invention recalls the mass-minded people of the bible who joined to construct a tower to the heavens. The people of Babel emphasized their unity and their collective abilities while they strayed away from religion and, ultimately, God. Similarly, in our fascination with technological advancement, we focus on our own abilities and achievements, our tower, without understanding the resounding moral implications. We can build "it," so we say "why not?" As God once scattered the people of Babel, so too may our ignored moral and ethical responsibilities return to destroy and muddle our creations. We may not underestimate a literal God figure, but we do ignore the complex moral issues that are built into towers of divine height; towers that demands our labor and trap us in perpetual construction.

The effect of technology on religion in the future will be the same as the effect of technology on religion in the past. If we do not instill moral values, in some form, in our creation of technology, then we risk moral corruption. Religion, in this context, is a belief in a common good and a common bad, rather than a specific moral body. We cannot become so consumed in

our creations that we forgo the effects and purposes of our actions. We cannot gather a community without an underlying and binding moral skeleton. If we do not want the chaos of Babel, we should not worship technology for its own sake. Ultimately, a communal-focus on technology will demand "religious" guidance if we want to establish an equal, just, and compassionate future.

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words… And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. (Genesis 11:1-3)

Like the people of Babel, we begin as a collective body driven to create for the sole purpose of creation. We hold raw materials and feel the urge to sculpt them accordingly. Jacques Ellul describes this urge to create as "technique." In Ellul's words, technique is "the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency... in every field of human activity."[1] Technique is the overall driving force that pushes us towards creation, towards optimization. Ellul believes that we are enslaved in this quest for efficiency[2] and that we may only be free when we no longer need.[3] In addition, Ellul envisions a reality in which technique will mechanize the world to comply with the machine in order to optimize the machine.[4] Heidegger refers to this mechanization and optimization of humanity as "enframing."[5] The "enframing" of humans is the shift from individual actor to, metaphorically, gear in a machine.[6] Humans become part of, what Heidegger calls, the "standing reserve,"[7] or the societal infrastructure that answers to the call of technology.

Arthur, however, does not view the human and machine as so intertwined, rather, he views the machine as a self-perpetuating system that interacts with humanity;[8] an entity that

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[1] Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, XXV.
[2] Ibid., 9.
[3] Ibid., xxxii.
[4] Ibid., 12.
[5] Martin Heidegger and David Farrell Krell, *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger* (HarperPerennial), 324.
[6] Ibid., 329.
[7] Ibid., 322.
[8] W. Brian. Arthur, *The Nature of Technology* (New York: Free Press, 2011), 168-170.

"constructs" itself through a process of "autopoiesis,"[9] inherently lacking the human labor of Ellul's technique and Heidegger's enframing. Finally, Kelly suggests that technology has evolved into the "*technium,*"[10] "the greater, global, massively interconnected system of technology vibrating around us."[11] Kelly reiterates Arthur's self-perpetuating cycle of technology,[12] but takes a step closer to Ellul and Heidegger when he suggests that the technium is the extended human body.[13] The authors may differ on the extent to which technology and humans are interwoven, but human involvement and perpetuation of technology is undeniable. Even if technology becomes self-sustaining and self-perpetuating, it has arrived at that state because of human invention. The tower is built of brick and bitumen through humans, as modern technologies emerge and survive, at least initially, because of humans.

Then they said, "Come let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves" (Genesis 11:4)

As the people of Babel begin to construct the tower from raw materials, they simultaneously declare their intent to create for the sake of creation; to build a divine tower for the sake of achievement and recognition. In modern times, we exercise a similarly dangerous mentality of creation because we have the capacity to do so. McLuhan addresses this mentality of creation before understanding in terms of media specifically. In his work, McLuhan explains that humans must study "general aspects of the media, or extensions of man,"[14] specifically man's "never-explained numbness that each extension brings about in the individual and society,"[15] in order to truly understand the "origin and development of the individual extensions of man."[16] In other, more broader, terms, in order to understand the root and subsequent effects of a specific medium on us, we must first understand the medium in relation to us and our

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[9] Ibid., 2.
[10] Kevin Kelly, *What Technology Wants* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 12.
[11] Ibid., 11.
[12] Ibid., 12.
[13] Ibid., 44.
[14] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*(Georgetown, 1964), 7.
[15] Ibid., 7.
[16] Ibid., 7.

blindness within this relationship. We can approach technology in an identical process: to understand the cause and effects that technology has had on us, we must be conscious of our entire, unbiased relationship to it. For example, if we honestly analyze our shift in communication from words to images, we realize that in this transition we've lost skills in verbal communication.[17] Furthermore, McLuhan argues that most of us are ignorant of our own manipulated state; those who are most equipt at understanding the patterns that "numb" us are artists because they are more "aware" to "changes in sense perception."[18] McLuhan recognizes our collective passivity towards the forces tectonically shifting our interaction with the world. In our collective passivity, however, we continue to produce "extensions" of man; we create because we can, not because we understand how or why this technology will impact our relationship to the world. We build a tower to the heavens because we have brick and bitmun, not because we understand that the tower will alter our relationship to the ground.

The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. And the Lord said, "Look they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do' nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them." (Genesis 11:5-6)

Our hubris fuels our ignorance in our construction of technology; we neglect morality as we unconsciously and, therefore selfishly, create. As God looks upon Babel, he recognizes that the tower has been built mindlessly — from a numbing mass mentality rather than from conscious individual reflection. God realizes that in this pursuit of construction to construct, morality is lost and, therefore, humans will remain wholly uninhibited from future, irresponsible construction. Humans will only perpetuate their delusions of divinity because they do not weigh the gravity of their creations. In Geraci's "Apocalyptic AI," he explains that our language about and understanding of digital technology is often viewed from a theological or religious

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[17]Nick Bilton, "Disruptions: Social Media Images Form a New Language Online," The New York Times, June 30, 2013, , accessed April 04, 2018, https://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/30/disruptions-social-media-images-form-a-new-language-online/.
[18] McLuhan., 7.

standpoint.[19] Specifically, creators of artificial intelligence often view themselves as gods.[20] Even if we create an entity that is greater than ourselves, a god, by producing a god we are thus a god.
[21]

Despite divine power and our ability to achieve divine capabilities, however, we are no more conscious nor moral in our actions. In Clarke's short story, *The Nine Billion Names of God*, the engineers are able to construct and maintain the machine that the monks believe will produce the name of God, but neither engineer understands the gravity nor reality of their mission. In fact, the engineers mock the monks' mission and, eventually, abandon it entirely.[22] Simply because the engineers can produce the infrastructure for divinity, does not mean that they themselves understand the ramifications of their actions. Furthermore, in her article, "The Case Against Reality," Gefter argues that there is a great distance between our perception and reality.[23] Through this distance, it may be argued that the engineers, as well as any human creator, may not wholly comprehend their reality and so cannot possibly understand the entirety of their existence nor creation. If humans perceive the world according to evolutionary advantage, then, morality aside, we can not be an omniscience god.

If, however, we are to produce a simulation, then within our simulation, bound by the limits of our evolutionary advantage, we may be omniscient gods. In Nick Bostrom's paper, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?," he posits the idea that, if we become posthumans and subsequently the creators of simulations, then we become like gods.[24] Bostrom's argument delineates that at least one of the following conditions are true: (1) it is likely that humans will go extinct before reaching a posthuman stage, (2) posthumans are unlikely to run a significant number of simulations, (3) we are almost certainly living in a computer simulation.[25] If we do transition to a posthuman stage and become the gods of our own simulation, Bostrom argues that

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[19] Robert M. Geraci, *Apocalyptic AI: Visions of Heaven in Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, and Virtual Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press), 102.

[20] Ibid., 102.

[21] Ibid., 102.

[22] A. C. Clarke, *The Nine Billion Names of God*, 12.

[23] Amanda Gefter, "The Case Against Reality," The Atlantic, April 25, 2016, , accessed April 04, 2018, http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/04/the-illusion-of-reality/479559/?utm_source=eb.

[24] Nick Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?" *Philosophical Quarterly* 53, no. 211 (2003): 12.

[25] Ibid., 1.

it is most likely that we are currently in a simulation.[26] Similar to the structure of worlds in Howey's *The Plagiarist*, Adam believes he is real and Belatrix is simulated[27] until Amanda arrives and informs Adam that she is real and he simulated.[28] In his video Bear Kittay declares that he is in a simulation and suggests that, "perhaps so are you."[29]

If we are indeed living in a simulation and, therefore, producing our own creation and achieving creator-status, we must do so responsibly. If we do not produce morally then we risk our creator's intervening hand — like God's hand at Babel. Although, perhaps beings aware of the simulation have tried to warn us of our fate, but we have not understood. For example, in Whittaker's graphic novel, when replicants reveal the simulation to proxies, they are promptly removed from the simulation.[30]Moreover, perhaps the glitches in our simulation, like the Oscars' mistake, the 2016 election, and Super Bowl LI should be warnings of our chaotic demise.[31] Summitgil argues strongly that Trump reveals the experimental reality of a simulation. The most compelling glitch, however, is the misspelling of Bostrom as "Bostrum" in Gopnik's article, Summitgil's article, and our syllabus; is his proximity to the creators leading to his erasure? Nevertheless, aware or not of a simulation, Hanson suggests that to please a creators and to achieve common human desires, one should live selfishly and publically.[32] The individual should not drift mindlessly into the masses, like the builders of Babel; the individual should be active and conscious in decision making.

"Come let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused

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[26] Ibid., 12.

[27] Hugh Howey, *The Plagiarist* (United States: H. Howey, 2011), 45.

[28] Ibid., 56.

[29] "Bear Kittay at TEDxTokyo 2014," YouTube, June 07, 2014, , accessed April 04, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWbaFuKO_wI.

[30] Lauren Whittaker, *The Two Certainties of Life*, 13.

[31] Adam Gopnik, "Did the Oscars Just Prove That We Are Living in a Computer Simulation?" The New Yorker, June 19, 2017, , accessed April 04, 2018, http://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/did-the-oscars-just-prove-that-we-are-living-in-a-computer-simulation.

[32] Robin Hanson, "How to Live in a Simulation," 5.

the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11:7)

God realizes that the builders of Babel are attempting to construct a tower both of divine height and of immoral motivation. To preserve his absolute divine reign and, possibly, to protect the builders from themselves, God scatters the builders. In scattering the builders, God can ensure that they will cease construction and will never again repeat their transgression; the people cannot amass to an unthinking force. Likewise, as we confront our own rising tower, modern technology, we face the same perils associated with divinely-scaled and ethically-sparse construction. In Forster's prescient *The Machine Stops*, he warns of a dismal future in which humans lie as powerless lumps to their very own machine.[33] As the machine was built and increasingly infiltrated human lives, the mass mentality lacked the moral foundation to cease progress and to save themselves — "no one confessed the Machine was out of hand."[34] When the machine fails, like God's scattering, civilization turns into utter chaos;[35] the humans produced divinity only to degrade and to destroy themselves.

In his book, *The Inevitable*, Kelly describes the unrelenting force of technology, and specifically the digital world, that we built and that operates over us.[36] Kelly argues that, as technology inevitably decentralizes, we must maintain "deep engagement, firsthand experience, and a vigilant acceptance."[37] Unlike the builders of Babel, we must be conscious and mindful of our creations to "prevent actual (versus hypothetical) harm."[38] Similarly, Joy urges us to ask questions about our technological development instead of proceeding with "instant familiarity and unquestioning acceptance."[39] Joy believes that we should maintain "great caution" in producing new technologies as they are unlike any that have come before and present an

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[33] E. M. Forster, "The Machine Stop," 1, accessed April 04, 2018, http://archive.ncsa.illinois.edu/prajlich/forster.html.
[34] Ibid., 18.
[35] Ibid., 21.
[36] Kevin Kelly, *The Inevitable: Understanding The 12 Technological Forces That Will Shape Our Future* (NY, NY: Viking, 2016), 4.
[37] Ibid., 5.
[38] Ibid., 5.
[39] Bill Joy, "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us," Wired, January 31, 2018, , accessed April 04, 2018, https://www.wired.com/2000/04/joy-2/.

unparalleled tool for evil.[40] Bostrom addresses the issue of responsible construction through the lens of artificial intelligence; he compares our interaction with artificial intelligence to "a small child playing with a bomb."[41] We handle AI "immaturely"[42] and avoid it, rather than coming to terms with it. Bostrom believes that AI will either have "an extremely good or extremely bad outcome," rather than a balanced outcome, because of its extraordinary power.[43] We must, therefore, learn how to control and collaborate with it.[44] If we take into account Buddhist principles of cause and effect, we should "(1) think about cause and effect in general (2) thinking about the specifics (3) [think] about... the way to modify [our] actions."[45] We should be conscious of how we cause creation and the effects of our actions in order to then change our approach to creation.

In his book, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, Baudrillard suggests that the ramifications of our irresponsible production have already begun haunt us. Baudrillard believes that "the psychological dimension [of modern technology] has been blurred;" we no longer probe and classify the effects of our technologies — we have become spectators, as opposed to partners." [46] Our "obscenity" lies in all "information and communication;"[47] we remain tragically indecent and immoral in our behavior. We become "ecstatic" rather than "passionate" and descend into mental chaos.[48] Levandowski's submissive worship of an AI GodHead perfectly embodies Baudrillard's "obscene" behavior.[49] Our creations consume us and exist beyond us because we have so irresponsibly embraced them. This unscientific approach to knowledge reflects Penrose's warning of science as a faith.[50] Whether or not Baudrillard's reality is currently accurate or we are just moving towards it, the argument for involved production remains; we should be aware of

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[40] Ibid.
[41] Nick Bostrom, *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 259.
[42] Ibid., 259.
[43] Ibid., 20.
[44] Ibid., 246.
[45] Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, 432.
[46] Ibid., 22.
[47] Ibid., 22.
[48] Ibid., 26.
[49] Mark Harris, "Inside the First Church of Artificial Intelligence | Backchannel," Wired, February 02, 2018, , accessed April 04, 2018, https://www.wired.com/story/anthony-levandowski-artificial-intelligence-religion/.
[50] Roger Penrose, *Fashion, Faith, and Fantasy in the New Physics of the Universe* (Princeton University Press), 121.

the message beyond the medium, not merely the medium. We should command our experience of the world rather than being led by technological distraction.[51]

In opposition to Baudrillard, Noble argues that our "technological enterprise has been and remains suffused with religious belief," specifically Christian belief.[52] Noble believes that Christian values and practices produce Western technology in hopes of redemption and restoration to a prelapsarian state.[53]Noble's Christian-tech-missionary is not Baudrillard's passive flesh unit; Noble's individual personally drives the tech to satisfy her own religious ends. Noble's text is deeply flawed as it so heavily Christian; it views the scientific project as a Christian mission, rather than merely human's desire to produce. All of Western creation cannot be pinned to Noble's argument. From a Christian perspective, Gillette also fiercely disagrees with Noble; Gillette claims that the mission of transhumanism and singularity are inherently non-Christian and a conspiracy of false prophets.[54] According to Gillette, our future achievements in technology cannot be Noble's Christian redemption as they do not strictly adhere to the bible.

Wagner flips the religion-as-tech narrative to suggest tech-as-religion, specifically in terms of video games. Wagner suggests that "games may ever offer us kinds of proxy religions, giving us a temporary structure and order in an increasingly chaotic world."[55] Following Wagner's narrative, our religious-esque relation to the virtual world more aligns with Baudrillard's perspective; we embrace without questioning; we find comfort through medium rather than message. Navarro describes his own experience of community and spirituality as he leaves messages for other players who experience similar deaths in his video game.[56] Navarro may feel emotionally and morally connected to his technology, but it is not the technology itself, it is the content of his technology. Navarro does not question the moral implications of

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[51] Marina Van Zuylen, *The Plentitude of Distraction*(Sequence Press, 2009), 20.
[52] David F. Noble, *The Religion Of Technology: The Divinity Of Man and the Spirit Of Invention* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 5.
[53] Ibid., 20.
[54] Britt Gillette, "Is the Singularity the Rapture?" End Times Bible Prophecy - Understanding God's Prophetic Word, , accessed April 04, 2018, http://www.end-times-bible-prophecy.com/singularity-rapture.html.
[55] Rachel Wagner, *Godwired: Religion, Ritual, and Virtual Reality* (London: Routledge, 2012), 7.
[56] Daniel Navarro, "Cycles, Memory, Modality in NieR: Automata's Method of Storytelling," 2018, 11.

participating in a gaming culture and perpetuating the interconnected system; he explores the human experience within his game, totally separate from the technology itself.

Through Singulatarian and Transhumanist movements, we have finally started to address the moral implications of the technology, rather than our surface interaction with the content of technology. Prisco describes his understanding of transhumanism as a moral conviction "to radically change the human condition" [57] for the better. Prisco believes that transhumanism will help us overcome the tragic problems of our current human existence — therefore, the pursuit of transhumanism becomes an inherently moral mission. O'Gieblyn similarly anticipates a transhumanist future, as she religiously maximizes her health to prepare for "an endless ladder of upgrades."[58] If we want to successfully progress into a transhuman state, these conversations are essential to maintain our autonomy and to continue on a productive path.

On Kurzweil's timeline towards a singularity, we are encountering the exponential "knee"[59] of technological progress and will rapidly merge with technology. Singularity, as Kurzweil describes it, will allow us to surpass our biological limits and incomprehensibly expand our intelligence.[60] Our complete integration with technology will redefine and recreate humanity. [61] We will remain human, but "more exemplary of what we regard as human."[62] From Kurzweil's perspective, mindless or mindful we continue on the track towards singularity; even if we enter the singularity from a mindless position, the enhancement of the singularity will provide us with increased moral intelligence.[63] Similarly, Bostrom suggests that we will be able to build morality models into future artificial intelligence that may be able to guide us[64] — perhaps even in a minyan.[65] Kodegaard's husband repeats Kurzweil's argument and implements it into his own

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[57] "Transcendent Engineering," in *The Transhumanist Reader*, 239.
[58] Meghan O'Gieblyn, "Ghost in the Cloud," *Issue-28: Half-Life*, Spring 2017, 16.
[59] Ray Kurzweil, The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology (New York: Penguin Group, 2005), 10.
[60] Ibid., 29.
[61] Ibid., 9.
[62] Ibid., 30.
[63] PBS, December 9, 2011, (2:42), accessed April 04, 2018,
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2011/12/09/august-20-2010-ray-kurzweil-extended-interview/6839/.
[64] Bostrom, *Superintelligence,* 218.
[65] Adam Soclof, "Should Robots Count in a Minyan? Rabbi Talks Turing Test," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, June 12, 2014, , accessed April 04, 2018,
https://www.jta.org/2014/06/12/life-religion/should-robots-count-in-a-minyan-rabbi-talks-turing-test.

life — urging those around him to convert.[66] Although knowledge of an impending singularity is essential, if we are to learn from Babel, our morals must match our progress.

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing (Genesis 12:1-2)

Immediately following God's intervention at Babel, God leads Abram to eternal greatness. If Abram is pious and follows God, he will secure power for both himself and his ancestors; he will become Abraham, the common ancestor of the three Abrahamic religions. The story of Abram/Abraham follows directly after the story of Babel and inverts it; an individual consciously rises to power under the divine guidance of God. Abraham struggles with God, but remains utterly devout — completely set in his morals. Similarly, if we intend to maintain a healthy and productive relationship to technology and innovation, every individual must approach the adaptation and implementation of technology in terms of morality. We are arrogant and naive if we believe that technology is neutral; technology forms and rises through the morals that we instill upon it.

Nishitani explains that the overall nihilism of modern people is due to the cold, mechanical world we have created.[67] As we build great machines intended for a known use and imbued with a purpose, we question our own use and purpose.[68] Nishitani explains that through our collective doubting, we lose our self and merge into a "Great Doubt."[69] We become the mechanized, mindless mass that built Babel. Nevertheless, Nishitani proposes religion as a panacea for our hopeless mindset. Nishitani emphasizes that religion must be "the individual affair of each individual."[70] Religion provides an "absolute"[71] and, therefore, a reference point

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[66] Kirsten Kodegaard, "Ich Bin Ein Singularitarian," Write Away, , accessed April 04, 2018, http://www.kodegaard.com/ich-bin-ein-singularitarian-210.

[67] Keiji Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 11.

[68] Ibid., 4.

[69] Ibid., 18.

[70] Ibid., 2.

[71] Ibid., 5.

and stability. Both God and Nishitani understand the necessity of morality, or religion, to combat the loss of the individual to a nihilistic, mechanized society.

The cultural foundations of humanity have been driven by our ability to cohesively work within a similar framework of morals, commonly a religion. In the most ancient signs of human culture, like the Peruvian temple, Chavin de Huantar, universal nodes of human belief systems can be found.[72] Likewise, in Gobekli Tepe, a Turkish archaeological site, there is evidence that suggests that humans, even in a hunter-gatherer stage, pursued a greater meaning and a religious call. Before humans cultivated agriculture, they were building shrines to great gods and animals.[73] According to the creation of Gobekli Tepe, the religious drive of humanity preceded, and possibly even contributed to, our industrial and social achievements. The success and lasting effects of these ancient civilizations, rooted in religion, contrast with our secular construction. We perpetuate the "Great Doubt" when we do not construct as a morally-minded, individually-driven collective.

In his book, "The Sacred and the Profane," Eliade delves further into the necessity and inevitability of a religious human existence. Eliade believes that religion exists throughout humanity, even in the vehemently irreligious.[74] In fact, Eliade claims that the denial of religion is inherently the acknowledgement and reaction to religion – it is not indifference.[75] Eliade writes that this behavior exists in the unconscious: "the unconscious has a religious aura."[76] Through Fasenfast's God's Website, we can see that even our neutral language is rife with religous terminology.[77] In *The Super Natural*, Kripal and Strieber argue for a non-traditional understanding of religion that encompasses the paranormal.[78] Kripal, a religion professor, argues that the approaches the religion and to paranormal activity share many "comparative and

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[72] William Park, "Future - The Peruvian Temple That Hints at the Origin of Religion," BBC, August 11, 2016, , accessed April 02, 2018,
http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20160808-a-lost-temple-holds-the-secrets-to-the-origins-of-authority.

[73] T. Conrad, September 12, 2013, , accessed April 02, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHG9URGDt6s.

[74] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (Harcout, 1957), 205.

[75] Ibid., 207.

[76] Ibid., 210.

[77] Bernhard Fasenfest, *God's Website*, 1.

[78] Whitley Strieber and Jeff Kripal, *The Super Natural: A New Vision of the Unexplained* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2016), 15.

interpretive practices."[79] Oppenheimer explores Kripal's work further and explains how Kripal is trying to change the religious community's thoughts on the religious experience as whole.[80]

If we take heed the warning of Babel and engage with technology as a mindful individual, then in our Abrahamic glory, perhaps we will finally be able to achieve divine status. Eagleman proposes that, at some point in the distant future, we may be able to reproduce our brains without the "wetware" and solely based on our neural processes.[81] Kim, in a sense, banks on this neural reproduction as she cryogenically preserves her brain.[82] Furthermore, Bostrom approaches the replication of the brain through AI and questions how various structures may determine the actions of AI.[83] If we can reproduce and enhance ourselves through AI, then, like God, we have created a new life form.

In his *Glorious Esoteric Communication Self-Creation Yoga*, Lama Tsong Khapa writes "may I conceive the holy spirit of enlightenment, the mind adorned by intense aspiration, wherein the instincts for all obscurations are eradicated by the purification of thought and evolutionary effects."[84] In creation of a new mind, Lama Tsong Khapa calls upon enlightened and pure spirits — moral guidance. As we create our own intelligences through modern technology, we must follow our moral compass, whether through existing religious institutions or through new ones. Our assumption of a divine status does not negate our need for religion, it enhances it. If we want to ensure an enlightened future, we cannot continue to create without a moral structure.

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[79] Ibid., 15.

[80] Mark Oppenheimer, "The Burning Bush They'll Buy, but Not ESP or Alien Abduction," The New York Times, November 13, 2010, , accessed April 04, 2018, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/13/us/13beliefs.html.

[81] Bigthink, "David Eagleman: Can a Computer Simulate Consciousness?" YouTube, November 11, 2015, , accessed April 04, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oj7FNCahWD8.

[82] Amy Harmon, "A Dying Young Woman's Hope in Cryonics and a Future," The New York Times, September 12, 2015, , accessed April 04, 2018, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/13/us/cancer-immortality-cryogenics.html?emc=edit_na_20150912&nlid=557900 87&ref=cta&_r=0.

[83] Bostrom, *Superintelligence,* 208.

[84] Robert Thurman, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (New York: Bantam, 1994), 218.

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