

# Chapter 40

## An Artist's Creative Process: A Model for Conscious Evolution



Dinorah Delfin

### 40.1 An Artist's Creative Process: A Model for Conscious Evolution

A great future is opened to humanity. Our interconnectedness with nature, the tools we use, and the narratives we create, is reaching a pinnacle. For the first time in human history, we have the means to *consciously* alter the fate of our evolution. New technologies are not only becoming increasingly embedded in our biology—giving us unprecedented human abilities—but this transition is also driving us to explore new notions of what it means to be human in the heroic pursuit of individual sovereignty, and general happiness and sense of purpose.

In this uncertain, but awe-inspiring unfolding of human potential, the goal for many of us is to become *transhuman*, also referred to as, *post-human*. Oxford University philosophy professor and transhumanist, Nick Bostrom, explains: a post-human, is a being that has at least one general capacity, like intelligence or lifespan, “greatly exceeding the maximum attainable by any current human being without recourse to new technological means.” Transhumanism, or *the conscious re-designing of the human organism, or its radical enhancement*, is thus, the most revolutionary and disrupting paradigm shift the modern human has yet to experience.

In transitioning to this *post-human* era, how can one adopt a framework for cognitive and physical enhancement that accounts for ways to ensure that this new era is also more consciousness oriented, safe, and egalitarian?

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### 40.1.1 *The Creative Journey*

In this essay, I'm presenting five art projects I created from 2007 to 2017 to showcase the following:

1. How an artist's creative process, that is future conscious and integral, can lead to the creation of artworks that foster a shift in perspective and inspire positive social change.
2. How a *transformative creative process* can be applied to any area of personal development by illustrating how my own process of cognitive, emotional, and spiritual development led me to explore transhumanism.
3. Lastly, I will propose how we can utilize a *transformative creative process* with transhumanist sensibilities to design a world that is more just and humane.

#### 40.1.1.1 **Hybrids, 2007**

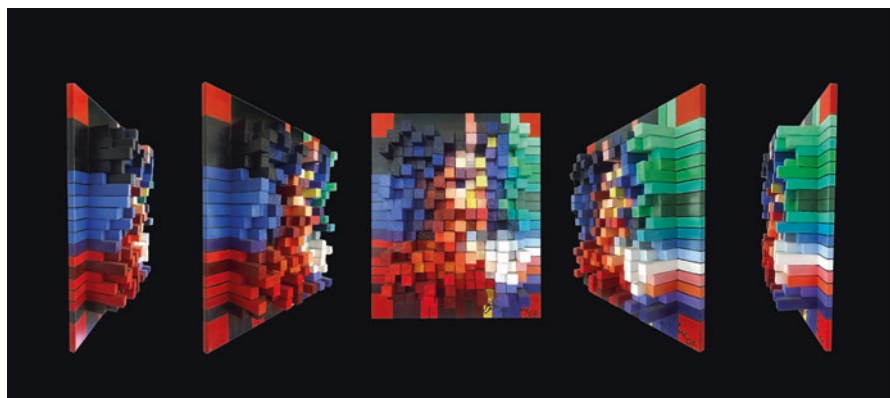
In 2007, I turned a computer-generated pixelated image of a person into a three-dimensional representation of it, in the physical space, to illustrate the idea of a future hybrid being embodying both human and digital qualities.

In this material instantiation of what began as an idea, the result was also a hybrid artwork which combined both painting and sculptural qualities, which I named "A Pixelated Profile of a Girl in Three-Dimensions."

When standing in front of the artwork, our perception is drawn to the fragmented parts, or cubes of various heights, which make the 3D pixels. To make sense of the composition, a tool such as a peep-hole or a camera phone, is used to look at the artwork and see it as a cohesive whole. A recognizable image, usually a face, can be seen. Stepping back also does the trick.

In transitioning from bits to matter, and from fragments to a whole, the canvas itself becomes the catalyst for the humanizing of digital information through a shift in perception inspired by a culture becoming increasingly digitally interconnected and more aware of its part in the big picture.

Creating this artwork gave me the opportunity to explore and reflect on issues concerning our evolution, which led me to realize that the more complexity and intelligence life produces, the better its chance for survival. These hybrid artworks represent the continuous permutation of complex organisms, like mind and matter, with its plethora of challenges and opportunities (Figs. 40.1, 40.2, 40.3, and 40.4).



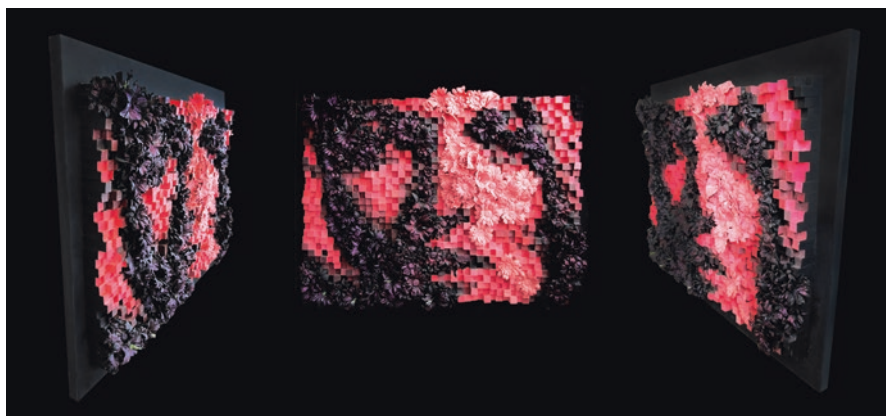
**Fig. 40.1** A pixelated profile of a girl in three-dimensions, 2007. Mixed-media assemblage on canvas.  $16 \times 20 \times 5$  inches. With front and side views



**Fig. 40.2** Kate, 2012. Mixed-media assemblage on canvas.  $40 \times 50 \times 5$  inches. With view through peephole



**Fig. 40.3** Close-up. Mixed-media assemblage on canvas



**Fig. 40.4** Kate Pink, 2012. Mixed-media assemblage on canvas. 40 × 50 × 5 inches. With front and side views

#### 40.1.1.2 Holy, 2009

In 2009, I started a new project. Instead of reflecting on the humanizing of technologies, the goal was to use technology to humanize the human condition.

I started creating a series of digital photo collages showcasing “digital clones” of myself interacting in bold and subtle power struggles. The process of making these images, which started out with a camera, myself, and a green screen background, involved layering a collection of personal symbolic imagery which I seamlessly assembled using Photoshop.

This series, which I named, “*Holy*”, was triggered by preoccupations of a dystopian future resulting from a holier-than-thou corruption of the psyche. My naked body symbolizes vulnerability and the discomfort one experience by the unlearning of deep-rooted beliefs associated with religious and cultural upbringings.

In the resulting surreal, Caravaggioesque photomontages, the fleshy digital clones are bound to primal and mundane realms in which a story of collective catharsis and transformation wants to take place.

Through this journey of self-realization, a collective awakening becomes humanity’s Holy grail needed to successfully transition into the next stage of human evolution—the transcendence of conscious and subconscious limitations, whereby a truly advanced civilization can emerge (Figs. 40.5 and 40.6).

#### 40.1.1.3 Fossil Fooled: The Age Of World Suicide, 2011

In 2011, I created “*Fossil Fooled: The Age of World Suicide*”, a 1-minute, 50 second-long experimental video, which I wrote, filmed, and edited, inspired by my participating in the Occupy Wall Street Movement.

The video starts off with a nude woman, myself, sitting hypnotically facing a bright light. The former president, Jimmy Carter’s voice plays in the background



**Fig. 40.5** Holy, 2009. Digital Collage

from footage recorded in 1979 where he talks about the “crisis of confidence” in American government and also challenges Americans to unite and address the excessive dependence on foreign oil and consider new forms of green energy. The video then cuts to a wrist bleeding what it appears to be black, thick oil.

Following, a woman, wearing a business jacket, a skirt, and an eerie mask, delivers a monologue: “We are in a very interesting period in human history. Most of us know that the world is in deep shit. The collapsing of the economy and the environment; the overpopulation and the squandering of the planet’s resources; people in power losing control; the lack of millions of dollars in my bank account. But, most people have no idea why this is happening and what we are really, really, facing in the future.” As her hands travel down her neck and gently rest on her chest,





**Fig. 40.6** A King's Milk Gone Sour in the Midst of Warly Delights, 2010. Digital Collage

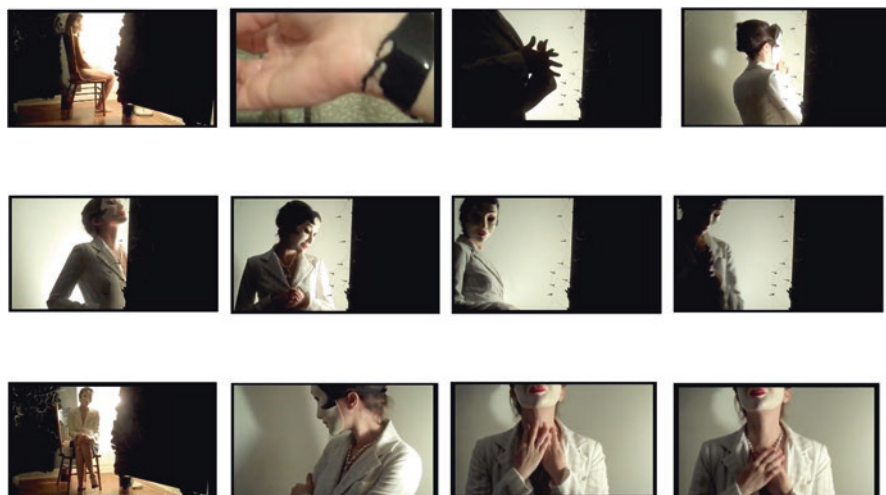
she calmly utters: “for the first time in human history, the world will experience increasingly and more acutely, loving pain, like it never did before. Like it never did before.” The video then ends with the words: “*To Be Continued*.”

While alluding to an underlying narrative of social transformation and better environmental ethics, the character's subtle demeanor in embracing paradox and ambiguity represents a cultural climate of rising stress levels and anxiety with a desire for redemption and continuation.

Is the short movie “*To Be Continued*”; is the current narrative of fear, scarcity, and excessive materialism “*To Be Continued*”; or is it life, at all cost, “*To Be Continued*”? (Figs. 40.7 and 40.8).

#### 40.1.1.4 Odissi Metal: A Meaning-Full Choreography, 2013

“*Odissi Metal: A Meaning-Full Choreography*” is a four-minutes, 29 second-long, video collage I created in 2013 to showcase two contrasting dances: “*Odissi*” (circa 500 BCE), one of the oldest classical sacred dances from India, and “*Body Remix*”



**Fig. 40.7** *Fossil Fooled: The Age of World Suicide*, 2011. Short movie. Screenshots

*Goldberg Variations*" (2005), an avant-garde dance by Canadian choreographer Marie Chouinard.

In this metaphorically quirky and playful composite of visual and auditory narratives contrasting two very different cultures, "Odissi" illustrates the ancient and the sacred, cherishing the wisdom of the years, grace, contemplation, and preservation. "*Body Remix/Goldberg Variations*" is a wild and sexually charged contemporary performance, enhanced by the use of crutches and prostheses, showing the body as an animalistic machine, alluding to transformation, freedom of expression and agency. The video collage is composed of small video frames within a large one, mirroring each other, all choreographed to the song "*Internet Friends*", by Knife Party.

Engendered by the feminine, feminist reflection, "*Odissi Metal: A Meaning-Full Choreography*" is a call for tolerance, diversity, and integration. This video collage represents a meeting of the minds through an interconnected global brain, inspired by a desire to coalesce the best of Eastern and Western wisdom in the pursuit of universal value systems (Fig. 40.9).

#### 40.1.1.5 Mantra Manifesto Capitalista, 2017

In 2017, I created "*Mantra Manifesto Capitalista*", a poem-like-manifesto for conscious evolution.

Originally a 1500-word reflection on spirituality, technological development, science, and post-modernism, this personal manifesto expresses the sentiment of an



**Fig. 40.8** Delfin's participation in the Occupy WallStreet movement and in the original ad from AdBusters America Magazine. "We Need You" call to action, appeared in the AdBusters issue which triggered the movement in 2011

era verging on the most profound paradigmatic shift the modern human has yet to experience—the rise of a super-human race and super-intelligent machines.

This mantra is a call to preserve what makes us human, or humane, in order to establish peaceful relations between humans and other intelligent species by proposing a set of values which can lead to universal civic virtues.

"*Mantra Manifesto Capitalista*" is a declaration for full autonomy and command over one's own evolution, not just through cyborgian technologies, but also through a re-negotiation of meaning and the power of *intelligent intentionality*.





Fig. 40.9 Odissi Metal: a meaning-full choreography, 2013. Video Collage. Screenshots

Through renewed ethos, pathos, and logos, this manifesto is a tool for cognitive enhancement and emotional intelligence inspired by the principles of neuroplasticity to positively impact one's consciousness through focused, intentional chanting (Fig. 40.10).

### 40.1.2 A Transformative Creative Process

Creating “Mantra Manifesto Capitalista”, lead me to discover Transhumanism. At first, I was skeptical. Some of the ideas advocated by the movement seemed too far-fetched and even dangerous. I remained curious, however, and the more I set out to understand the reasoning and philosophies behind these ideas, the more I realized that this movement represented some of the most revolutionary and forward-thinking ideas I have ever encountered. Transhumanism, with its promises and challenges, provides to date, the most logical and promising plan for the future.

As with “*Mantra Manifesto Capitalista*”, each artwork presented in this essay was conceived using a creative process which involves two distinctive stages: *First, it addresses and challenges a limiting or deeply held belief. Second, it leads to a positive, measurable change.*

Limiting beliefs are rooted in cultural upbringings and conscious and subconscious biological programming. Limiting beliefs prevent us from expanding the scope of our imagination and understanding of reality; prevent us from becoming more tolerant, authentic, empathetic, accomplished, and happy; and also prevent us from finding common ground with other belief systems. Limiting beliefs, whether

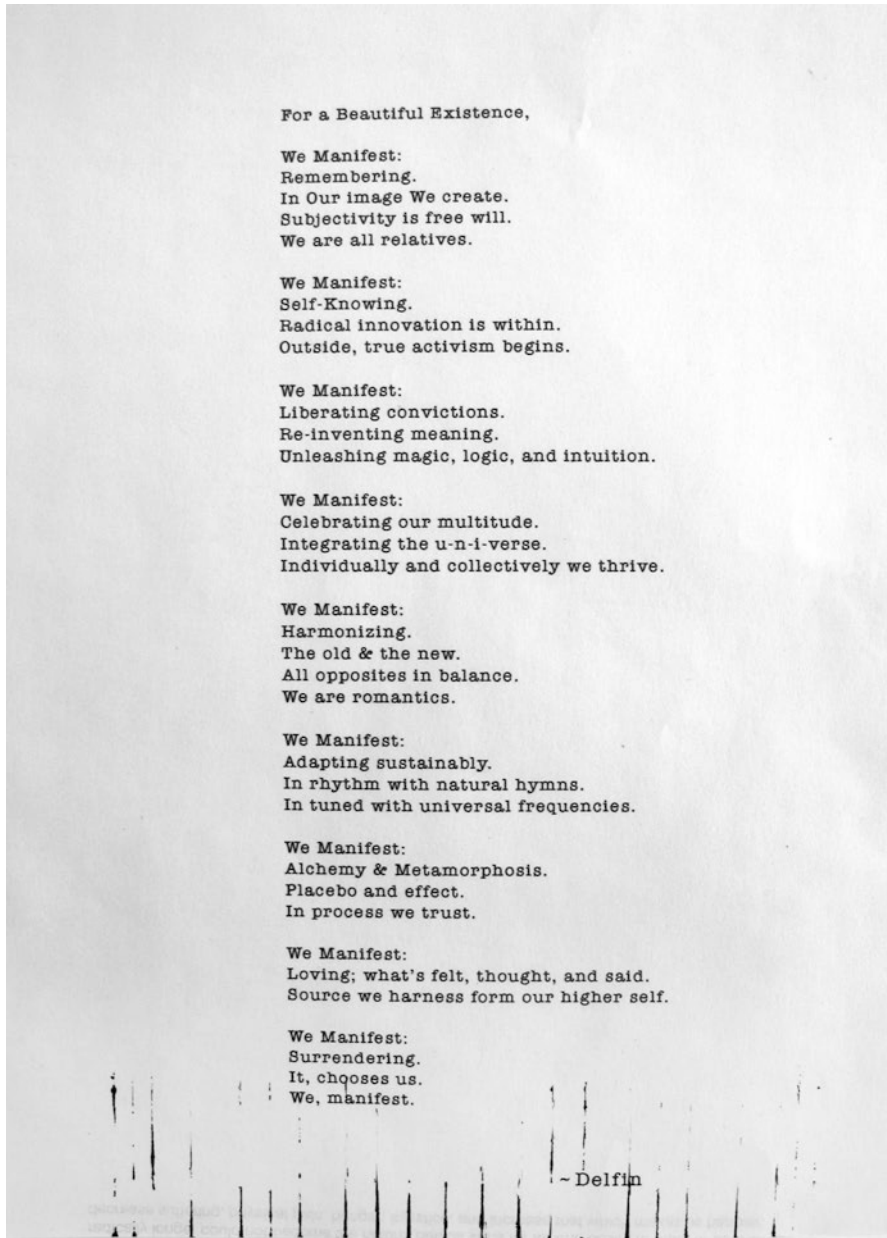


Fig. 40.10 Mantra manifesto capitalista, 2017. Poem

it involves one's identity, others, or the world at large, limits human potential and creativity.

A positive, measurable change may be emotional, cognitive, physical, or spiritual; and it may be in the form of self-realization, wellness, profound ideas, artistic expression, communal creativity, and world peace. A transformative creative process can foster a world that is less fearful, anxious, judgmental, and corrupted; and more conscientious, healthy, safe, and sustainable.

During this process of constructive perspective shifting, five distinct stages take place:

1. Curiosity: Embracing the unknown, the different, the contradicting and the ambiguous is a source of unspoken wisdom. Vulnerability and humility are as important as confidence and strong convictions. However, daring to challenge our own conventions, and resisting the impulse to judge an idea, or a belief system, without giving it the opportunity to reveal its universal truth and essence are key. Curiosity not only expands intellectual excellence and emotional intelligence, but it is essential to dissolve limiting beliefs. Curiosity leads to interdisciplinary research to develop and generate ideas. At this stage of the creative process, one can experience heightened levels of empathy and pattern recognition.
2. Reflection: A creative process is a powerful tool for introspection; to create hypotheses; to find common ground in seemingly unrelated information. This is a time to serenely monitor the patterns of our own thoughts and amend biases and shortcomings. During the reflective stage, ideas incubate as one takes time to consider the knowledge and information that has been accumulated. One important aspect about this stage is solitude, to give the brain a chance to wander and gain clarity. Solitude is key to revealing the true and most authentic self from the noise of modern life and cultural constructs.
3. Integration: Everything is connected! Throughout history, things have been done and said in a plethora of ways to refer to the same ideas and needs. Drawing connections between the various things that interest someone is very important. The integration stage of the creative process increases our ability to be more flexible, fluid, attuned, and adaptable.
4. Play: Creative expression can take any form. Participating, showing up, speaking up, writing it up, dancing it out, building it out, dreaming it big; anything it takes to express one's deepest, weirdest, wildest, and most vulnerable desires and fears—Reality, is a work of art whose expression is defined by the limits of our imagination.
5. Resilience: The creative process isn't free of moments when feeling like giving up. Bottlenecks, frustration, and technical problems can become insurmountable. Take a break. Don't give up. *Trust The Process*.

One key aspect of my creative process, which shares transhumanist sensibilities, is *Pragmatic optimism*.

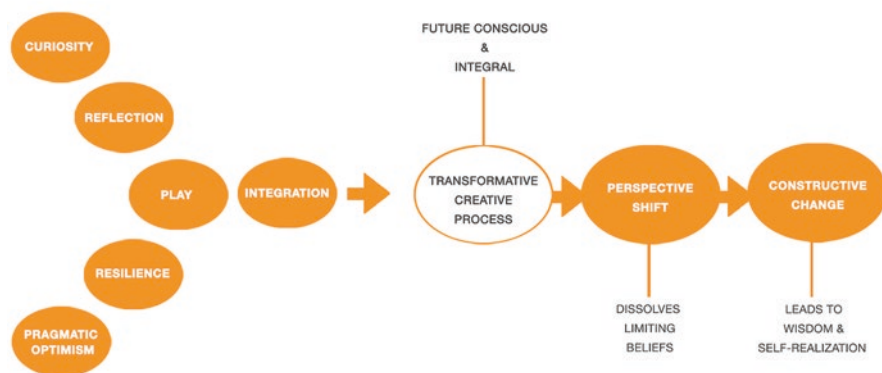
6. *Pragmatic optimism*: isn't about having a blind positive attitude about the future, it is about understanding where things can go wrong and finding proactive solutions without losing focus on the possible positive outcomes.

Most importantly, *pragmatic optimism* is about wellness and longevity. The quality of our thoughts, whether it is contained within the individual or shared with others, can have a profound impact on our biology. Daisy Robinton, a Harvard University graduate Biologist, in a recent TED Talk (*"Thoughts Matter: How Mindset Influences Aging & Lifespan"* 2018), explains that having a positive attitude towards life improves our physical and psychological health and resilience to sickness and cellular degeneration. In the talk, she states: "The tone of our thoughts can influence the way our bodies degrade to a molecular level. Severe stress causes our DNA levels to shrink until they can no longer replicate." She adds, "Negative thoughts are slowly killing us."

Simply shifting one's attitude can be lifesaving and an artist's creative process can be a very effective tool to achieve just this. By harnessing the power of curiosity, reflective thinking, pattern integration, practicing resilience, and pragmatic optimism, one can give birth to creative expressions for radical positive change. **An artist's creative process is thus, a bold reminder that transformative, sustainable change starts within** (Fig. 40.11).

#### A Transformative Creative Process

By Dinorah Delfin



#### 40.1.2.1 The Integral Transhumanist

Recently, I wrote a short, reflective article titled, “*Integral Transhumanism*”, which was published by the U.S. Transhumanist Party’s website on October 31, 2018. In this article, I argue that in order to preserve transhumanism inherent ethical and altruistic worldview and to successfully inspire a transition into a post-human era, we ought to master the art of *holistic living* and take into consideration our interconnectedness to the collective consciousness (collective psyche) and natural systems.

Throughout my creative process, I also adopt an integral approach, which is a developmental cognitive model developed by contemporary philosopher Ken Wilber. Wilber’s model takes into account all dimensions of existence—the internal and external make-up of an individual in relationship with others, his/her culture, and the universe at large—towards a more complete map of reality. Wilber’s model put into context Eastern and Western knowledge, and relates all parts to the whole by using diversity and discernment.

A creative process that is future conscious and integral has a post-postmodern outlook by taking into account the relevant wisdom of all of its preceding movements, including the wisdom of ancient and aboriginal cultures. This holistic approach to the creative process can lead to a more conscious and responsible use and development of transhumanist technologies.

### 40.1.3 A Model for Conscious Evolution

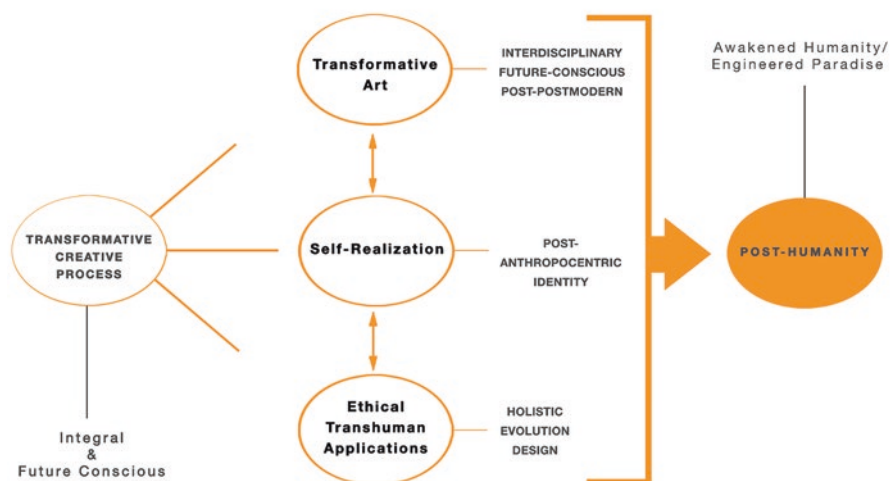
Many experts agree that the rate of development in scientific and technological discoveries is expected to see exponential growth in the relatively near future. “Humanity will change more in the next 20 years than it did in the last two millennia”, says Dr. Jose Cordeiro in a recent interview for his book, “The Death of Death”. As humanity ventures into the conscious re-designing of its own evolution and becomes more advanced with enhanced physical and mental capabilities; more sophisticated in the faculties of reason, intuition, and communication; and better at regulating its own emotions, it will also encounter many challenges.

To implement holistic and transformative models in support of transhuman technologies that are safe, ethical, and sustainable, it is important to re-establish our role as humans in relationship with other living organisms.

A problematic notion of the human is its anthropocentric, top-of-the-food-chain attitude, which has led to horrific discrimination between people and a disconnect with, and abuse of, natural systems and the environment. Humans are, in a sense, “more superior” than other species in that we have the mental faculty to advocate for and protect others, including non-human animals. For example, if we were to face extinction due to a natural event like a meteorite impact, humans have the ingenuity to potentially create technologies to divert such risk and protect the Earth. On the other hand, non-human beings and the eco system are as important as humans in



**A Model For Conscious Evolution**  
**By Dinorah Delfin**



**Fig. 40.12** A model for conscious evolution, 2019. Graph

the sense that we are all an interconnected organism; just like the human body is an interconnected system within itself and with the macrocosms.

We can think of anthropocentrism, as a social construct of the human, another example of limiting beliefs which need to be dissolved. Transhumanists wish to not only foster a climate of tolerance and acceptance but to abolish all forms of discrimination: ethnicity, class, gender, creed, and at its root, speciesism, by establishing policies and value systems that can facilitate peaceful and harmonious relationships, not just with fellow humans and nature, but with future intelligent species, including our machine descendants (Fig. 40.12).

### 40.1.3.1 The Awakened Sapient

*“States of sublime well-being are destined to become the genetically pre-programmed norm of mental health.”* (David Pearce, The Hedonistic Imperative)

Humanity’s journey is a call for adventure. The call is to upgrade—from a fear-based to a love-based subconscious programming. Our greatest obstacle, however, is our pre-historic, fight-or-flight, psychological survival wiring. Adopting a creative process that is future conscious, integral and harnesses the best of transhumanist technologies, may be humanity’s best chance at breaking free from its pre-historic and outdated ego construct.

Striving for a natural default state of profound well-being, pleasure, excitement, and simple joy at being alive and living longer is the most beautiful concept humans could aspire to. We all want to decrease suffering, physical pain, hunger, injustice, and involuntary death. Transhumanist technologies are an invaluable addition towards the pursuit of everything we set out to achieve. After all, humanity's greatest legacy derives from both its humanness and its creative power and ingenuity.

Through the creative process and the infinite artistic possibilities of human imagination, I envision a super-abundance of archetypes representing the truest, most complete sense of self, manifesting and giving rise to an awakened humanity setting out to build a harmonious symbiosis between the natural order, technological systems, and *intelligent intentionality*.

The future I envision, the awakened sapient knows no fear, but the playful innocence of a child. The awakened sapient has no attachments to social conditioning, but has a unique identity while embodying it all. The awakened sapient is free and fluid; forever unfolding; forever transforming; it's essence, forever constant. The awakened sapient has mastered the vibrational language of love to regenerate at a cellular level; to create life; to communicate with all. The awakened sapient embraces its ingenuity and the tools it builds to master the art of living holistically and sustainably, so it can share it with all.

#### **40.1.4 Conclusion**

The coming of a techno-social paradigm shift might be the most important and challenging transition modern humans will ever experience. How we handle it, might lead to the extinction of intelligent life on Earth, or it's flourishing across the cosmos. With emerging super-technologies, we are taking a hold of great power, which also has the potential for great destruction. Transhumanists recognize a moral responsibility to educate and develop the wisdom to wield this creative power and reduce existential risks. We can choose to think of technological development not as a zero-sum game, but a positive sum game—If old age and death are part of the natural order, so too is human desire to overcome them.

A purely empirical scientific approach could rob us of our ability to experience the depth and sacredness of our essence. To survive the logical mind, and enhance our transformative creative potential, we must find a balance between the role of the thinking brain, our intuitive feeling body, and the role of our consciousness and interconnectedness, for human civilization to truly mature, harmonize, and prosper.

With reverence and humility to that which we don't understand yet, and faith in the power of our thoughts and intentions, we can all become the reason why we intuitively feel there is something special about being transhuman, or simply human. Through the power of the creative process, we can achieve the unimaginable and

enhance the human story through renewed symbolic carvings and transformative narratives.

There has never been a more exciting time to be alive and to look forward to what lies ahead. May life and creativity flourish across the universes, infinitely.

**Dinorah Delfin** is a Fine Artist and Futurist located in New York. Ms. Delfin also serves as the Director of Admissions and Public Relations for the U.S. Transhumanist Party.