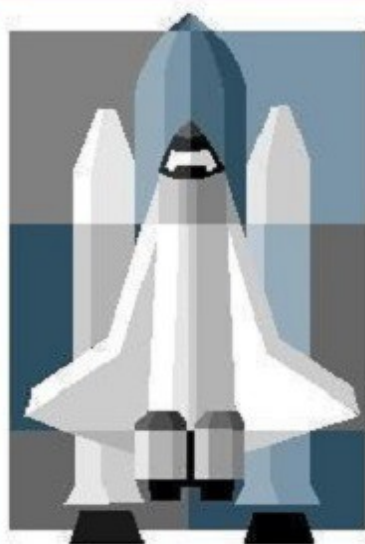


THE IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY TO THE TRANSCENDENTAL FUTURE

John O'Loughlin



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This edition of *The Importance of Technology to the Transcendental Future*
first published 2011 and republished with revisions 2022 by Centretruths
Digital Media

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ISBN: 978-1-716-10978-2

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PREFACE

This fairly substantial collection of philosophical dialogues, dating from the winter of 1981–2, begins with an investigation of technology from a transcendental point of view, as though continuing from where the previous collection of dialogues, *The Transcendental Future* (1980) left off, albeit building upon the ensuing philosophical and literary titles, which included a number of philosophical novels, and, having answered its own questions, proceeds to investigate a number of other topics, including contrasting kinds of writer, the scope and nature of philosophical truth, the likely goal of evolution, different types of decadence, and the parallels between Henry Miller and Malcolm Muggeridge, two very different but strangely related authors, from a similar technologically-orientated transcendental standpoint.

In sum, *The Importance of Technology to the Transcendental Future* is a far from definitive but, nonetheless, a highly engaging and sometimes mind-boggling debate on a variety of controversial or at the very least interesting issues with, as per custom for me at this juncture in my vocational adventure, an aphoristic appendix, which both subsumes and expands on a number of the subjects under discussion.

John O'Loughlin, London 1982 (Revised 2022)

THE IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY

GRAHAM: Isn't the dialogue genre a little out-of-date now, and therefore unlikely to appeal to a mass public?

KENNETH: I doubt whether it is out-of-date, but you may be right in supposing that it won't appeal to a mass public. Ordinarily the masses are more interested in fiction than in fact, in illusory entertainment than in truthful enlightenment. They have little taste for philosophy or higher thought. Consequently they tend to prefer novels to dialogues. But that is no reason why dialogues shouldn't be written. One is simply appealing to a more intelligent public.

GRAHAM: Yes, but who honestly writes dialogues these days anyway?

KENNETH: Khrishnamurti, for one. I, for another. There are doubtless others as well, though I don't make a point of reading them.

GRAHAM: And do you regard the dialogue to be as viable a means of expression as the essay?

KENNETH: I would say that a dialogue which contains original thought or pertains to higher truth is no less worthy of attention than an essay which does the same. It isn't so much the genre that matters as ... what one does with it. Even a prose poem can be something well-worth reading if the man who writes it is a poetical genius and can tell you things that no-one else could. The writer makes the genre, not vice versa. Better to read a dialogue by a genius than an essay or novel by a mediocrity!

GRAHAM: I take your point! So presumably you appertain to the category of dialoguists of genius?

KENNETH: That isn't impossible. After all, I have a philosophy to expound, and that helps somewhat. My philosophy goes equally well into dialogues, essays, short prose, novels, or aphorisms. When I become tired of one genre I gravitate to another, thereby maintaining my taste for philosophy and preventing it from going stale or sour or whatever.

GRAHAM: And what, pray, *is* this philosophy?

KENNETH: That evolution is essentially a struggle from alpha to omega, as from the Devil to God.

GRAHAM: Is that all?

KENNETH: I was putting it as succinctly as possible. I haven't told you how I conceive of the Devil, nor what God will be?

GRAHAM: Then please do!

KENNETH: The Devil is the sum total of primal stars in the Universe and is therefore divisible. God will be the pure spirit that emerges from human spirit at the climax of our evolution, and will therefore be indivisible. The Devil is Manifold, but God will be One, or Unified.

GRAHAM: I see! And what about Jesus Christ?

KENNETH: Christ is the anthropomorphic, dualistic deity relative to an egocentric stage of human evolution. Christ is Man as God. Yet He isn't literally and ultimately God, but a humanistic deity coming in-between two absolutes – the alpha absolute of the Cosmos or, rather, the Father and the omega absolute of the Holy Spirit, which I believe to be in the process of evolution throughout the world and, in all likelihood, the Universe as a whole. God as such doesn't exist. Only the Devil.

GRAHAM: So you are evidently an atheist?

KENNETH: Precisely! I don't confound the Creator with God, which, by contrast, will be the ultimate creation ... of man. I realize that the Creator, or Father, is God's antithesis, since the alpha absolute.

GRAHAM: Why absolute?

KENNETH: Because beneath the dualistic compromise between sensuality and spirituality which is found in organic life, particularly human life. The stars are sensual absolutes, and so the Devil, being synonymous with the stars, is the alpha absolute, existing through its own means independently of external assistance. Our star the Sun, which is but a component of the Devil, produces energy through the so-called proton-proton reaction which converts hydrogen into helium, the gas of hell, so to speak. Other stars follow a similar process, burning up in the course of time. None of them can last for ever, since they are the antithesis of Eternity, which will be manifested in the Holy Spirit. This latter manifestation will expand throughout the Universe through all eternity, eventually replacing the stars, and so bringing the Universe to perfection. If the alpha absolute is beneath dualism, then the omega absolute will be above it.

GRAHAM: And so God is beyond man, never something that is a part of

him or anterior to him.

KENNETH: Yes, strictly speaking! We are not God and neither do we have contact with God. If we are spiritually earnest and therefore dedicated to the cultivation of spirit, we have contact with that, in ourselves, which is spirit and not with the omega absolute, which will eventually arise out of it ... at the climax to our evolution. God is not in us but only what is potentially God, which is spirit, the essence of the superconscious.

GRAHAM: So, presumably, no man can claim to be God or one with God?

KENNETH: Not with absolute justification! We can only build towards the establishment of God in the Universe, not personally identify with Him.

GRAHAM: But how will we build towards such a divine establishment?

KENNETH: By continuing our evolutionary progress along lines designed to free us from nature's influence and enabling us to cultivate as much spirit as possible – in a word, by the further development of civilization. For nature is the main offspring of the Devil. It is a wholly sensuous, subconscious phenomenon. Now it seems to me that we are here to battle against it and eventually attain to the supernatural. This would seem to be our privilege and responsibility as men. We may stem from the Diabolic Alpha to the degree that we are dependent on and under the influence of nature, but we also aspire towards the Divine Omega by striving to overcome nature and, more importantly, by cultivating spirit. We are 'born under one law [but] to another bound', as Huxley was fond of reminding us, quoting from that poem by Fulke Greville, I think it was. Thus there are two ways of building towards God – the indirect way, which entails a struggle against nature, and the direct way, which entails the cultivation of spirit. Broadly speaking, one might argue that the West has hitherto given priority to the former and the East, by contrast, to the latter. Yet both ways are absolutely necessary and equally important! By themselves, in isolation, neither of them can effect a future transformation to the supernatural. The coming together of both the East and the West into a unitary synthesis is the cardinal fact of our time, the inevitable evolutionary step beyond the independent existence of the two approaches to salvation. In sum, the indirect approach of striving to overcome nature through technological, industrial, urban, scientific, and social progress must be put to the service of the direct approach ... of cultivating spirit through transcendental meditation. Only then will we be on a direct course for the millennial Beyond.

GRAHAM: And presumably this direct course will be a consequence of the fusion of East and West into a new civilization?

KENNETH: Yes, the transcendental civilization of post-dualistic man. However, we are still quite a way from such a civilization at present, especially in the West, where dualistic criteria continue to prevail. Obviously, it will be necessary to outgrow and clear away the existing civilization before another and better one can be put in its place, yet this won't happen overnight. I foresee the triumph of socialism to pave the way for this new civilization. Socialism will lead to transcendentalism, and that, in due course, will lead to the millennial Beyond.

GRAHAM: How, exactly, will it do that?

KENNETH: By making transcendence possible. As I said, there are two ways of building towards God, and both of them are absolutely necessary. Let us start where dualistic civilization leaves off, with the indirect method ... of socialism. Here we witness the development of urbanization, industrialization, science, and technology to unprecedented heights, as man struggles to overcome nature and thus free himself from its clutches. One might term this phase of post-dualistic evolution the New Barbarism, since there is little or no place in it for transcendentalism. Here man builds towards God without necessarily realizing it, since social and economic concerns are paramount. The genuine socialist is an enemy of traditional religion in *all* its guises, and wishes to rid the world of every last shred of religious superstition. Salvation is in the hands of man, and socialism is the means through which it will be realized. But the socialist doesn't think in terms of salvation in a heavenly Beyond. On the contrary, he thinks in terms of a classless society here on Earth, in which men live in harmony with one another and with their environment. This is what the typical socialist, be he European or Asian or anything else, thinks about salvation, and instead of Heaven he uses the term 'Millennium', which is intended to designate – over and above epochal parameters – the coming time of 'happiness on Earth'. This attitude, which is perfectly logical in its context, I call the New Barbarism, and it signifies a transitional phase between the end of dualistic civilization and the beginning of the transcendental one to come. With the birth of the latter, however, socialism will embrace transcendentalism, and so make feasible the direct method of building towards God. This method should become the post-dualistic religious norm, and it would differ from traditional transcendentalism by being the inheritor of the technological, industrial, and social progress to which the

predominantly socialist stage of evolution had given a boost. Meditation would not then be impeded in its efficacy for cultivating spirit by the natural body, but should become progressively freer of such an impediment through the assistance of technology, which would gradually replace the natural organs with artificial ones, eventually making for a situation where the brain was artificially supported and no-less artificially sustained. Hence the overcoming of nature would not just be confined to the impersonal environment of the outside world, but would have extended into the personal environment of the body, thus freeing the spirit from sensual constraints. Technology wouldn't simply free man from the burden of cultivating animals and crops for their food-value; it would free him from the necessity to eat and drink, thereby rendering him completely independent of nature. Oxygen could be supplied to the brain via special containers, whilst a mechanical heart, or pump, would keep blood, or some enhanced equivalent, flowing through the brain via plastic tubing. Ultimately nothing would be left of man except the brain, and most probably just the so-called new brain, the most advanced part of the brain, with a consequence that he would be able to dedicate himself exclusively to the attainment of salvation in the millennial Beyond.

GRAHAM: What a staggering prospect! The gradual phasing-out of the body until nothing remained but the brain?

KENNETH: Indeed! And one might argue that, with the gradual 'withering' of the state as a compromise between socialism and transcendentalism, something analogous to a 'communist' millennium would have properly arrived as the final phase of the transcendental civilization, in which everything was geared to man's eventual attainment of spiritual transcendence. For once man had been rendered incapable of rebelling against progress, there would be scant need of a security apparatus to ensure the prevention of counter-revolutionary 'wrecking' tendencies. A man elevated to the status of an artificially-supported brain could hardly be expected to wreck anything, least of all the technology at his disposal! So the state would inevitably 'wither away' as a coercive and supportive agent, once its goal of maximum security had been reached. People would no longer be thinking in terms of how to perfect the machinery of state while simultaneously protecting the cultural or religious aims and achievements of the transcendental civilization, but would be exclusively concerned with attaining to definitive salvation at the climax of evolution. Religious concerns would completely supplant political ones, in

this latter phase of post-dualistic civilization. Inevitably, man would become God, become part of the omega absolute, and thus leave the material world behind him, as would his counterparts elsewhere in the Universe, assuming, for the sake of argument, there were any. Such is the ultimate implication of Teilhard de Chardin's convergence to the Omega Point, as expounded in *Activation of Energy*. Each individual spirit would tend towards maximum unity in the Oneness of the Holy Spirit, as it abandoned the separate brain of the individual meditator at the moment of transcendence.

GRAHAM: And soared heavenwards, like a comet or rocket?

KENNETH: I don't know about that! But certainly it would gravitate towards its destination in space at a suitable remove from the sensuous presence of individual stars, which constitute Hell. Perhaps for thousands or even millions of years Hell and Heaven would coexist in the Universe. But eventually, following the inevitable collapse of all or most of the stars, only Heaven would prevail, bringing the Universe to perfection.

GRAHAM: So you don't object to the concept of Heaven, but are of the belief that it will one day become a reality?

KENNETH: No, I don't object to it! What I object to is the Christian way of conceiving of it, a way which is inherently egocentric, and related to the idea of a posthumous salvation, or salvation following death. These days such a conception is no longer valid because the world is tending in an increasingly post-egocentric direction. One would indeed be deluded to imagine that, after a life of sensual self-indulgence or attention to natural obligations like drinking and eating, never mind urinating and defecating, one was entitled to absorption into a realm of pure spirit! Believe me, Heaven could not be entered so easily! No, at death the spirit is overcome by the flesh and simply dies. It isn't saved.

GRAHAM: Then how are we to save it?

KENNETH: By gradually getting rid of the flesh and prolonging the duration of life, as I have already said. At present we lack the requisite technology to save the spirit, although we are nevertheless increasing the average life-span of man, which is a step in the right direction. Yet no amount of pampering or doctoring the body will prevent it from eventually succumbing to the fate of old age, which is dissolution and death. So the ultimate solution to prolonging the life of our spirit must reside elsewhere – namely in the phasing-out of the natural body through technology. Only

then will the human life-span be considerably extended, thereby providing man with sufficient time for the cultivation of an advanced degree of spirituality, a spirituality which will culminate in transcendence.

GRAHAM: Even with the existence of the old brain?

KENNETH: No, as I intimated earlier, the old brain would probably have to 'go the way' of the rest of the body if spirit, which reposes rather more in the new brain, as superconsciousness, was to be cultivated to a transcendent degree. There may well be a period of time when the old brain won't be subject to technological interference, in response to both an inability to successfully deal with it technologically and the course of events inevitably having to proceed by degrees rather than in leaps and bounds. One must envisage an initial coexistence of the different brains in which some form of egocentric consciousness will be retained, and the subconscious accordingly continue to exist. Meditation will assist in the cultivation of the superconscious, or spirit, and so, too, should synthetic drugs like LSD, which make for transcendent visionary experience in the lower regions of the superconscious.

GRAHAM: But not, apparently, in the subconscious?

KENNETH: No. The subconscious appertains to the sensual realm of dreams and sleep, not to the realm of transcendent visionary experience. To approach it in a waking-life context it is only necessary to take one or another of the natural drugs, like tobacco, hashish, opium, et cetera, which stem, in a manner of speaking, from the sensuous roots of the world in nature, and so facilitate varying degrees of downward self-transcendence, to coin a Huxleyite phrase. However, no transcendental civilization could encourage the consumption of such drugs, and so it would be to the lower regions of the superconscious that synthetic drugs appealed, expanding consciousness upwards in the direction of pure spirit. Of course, one cannot run before one has learnt to walk. Consequently a period of acclimatization to the lower regions of the superconscious would have to precede complete absorption into its higher regions. The eventual separation of the new brain from the old brain would doubtless further this end, but one could only be led to it by degrees, as one gradually learnt to adjust to upward self-transcendence and simultaneously acquired greater control over the subconscious influence of the old brain. No-one can escape from his past all at once, especially when that past is a psychic/organic one which has lasted for many thousands of years. One must first be weaned away from sensual consciousness in the milk of a

synthetic drug like LSD, before one can hope to face the light of the higher superconscious and, ultimately, the Supreme Being itself, as one's spirit merges into it, following transcendence. Otherwise one would experience the fate of Huxley's Eustace Barnack, one of the leading characters of *Time Must Have a Stop*, who, following death, was unable to tolerate absorption into the Clear Light of the Void, in consequence of having the burden of his past egocentric consciousness upon him. Now although the concept of such a posthumous encounter with the Clear Light ... is no better than the Christian belief in a posthumous Heaven, the situation which Aldous Huxley describes in his novel isn't without at least some applicability to what I have just said about the need to approach salvation by degrees, considering that Barnack was somewhat less than psychically prepared for Eternity. He would inevitably be obliged, in the moral nature of these things, to return to the world in the guise of a new-born infant and work towards his self-improvement, before any possibility of subsequent unification with the Divine could be expected. However, reincarnation isn't a doctrine to which I literally subscribe, since I contend that, at death, the spirit simply dies. But Huxley was expounding Hindu belief and apparently believed in it himself, as his own experiment with a dose of LSD, while dying, would seem to confirm. He imagined it would assist his passage into the Beyond, and so died in the egocentric tradition of short-term, or posthumous, salvation. He might as well have remained a Christian, as experimented with Oriental religion!

GRAHAM: Yet it does have some applicability to the future, doesn't it?

KENNETH: Insofar as meditation is concerned, yes, I believe it does. But, then, so does Christianity, to the degree that it posits salvation in the Beyond as the goal and true resting place of human striving. Where it is mistaken, in my view, is in its short-term, egocentric view of the Beyond. So the time has come when a new religious orientation, compatible with a long-term or millennial view of the Beyond, must arise to supersede the old one. The genuine Christian will contend that Heaven already exists, since comprised, as it were, of the risen presence of Christ. Such an egocentric, quasi-mystical view is upheld, for example, by Teilhard de Chardin, despite his long-term philosophy of the Omega Point. But, of course, Christ is simply an anthropomorphic deity relative to a humanistic stage of evolution, not the omega absolute as such, and so we can be certain that he doesn't literally reside there, since he ...