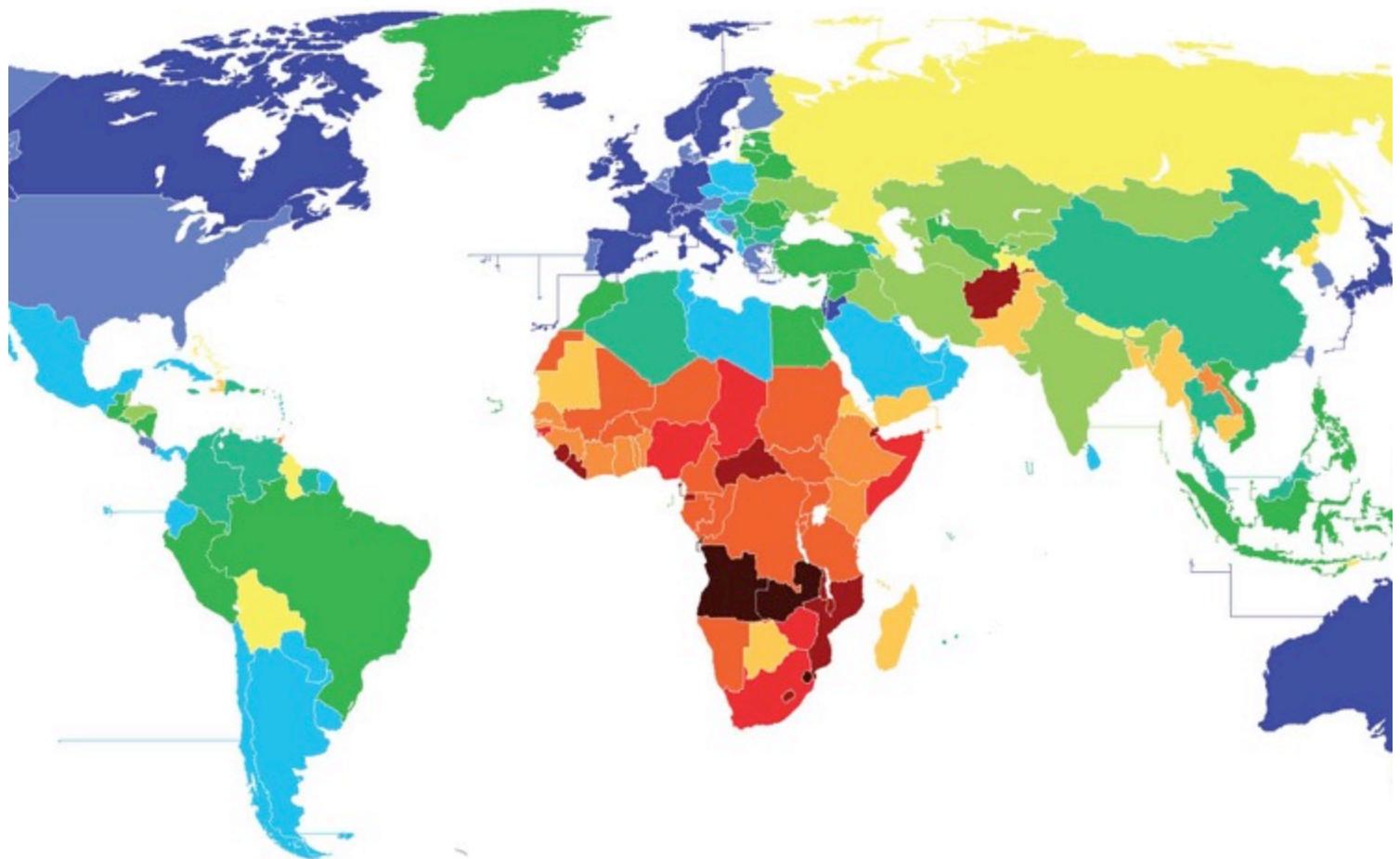


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**KENYA BUILDING COLLAPSE: NEARBY
RESIDENTS ASKED TO LEAVE HOMES**

**TRANSHUMANISM AND OUR OUTDATED
BIOLOGY**

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Headlines

KENYA BUILDING COLLAPSE: NEARBY RESIDENTS ASKED TO LEAVE HOMES

People in Nairobi have been asked to leave their homes near a six-storey building that collapsed in heavy rain, killing at least 12 people.



A girl is rescued from the collapsed building – at least five of the dead are reported to be children.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta visited the disaster site and said the building's owners should be arrested.

A baby was among 134 people pulled from the rubble and rescuers are searching for more people who may be trapped.

The buildings to be evacuated house 1,000 people and are built next to a river bank.

The Red Cross criticised "chaotic scenes" as rescuers arrived after the Friday night collapse. Nairobi's police chief has said rescue teams were delayed on their way to the scene by hours-long traffic jams caused by flooded roads.

The Red Cross said 150 building units and adjacent homes were affected.

Rainfall has caused landslides, washed away houses and flooded roads. Police said 19 people had died in the Nairobi rains, including those in the collapse.

The building took three months to construct, the BBC's Emmanuel Igunza reports from Nairobi. County authorities say it had been earmarked for demolition and did not have a certificate of occupation that would allow tenants to rent the 119 rooms out.

"The building went down during the heavy rains, but we still want to establish if all the procedures were followed when it was constructed," Nairobi's deputy governor Jonathan Mueke told reporters at the scene.

He said the building, reportedly built two years ago, did not have planning permission.

Across the city, more than 800 homes were affected by the flooding, Kenya's Red Cross said.

Huruma is a poor district on the outskirts of Nairobi made up of narrow streets, adding to the difficulties of fire fighters in getting to the scene.

After some time, the army took charge of the rescue with the help of the Kenyan Red Cross.

"It appears that some people are getting impatient but... we have got indications that there are people who are still trapped in the rubble," said Nathan Macharia Kigotho, the director of the national disaster operation centre.

"We don't want to use heavy machines because it is likely to crumble and crush them."

Poor building standards are a fact of life in Kenya, correspondents say. A survey carried out last year found that more than half the buildings in the capital were unfit for habitation.

The high demand for housing in Nairobi has led to some property developers bypassing building regulations to reduce costs and increase profits.

President Kenyatta last year ordered an audit of all the buildings in the country after a spate of collapses.

By BBC

Science and Technology

TRANSHUMANISM AND OUR OUTDATED BIOLOGY

*This essay below is adapted from the philosophical Libertarian book *The Transhumanist Wager*, which is increasingly being used in colleges and high schools around the world to teach about the future:*

Humans are handicapped by our biology. We operate tens of thousands of years behind evolution with our inherited instincts, which means our behavior is not suited towards its current environment. Futurists like to say evolution is always late to the dinner party. We have instincts that apply to our biology in a world that existed ages ago; not a world of skyscrapers, cell phones, jet air travel, the Internet, and CRISPR gene editing technology. We must catch up to ourselves. We must evolve our thinking to adapt to where we are in the evolutionary ascent. We must force our evolution in the present day via our reasoning, inventiveness, and especially our scientific technology. In short, we must embrace transhumanism—the radical field of science that aims to turn humans into, for lack of a better word, gods.

Transhumanists believe we must stand guard against our natural genes, less they chain us to remaining as animals forever. We believe our outdated instincts can easily trick us from knowing right from wrong, practical from impractical. If one looks closely, the human body and its biology constantly highlight our many imperfections.

Compared to humans, rats have better noses for smelling. Pigeons have sharper eyes for seeing. Crocodiles can run faster. Earthworms can survive underwater longer. Cockroaches can bear far colder temperatures. Humans are only best at reasoning. Yet, computers can already beat the best of us in chess, math, and recently the sublime game Go. And the robots we've made are far stronger than we are, can handle more danger, and can fly through interstellar space without us.

Obviously, the human body is a mediocre vessel for our actual possibilities in this material universe. Our biology severely limits us. As a species we are far from finished and therefore unacceptable. The transhumanist believes we should immediately work to improve ourselves via enhancing the human body and eliminating its weak points. This means ridding ourselves of flesh and bones, and

upgrading to new cybernetic tissues, alloys, and other synthetic materials, including ones that make us cyborg-like and robotic. It also means further merging the human brain with the microchip and the impending digital frontier. Biology is for beasts, not future transhumanists.

Our outdated biology's emphasis on social interaction is also dangerous for the overall evolutionary ascent of the human race—so dangerous that new questions must be asked immediately. Are so many of us healthy for this fragile planet? Should we rid ourselves of all our 25,000 nuclear weapons? Is the sexual ritual even functional anymore? Does matrimony serve purposes outside of private property and economics? Are social customs like monogamy foolishly conservative? Should we embrace a culture of drugs and biohacking? Should government use cranial implant technology to safeguard its citizens? Should society insist that all government and military leadership be equally split between females and males? Should corporations be hindered from catering to the weak, petty sides of human nature? Should religion and superstitious faiths be discouraged? These are challenging and thorny questions to ask. Yet, they should be asked, and maybe even the best answers should be implemented if we are to be true to our highest selves.

A truly transhumanist society should embrace reason and the scientific method to improve itself and bring about the best world possible on Planet Earth.

By Huffington Post

Arts

MOCKERY: THE BEST WAY TO OPEN UP THE ARTS

Creativity is being strangled in our schools, but subversive memes are inspiring young people as never before



Leonardo da Vinci 's The Last Supper: a table for 26, please.

One of the first things you learn when you study art is that there is “good art” and “bad art”. “Good art” will get you an A-grade if you copy it meticulously as part of your art class, while “bad art” will not. The people who decide the difference between these two types of art are generally long dead men in books and, if you’re especially unlucky, your teachers.

You learn that there’s a canon (although you probably won’t call it that) of good art that you’re not really meant to criticise, even if you privately think it is rubbish (unless it’s contemporary art, in which case feel free to dump as much disdain on it as you like – there’s a braying chorus to back you up). This way of teaching is intimidating, and boring, and does nothing to inspire young people, many of whom have had very little contact with the arts.

The government's pushing of the English baccalaureate – which has no creative component at all – in schools has seen a narrowing of our arts curriculum. There has been a sharp drop in students taking arts-based GCSEs, and in arts teachers; and it appears that low-income students taking arts subjects at degree level are very much in the minority. In other words, we have an arts divide.

The Warwick commission report, released last year, found that the best-educated and least ethnically diverse 8% of society make up a third of gallery visitors, and "higher" social groups account for 87% of all museum visits. Yet in this climate of rampant social inequality, there have been suggestions that museums reintroduce entrance fees – despite the fact that studying creative subjects has a positive impact on student attainment across the board, including maths and literacy. Students from low-income families who take part in arts activities in school are three times more likely to get a degree.

I was lucky to be taken to galleries from a young age: we had a house full of art books and a mother who paints. But I was also lucky to have a great art teacher. He made Roman decorative art interesting by conjuring up an image of the warrior druids lined up on the shores of Anglesey; he told us how Magritte's fragmented bodies might be a reflection of his mother's death by drowning. My teacher let a 16-year-old boy do his final project on what it felt like to be on pills, and gave him a B. He made art relevant to our lives.

This happened at degree level too, notably when we were asked to compare a painting by Joshua Reynolds (a white man in a red coat practically straddling a cannon) and a picture of the rapper 50 Cent (black, holding a gun). The teacher argued that the Reynolds was superior because of the stoicism it captured, but the class were having none of it. "50 Cent's been shot nine times," said one guy. "What's more stoic than that?"

Some will use this anecdote to argue that an arts education is useless and profligate, and serves no wider purpose, but they'd be wrong. It's important that we analyse the visual culture around us, and that includes pop culture. Better to question the distinctions between good and bad art, than lording it on your high horse.

Which is why, when it comes to opening up the arts, the internet is such a godsend. I cried tears of laughter when I first came across the blog Ugly Renaissance Babies (tagline: "the kids aren't alright"), showcasing the worst infant figure painting the period has to offer. Meanwhile, Renoir Sucks at Painting is a hilarious and

subversive commentary on artistic taste. This tongue-in-cheek group has got the internet analysing the differences between what is good and what is saccharine and sentimental. We should salute them.

Art history memes are everywhere. Those of the “Medieval reactions” variety – mocking the cackhanded and surreal artistic output of the middle ages – are especially funny. It doesn’t matter how revered the painter is, either. Online, the Last Supper diners are said to have asked the waiter for “a table for 26” – so that they could all sit on the same side of the table.

Because of the internet young people today are probably looking at more paintings than ever. They are more engaged, more enthusiastic, more questioning. It’s exciting and inspiring to see, and teachers should be harnessing this power to educate.

The death of David Bowie this year led to many of us reflecting that the well-trodden trajectory of the star and his contemporaries, from working-class kid to art student to creative visionary, no longer really exists. Thanks to the abolition of the student grant system, the introduction of tuition fees, and the cultural dominance of the privately educated, any modern-day Bowies would these days find themselves standing outside a great many closed doors. And that is a tragedy.

By Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett, for The Guardian



UNDER THE MACROSCOPE

Under the MacroScope is a weekly summary of what's happening around the world and what's worth pondering. Stay on top of international and local news with this bulletin produced by the Raffles Economics and Current Affairs Society