Religion, Progress, and Innovation in the Contemporary World

The Transhumanist Imagination: Innovation, Secularization, and Eschatology ($200,000).
Arizona State University. PIs: J. Benjamin Hurlbut and Hava Tirosh-Samuelson (Arizona State University)

The project addresses meta-questions posed by the RIHA program by highlighting the connection between reason, religion, and imagined futures. Transhumanism serves as a particularly noteworthy expression of the postsecular moment, and thus as a fruitful context through which to interrogate the interplay of eschatological vision, projects of technological innovation, and forms of normative imagination in modern secular societies. As a technocratic, political, and theological project, transhumanism is perhaps the most visible attempt to preach a vision of innovation as a gospel of progress, and to undertake a mission of world-transformation.

Does religion contribute to innovation? Insofar as the question demands that we analyze a world that we presume to grasp by mapping relations between categories that we presume to understand, the question should be refused. But insofar as it invites us to interrogate concepts and categories that are at once so commonplace that they are exempt from critical examination, yet so consequential in practice that they configure the very shape of human lives, the question is profound and urgent. In the spirit of that invitation, we must therefore also ask: what collectively held visions of right knowledge, reason, and progress configure and constrain creative innovation in the work of moral imagining? And what repertoires of meaning—religious and otherwise—can engender the humility that this task demands?

Major Outputs:
Book:
• Hurlbut, J. Benjamin & Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, eds. Perfecting Human Futures: Technology, Secularization and Eschatology (Springer, under contract)

Articles:
• Boenig-Liptsin, M & J. Benjamin Hurlbut, “Jump, Grab, Twist, and Bend: Innovation as Disruption at Singularity University” (in preparation, to be submitted June 2014).
  http://pus.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/03/06/0963662514523712

Published Roundtable:

  *Zygon*, Special Section on Transhumanism 47:4 (December 2012):
  - Robert M. Geraci. “Video Games and the Transhuman Inclination”: 735–56

Conference:

• *Imagining the (Post-) Human Future: Meaning, Critique and Consequences*, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany, July 8–9, 2013.

Website:

• *The Transhumanist Imagination: Innovation, Secularization, and Eschatology* (The Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict, Arizona State University)
  [http://transhumanistimagination.csrc.asu.edu/home](http://transhumanistimagination.csrc.asu.edu/home)