

Radical Next: Reclaiming Your Humanity in a Post-Human World

Sam Rad

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Musing on technological progress with the hope that humanity can rally to solve the associated problems, Radical Next is an optimistic work of futurism.

Sam Rad's provocative philosophy book *Radical Next* is about being human in a time when technology mediates most interactions.

Saying that "our current governance operating system relies on inequity," this book reconsiders the costs of remote work, social media, surveillance states, and means of controlling the masses through technology. Drawing on psychology, philosophy, science, and spirituality, it speculates on what is next for society as technological progress redefines what it means to be human. And it muses on how contemporary trends might be extrapolated upon within a range of futures, covering relationships, global economies, world governments, health care, and education.

The book's reach is vast, with coverage of biomimicry, quantum computing, and generative AI, among other topics. All are investigated to the benefit of the world's people, plants, animals, and ecosystems. Ultimately, the text envisions a society that values equitable, just, ethical progress.

Each chapter glimpses into a possible future, exploring aspects of the "Age of Acceleration." Emphasis is placed on individual energies and how they might manifest in a new, augmented age. Sometimes this emphasis comes at the expense of substantiative extrapolations of how contemporary circumstances might be altered into the vision presented. And at times, the book is too pseudoscientific, challenging the borders of science and technology and veering into spiritual territory. The suspension of disbelief around spiritual practices like remote viewing and clairvoyance is required.

The potential capacities of the human mind are explored, with warnings given about predilections toward deception, harmful rhetoric, alarmism, and extravagant promises in politics, science, and technology. There are warnings about ways that people might go wrong throughout, though these are tempered by thorough considerations of the benefits of breakthroughs in technology, including quantum computing, augmented realities, bioengineering, and robotics. Though a cautionary undertone pervades the text, optimism prevails in most of its predictions. Arguments are made for protecting biodiversity and eschewing fantasies of living on Mars; the book's terrestrial lens grounds its arguments in the realm of the plausible, the possible, and the inevitable.

A conversational tone is maintained throughout, making the book accessible even to those not well-versed in cutting-edge technological developments. References are made to the perspectives of visionary icons from ancient to modern times, from the works of Plato and Ovid and *The Epic of Gilgamesh* to contemporary thinkers and writers, including Albert Einstein, Michel Foucault, and George Orwell, who proffered insights into human nature.

Radical Next is an ambitious book that analyzes technology through a futuristic, anthropological lens grounded in embodied practices that seek to reinforce humanity rather than replace it.

CAITLIN CACCIATORE (October 23, 2024)

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