

### Essay 3

## Essay 1: Critical Response Paper

In the CNN news article, “World’s First Cyborg wants to hack your body” by Madeleine Stix, Neil Harbisson stated in an interview “We all have a mobile phone and we all use technology constantly, so this has become normal. It will also become normal to have it implanted. I think it just needs time”. Harbisson believes this due to the fact that he himself is the first ever legalized cyborg, having a bionicle body part known as the “Eyeborg”, a device attached to his skull that helps him perceive normal and infrared color by turning colors into sound. Thanking technology for his cure diagnoses of achromatopsia, a common color blinding deflection from birth, it’s very understandable why he believes that bionicle enhancements can improved the human’s physical and mental limits. However non-cyborgs would disagree with Harbisson and groups such as “Stop the Cyborgs”, an organization that specifically targets wearable technology users, would flat out encourage others to dispose the use of wearable technology. Harbisson is well aware of these kind of people and ideas and he blames these “Anti-Cyborg” groups for society’s fear of wearable engineering, but he still claims that after some time passes, they will have the same ideas as he does. Unfortunately, a number of non-cyborgs and “Anti-Cyborg” groups have recently suggested that Harbisson’s claim has several fundamental problems.

One reason why most non-bionic humans would disagree and never would consider bionic enhancements is the same reason why most humans wouldn’t consider negatively effective steroids. What Harisson doesn’t realize is the human’s idea of a desire for requirements more than enhancements. In one point of the article, Harisson states "Hearing through bone conduction is something that dolphins do, an antenna is something that many insects have, and

knowing where North is something that sharks can also detect. These senses are very natural, they already exist but we can now apply them to humans". These senses that Harbisson explains counts as enhancements, painful enhancements at that. Most humans wouldn't desire the pain and suffering that they would have to go through to have these enhancements. Same goes for bionic requirements such as a bionic arm or a bionic leg. To get these requirements, you'd need to lose something that you once had and use to having; your arm and your leg! To put it simply, compared Harrison's own deeply desired enhancement that he's wanted since the day he was born to a matured human that's already use to their own flesh and blood, it's just not the same desire.

Another and probably the most important reason why most non-bionic humans would disagree and never would consider bionic enhancements is that bionicle body parts are still a new subject of science to most scientist. Unlike normal, durable body parts that are fully under the human's control and require little maintenance, bionicle body parts require extreme maintenance and are less durable. Even the people who do use bionicle body parts go through several malfunctions monthly, ranging from battery loss to flat out disconnected signaling from the now alienated body part. One example of this is Harbisson himself. Harbisson's "Eyborg" is a device that's implanted into is skull and stretches to the front part of his face and gives him the ability hear color. It's true that he can now see, or rather hear, normal and inferred colors thanks to his bionicle enhancement, but a device such as that would definitely make it harder to do the basic and daily requirements for humans, such as wearing things on your head, showering, being able to sleep and socializing. They even mention in the article that before the machine could fully function, Harbisson had to get use to the constant ear ringing of each and every color he saw.

Even though that there are clear, countless reasons of why mechanical enhancements would never be completely accepted by the human race, I can understand where Harbisson's coming from. Thanks to Harbisson's experience with bionical enhancements, his life has completely changed. He can now see things that his normal, humanoid eyes could never even dream of comprehending. Also, Harbisson believes that society is already use to daily usage of technology such as phones and computers, which would make sense of his ending quote in the article; "We all have a mobile phone and we all use technology constantly, so this has become normal. It will also become normal to have tech inside our bodies of have it implanted. I think it just needs time". However, to mention an earlier argument, mobile phones are painlessly required devices that have no relation to the human body, so of course people are more accepted to phones that implanted technology.

Though it would be spectacular to have bodily enhancements such as mechanical legs that make you run faster and mechanical arms that make you stronger just like in Harrison's made up world, it's just too dangerous to have in the real world. Like mentioned before, it's not required and therefore society would have no use of them when they have their own, normal bodies. It's only when say for example that a human loses a certain body part due to a terrible incident is when they would consider it, and still that would be considered as a requirement than an enhancement. This is because most humans would prefer to feel and have a hundred-percent control over their body instead of worrying about constant machinery problems of having mechanical body parts over most circumstances. Maybe in an era where humans are more

technologically advanced and suddenly start to lose limbs left and right, but not in an era where a hand is handier than any device than any scientist can think of.

Stix, Madeleine. "World's first cyborg wants to hack your body."

*CNN Tech*, 7 Jan 2016,

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/02/tech/innovation/cyborg-neil-harbisson-implant-antenna/index.html>