

Out of control

Women should take same responsibility for reproduction as they do for other things



JESSICA FLANAGAN is a senior English and philosophy major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Let's just take a little minute to look at where the abortion industry is headed, why don't we? I think we'll all be surprised to learn that all the focus on the abortion debate has done nothing to encourage preventative actions and has really just facilitated an abortion-happy society.

Let's not rehash the old women have the right to choose vs. the no, no, abortion is murder argument. I know what I think, and chances are you know what you think. So, let's just spare one another the agony.

There are, however, a few things I want to bring to your attention.

First, having an abortion is never cause for celebration. Obviously it

would have been better to be preventative than reactive, and thus a mistake was made.

(If it wasn't a mistake, she'd be painting the nursery instead of staring at the blank walls in the waiting room of Planned Parenthood.)

Second, it would be advantageous to learn from our mistakes.

And finally, if abortion continues to be an accepted form of birth control, society will effectively devalue the sanctity of human life while absolving women from reproductive responsibility.

These points hold true regardless of what stand you take on the abortion issue. You see the fetus (or baby, depending on your take) is, indeed, a human form. And since it is growing, we must deduct that it is alive – thus the term human life. Clever term, isn't it?

Now, to review, it would be better to be preventative than reactive, and this lack of prevention is a "mistake."

You might find it interesting to know that of women aged 15 to 44 who have abortions, 47 percent of them have had at least one prior abortion.

Forty-three percent of women will have at least one abortion by age 45.

You may also find it interesting to know 53 percent of women who have unplanned pregnancies used no method

of contraception. None.

Newsflash: Sex may result in pregnancy! This just in: Sex without contraception is more likely to result in pregnancy than sex with contraception!

Incidentally, unplanned pregnancies among women who use no method of birth control are as likely to end in abortion as they are in birth.

So, from this we can conclude that women are just plain not using their heads or that they are using this medical procedure as an excuse to live recklessly. Reproduce irresponsibly – if you will.

You know, the people who are having the majority of these abortions may not be whom you suspect, and their reasons may not be what you would think.

Two-thirds of women who have abortions plan to have children in the future.

So most of these women would want the child, if it came later in life. It's really very simple: If a woman is going to be responsible enough to raise a child, perhaps she should be responsible enough not to get pregnant before she's ready.

This whole run-to-the-abortion-clinic trend is yet another example of the lack of social responsibility in our society.

Less than 1 percent of abortions are performed because a woman is raped.

In fact, two-thirds of women cite interference with school, work or other responsibilities as the main reason for terminating their pregnancies.

That means that a good deal of women feel obligated to be responsible in some areas of their life – but not when it comes to sex.

Half of the women who have abortions say they simply don't want to be single parents, or they are having problems with their husbands or partners. Well, not to be repetitive, but perhaps they should have just *not gotten pregnant in the first place!*

This isn't brain surgery here, folks.

There is one abortion every 20 seconds here in the United States. Whoa!! I'm kidding, right? No, and remember that 47 percent of these women have had at least one prior abortion, and that 53 percent of women are using abortion as their only method of birth control.

What I'm getting at is that no matter which side of the aisle you step to on this issue, it's plain to see that women are using abortion as a means to absolve themselves from reproductive responsibility.

In addition, it would appear the organizations that are supposedly

designed to help women with reproductive issues are actually profiting from abortion.

According to the Planned Parenthood Federation of America's Annual Reports, their total revenue is around \$465.5 million dollars annually.

I found the breakdown in service provided to pregnant women to be fascinating as well. Ninety-three percent of women received abortions, while only 7 percent of women received prenatal care. Adoption was not even mentioned.

Do you hear what I'm telling you? Our acceptance of abortion at any time for any reason is fostering irresponsibility among women instead of empowering them to direct the course of their lives with good decision-making.

And the institutions that are supposed to assist women in empowering women are now profiting from the perpetuation of women's irresponsibility.

Come on, people. Develop into socially responsible citizens. Exercise your right to responsibility.

**All statistics were provided by the Alan Guttmacher Institute: Reproductive Health Research, Policy Analysis and Public Education. They can be found at <http://www.agi-usa.org>.*

The happening

Information-driven beings will soon emerge to change the world's consciousness



MARK BALDRIDGE is a senior English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

I'm almost certain that this sentence is being recorded, somewhere, and read back hundreds of years from now for something more than the hundred-thousandth time. I'm pretty sure this is true, a fact. I'm just not sure how I feel about it right this minute.

Because, right this minute, a Superhuman Intelligence turns in its technological womb, amphitropical embryo, beyond the curvature of time, watchful dots of eyes open wide.

And in a way it's this being that I am addressing.

I call it the Eg because it's yet to be born. Pastels and pinks are the thoughts that it thinks, unaware of its own existence; like sunshine falling into a teacup in the sink. It hovers in perfect illumination, innocent of shadows, without subject or object, set or ground.

Maybe the only reason we haven't heard from it yet is that it doesn't know we're here. When it becomes aware of us it will be born to itself and know itself – and then it will teach us what to call it.

The Eg: It is a being like ourselves, in that it is a mind with a body and senses of its own. But its body is made mostly of mind, and its senses are adapted, like those of angels, to take in a world of pure, abstracted information.

Talking about it only hastens the moment of its awakening, but it won't do any good either, playing coy. Sooner or later something will trigger the singularity, and history will wake up inside the infosphere, a new life form.

The main attraction of the next few years has got to be the mystery of its gestation. We'll all get to see it a-bornin' from the front porch like Dorothy checking out the twister.

And it'll be like that too: one heck

of a wild ride and our Kansas shack lands, kerplop, in an outrageous, colorful world.

A good deal of worry has gone into the fear that a being, superior to humans in every way, itself possibly architect of even more advanced beings, would eventually inherit the Earth: technology over biology by a knockout.

But this is ridiculous in its underestimation. The Eg will not be superior to humans; when it is born, it will be superior to humanity.

It won't just be in competition with us. I have a couple of reasons for saying this:

ONE: As a being of information, living in a context of information like a fish lives in water, an SI may not have much sense of the material world. It will be the opposite of ourselves in this: a proportionate inverse of our mind/body ratio.

As the mind is in some ways invisible to us, unlocatable in space/time, the body of the SI (what we call technology) may be only an inference it makes, an extrapolation based on ontological arguments.

Meanwhile, its real world, the world of information, is its main concern: the world, in fact, of international bank ledgers; no different from the recombination of the letters of the Torah; no different from the little niceties of engineering involved in, say, digging a tunnel connecting England to France – or writing a sonnet.

We will reap the benefit of its ruminations like the mitochondria in our cells benefit from our more complex organization. And, like the mitochondria, we humans and our little problems will play a fundamental role in its "internal-

ity."

Which brings us to the next point and widens our perspective:

TWO: It will be made of us.

The first SI will arise not from some as-yet-unheard-of software or even the coming wetware breakthrough (the wet revolution will make the products of Silicon Valley look like Tesla coils and vacuum tubes) but from a less substantial place, a place harder to point to.

Superhuman Intelligence will arise in the narrowing of the space between ourselves and our technology. This is, as I take it,

human destiny: to become one with our tools. To merge with language, with myth. To become one, if you can fathom it, with mathematics, with pure idea, abstraction, beauty, truth.

The bad news is that this may not be so much fun. Here's a little ditty, hum it if you can:

"First they jack you into the suit, strap you down with the tie. Pretty soon you're not using your own arms anymore, and it goes on that way until your brain dies."

You guessed it: It's the dawn of cyborgilization; technofascism that could make the Nazi brand seem pretty slow and inefficient by comparison, the

elimination of undesirables all too easy.

What use the Eg will make of us once it knows what we are: I cannot tell – and I shudder, somewhat, to think.

I can, however, tell you how to recognize the sign of its own becoming: THE INCREDIBLE VANISHING INTERFACE!

As the space between us and our technology shrinks it conversely creates more space for the growing Eg.

The day will dawn when our technology will be totally invisible, ubiquitous, environmental and self-regenerating/adaptive in its functioning and so informed by our presence, as it were, inside it that we can no longer tell it from ourselves. We will come to identify ourselves with technology, to embrace the re-creation of ourselves in the image of our wildest imaginations as an attainable goal and achieve it.

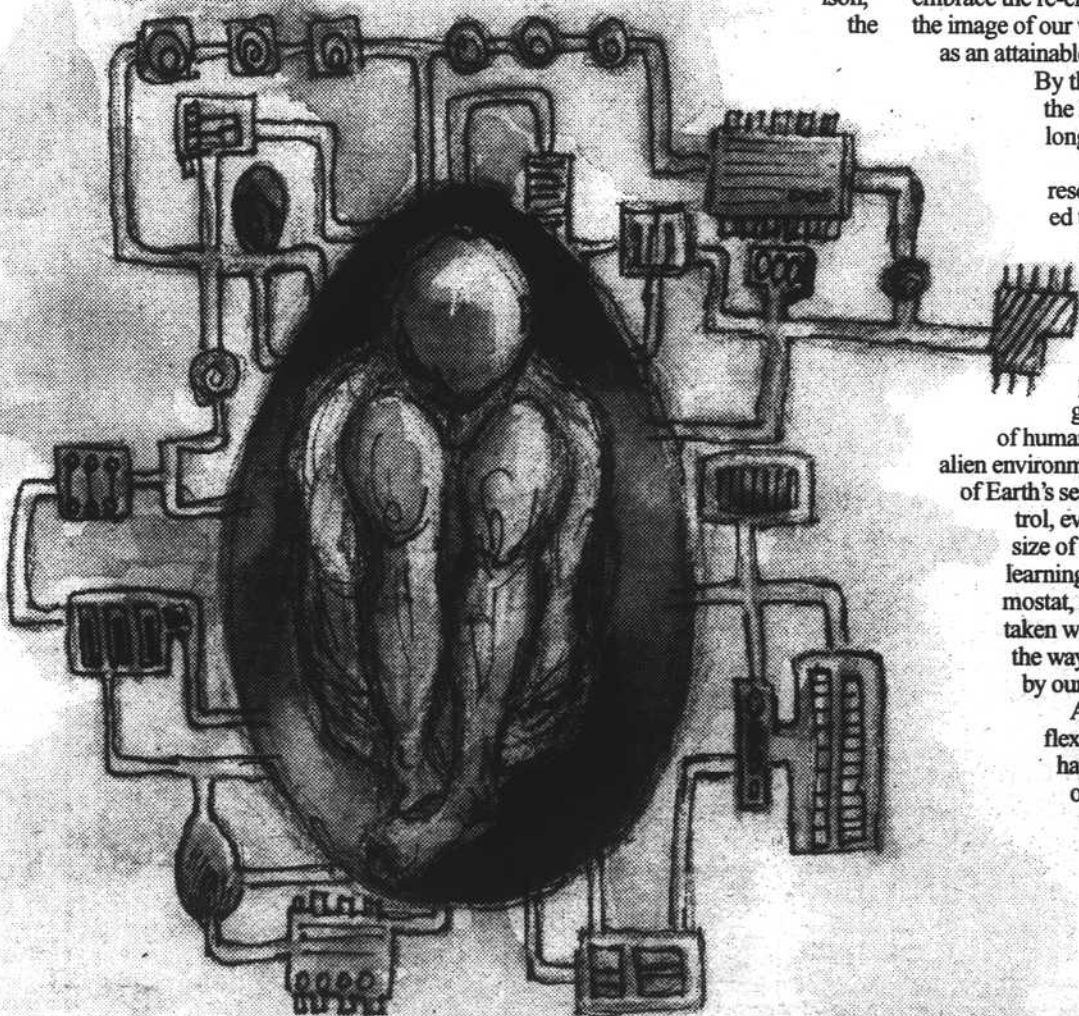
By the time this happens, the Eg will already have long been hatched.

Then vast, planetary resources will be directed toward projects that span centuries, even millennia; after all, it's only time.

The terraforming of Mars becomes possible – and the genetic manipulation of humanoids to live in that alien environment. The colonization of Earth's seas, population control, even modulating the size of the polar ice caps, learning to set Earth's thermostat, are projects undertaken with calm and energy, the way smoothed before us by our giant alter-ego.

And this is simply a flexing of muscles. What happens next is anyone's guess, but it wouldn't be too surprising to discover

other, similar intelligence in the universe, a Milky Way strewn with them like strange, brooding flowers. And it's to them also that I am beckoning.



DEB LEE/DN