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The Aberration of the Species

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Ayla Murray

Thesis Statement

Technology is the foundation upon which society has been built. Early achievements, such as the wheel and agricultural systems, provided people with an alternative to nomadic life in the form of settled communities for the first time in human history. Today people are members of several communities not limited to the physical realm; they are also participants in an altogether different form of community with the help of a little something called the Internet.

Since 1960, the exponential growth of technology and the proliferation of personal devices has permanently altered every aspect of our lives. The ensuing generations have been raised in a time aptly dubbed the Digital Age, in which communication, entertainment, healthcare and the global economy have become intertwined with technical advancement. It may be said that the sole purpose of continued innovation is a desire for complete ease and efficiency of the systems that make life possible. However, if this utopian vision is achieved, what then becomes of humanity and the activities that occupy our waking hours?

The flaws in this fantasy are already apparent. At this very moment the phone in your pocket or the computer on your desk places the world at your fingertips. The ability to have your image seen and words heard by the masses was once reserved for rulers and gods, but now is achieved by anyone who can find the power button. These devices offer us an escape to an alternative world where we can manipulate how others perceive us by fabricating an idealized version of ourselves. In some cases, we begin to believe this is reality rather than fallacy and struggle to separate these two conflicting realms. In this world, we can engage in anonymous discourse and avoid uncomfortable personal conversations, which has begun to inhibit the development of healthy relationships with friends, family and our own self-image.

While this is pure conjecture on my part and, hopefully, destined to become nothing more than a nightmare, *The Aberration of the Species* is an attempt to confront this uncomfortable by-product of technological advancement and what it may lead to in the future. I have created an atmosphere of curiosity and unease by utilizing Sigmund Freud's concept of the uncanny; incorporating near-human representations, fragmented appendages and reflective surfaces. With the combination of these subjects and familiar symbols of contemporary communication I aim to encourage the viewer to ponder their own relationship with technology and how it has distorted their perception of themselves and others.