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In this latest version of humanity, we are equipped with a fully re-engineered immune system; the latest set of cultural assumptions about gender, ethnicity, and sexuality; and a suite of customized enhancements, including artificial joints, neurochemical mood modulators, and performance-boosting hormones. In The Techno-Human Condition, Braden Allenby and Daniel Sarewitz explore what it means to be human in an era of incomprehensible technological complexity and change. They argue that if we are to have any prospect of managing that complexity, we will need to escape the shackles of current assumptions about rationality, progress, and certainty, even as we maintain a commitment to fundamental human values.

Humans have been co-evolving with their technologies since the dawn of prehistory, when tool making and meat eating co-evolved with brain development and social complexity. What is different now is that we have moved beyond external technological interventions to transform ourselves from the inside out_even as we also remake the Earth system itself. Coping with this new reality, say Allenby and Sarewitz, means liberating ourselves from such categories as "human," "technological," and "natural" to embrace a new techno-human relationship. Describing the- terms of this relationship, and exploring sociotechnical systems ranging from railroads to modern military technology, Allenby and Sarewitz ultimately locate individual authenticity in the quest for a new humility in the face of the rapidly disappearing moorings of the Enlightenment.

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