THE NEGATIVE UTILITARIAN TRANSHUMANISM AS A SALVATION TO AVOID APOCALYPTIC FUTURE OF HUMANITY: A CASE STUDY OF BERTRAND ZOBRIST IN DAN BROWN’S INFERNO

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ABSTRACT
Recently, the argument about the utilisation of advanced technology to sustain human lives is controversial. The employment of technology, such as biotechnology, genomics, nanotechnology, artificial intelligence and cognitive neuroscience, to redeem human beings from illness and death is called ‘transhumanism’. Consequently, transhumanism and its proponents defend the various application of technology that seeks to ensure the advanced future of humanity. Thus, this notion corresponds to the concept of negative utilitarianism which legalises the conduct of different methods to guarantee the minimum suffering of humankind. In this regard, this paper presents a case study from contemporary fiction to examine the transhumanist primary principle in the eyes of negative utilitarianism. The case study is represented by Bertrand Zobrist, a transhumanist scientist in Dan Brown’s Inferno, who seeks to utilise biotechnology to save the future of humanity. The methodology of this study comprises extracting excerpts from the novel which serves as observations to discuss the objectives of the study. The first objective argues the apocalyptic future of humanity which is depicted in the novel. The second objective examines the implementation of negative utilitarianism with respect to the principles of transhumanism that attempts to resolve the overpopulation crisis. Through the problematisation of Zobrist’s moral conduct to his biotechnological project, this study shows that transhumanism shares a mutual ground with the concept of negative utilitarianism which validates the employment of strategies to place a higher priority on the reduction of suffering.

Keywords: Apocalypse, Dan Brown’s Inferno, negative utilitarianism, overpopulation, transhumanism

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INTRODUCTION
The academic scope of morality interacts with many modern fields of empirical science. When it comes to debating the moral aspect of biological fields that comprise technology, such as genetic engineering, there is a controversy that argues the limits and boundaries of such fields in regard to ethics. Transhumanism is an expanding field of study that began as a philosophical movement and it emerged during the postmodern era. It shares some postmodernist principles, such as a need for change, reevaluating knowledge, recognising multiple identities and opposing sharp classifications of humans and humanity. Transhumanism also seeks a transmodernity or hyper-modernism rather than explicitly arguing against modernism (More & Vita-More, 2013). However, transhumanism is seen from a different perspective as a moral sense by which human beings avoid the destruction or deterioration of human civilisation. In other words, the embrace of transhumanism provides one possible solution to the problem of the exponential growth of advanced technology, which either significantly improves the quality of life for humans or provides the means for their extinction (Persson & Savulescu, 2010).

Previous studies on this topic have shown that the fear and unsatisfying scenarios that result from the intervention of technology into the human biological construction may lead to the apocalypse (de Hart & Farrell, 2012; O’Callaghan, 2017; Belk, 2022). These scenarios predict unpleasant consequences that may happen if technology dominates and imposes its hegemony on the biological structure of humankind. Surely, such ideas are found in popular fiction which is dramatised in TV series and movies. However, discussing transhumanism from an abstract scientific point of view is basically different. Transhumanism refers to a growing body of thought within the scientific community that advocates for the advancement of human capabilities through technological means; it enhances the belief of the movement that technology can be used to overcome human weaknesses. The advancement of scientific fields, such as biotechnology, genomics, nanotechnology, artificial intelligence and cognitive neuroscience, aims to sustain human lives. As a means to meet human needs, technology is defined as the use of reason and tools to enhance the body, senses, brain and strength or improve their performance. In regard to this notion, the employment of transhumanism exists in the apocalyptic fiction that predicts a catastrophic future for humankind. The apocalyptic fiction raises concern about the ultimate environmental meltdown by depicting the collapsed potential future (Bowen, 2017). Apocalyptic fiction depicts the irreversible changes and effects of degradation and sickness accompanied by the emergence of biotechnological research. As such, L. M. Silko’s *Almanac of the Dead* (1991) draws attention to the skepticism toward technoscience and the discussion of the technological intervention in human life in apocalyptic fiction bridges the gap between cultural studies and empirical science (Houser, 2014).

In Dan Brown’s *Inferno*, the overpopulation crisis reflects the apocalyptic theme. It stands for the central motivation for the emergence of a transhumanist scientist to employ biotechnology to rescue humanity from extinction. Building on this concern, this study problematises the moral conduct of the transhumanist solution. Accordingly, the prime concern of this study focuses on the evaluation of the transhumanist primary principle in the eyes of negative utilitarianism, which is a concept derived from the theory of utilitarianism. It assesses the moral scale of deeds on their function in the eradication of suffering and reaching the minimum amount of pain. In this vein, the character analysed for this study is Bertrand Zobrist, a transhumanist scientist in Brown’s *Inferno*, who seeks to utilise biotechnology to save humanity from its apocalyptic future. The transhumanist biologist Zobrist conducts a method to rebalance the world population. This study, therefore, investigates Zobrist’s employment of
transhumanism to avoid apocalyptic scenarios that may end the existence of the human race. Accordingly, the first objective of this study aims to examine the apocalyptic future of humanity depicted in the novel. The second objective investigates the implementation of negative utilitarianism with respect to the principles of transhumanism that attempts to resolve the overpopulation crisis.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

The controversial debates that consider the increasing number of population or lack of natural resources are vibrant in some literary fields, such as apocalyptic and dystopian fiction. On that account, some novels include utilitarian characters that conduct different methods to minimise the suffering of the majority which is a reference to negative utilitarianism. Lahdenvuo (2021) discusses the themes of population and reproductive control in *Oryx and Crake* (2003) by Margaret Atwood and *The Carhullan Army* (2007) by Sarah Hall. In the depiction of the catastrophic future of humanity, Lahdenvuo remarks on the inclusion of ideologies, such as antinatalism, antihumanism and negative utilitarianism. These ideologies deal with the existence and extinction of humanity. Negative utilitarianism initiates as a redeeming way to minimise the suffering of humans who are the reason behind the destruction of the environment and climate change (Lahdenvuo, 2021). Ouzts (2014) affirms the same connection between utilitarianism and utopian fiction. To discuss the direct happiness of humanity, authors design and describe an alternate society distant from their own. In other words, the depiction of a utilitarian society is associated with a type of thought experiment which is seen in utopian or dystopian fiction, such as in Huxley’s *Island* (1962) and *Brave New World* (1932) (Ouzts, 2014).

Bergen (2008) debates the prevalence of modern American Christian apocalyptic fiction which is seen as a complex form in its connection to popular culture. The direct interpretation of biblical apocalyptic literature has an influence on modern secular culture. In addition, these apocalyptic writings share mutual elements which encompass science fiction, action and adventure. According to de Marques (2015), there is a connection between the themes depict the issues of humans, science and posthuman/transhuman. The depiction of a post-apocalyptic world can be found in Margaret Atwood’s *The MaddAddam* (dystopian trilogy series), where the intervention of technology occurs due to the pre-apocalyptic disorder that includes suffering from climate change and biological extinction (de Marques, 2015). Pilsch (2017) argues the notion of evolutionary futurism which represents the integral rhetorical ingredient in the creation of science fiction in the image of a utopian genre to form a critical dimension of technology, bioethics and the evolutionary future of humanity. Plisch discusses the seriousness of transhumanism in comparison to utopian fiction:

> Utopia—in this more popular understanding (tied to a contemporary instantiation in science fiction but indebted to a much longer history)—is an unreal, unrealizable imaginary future. Transhumanists, long disparaged in academia, are particularly sensitive to rhetorical moves that distance the movement from a practical, serious, and, most important, realistic future. (Pilsch 2012, p. 16)

In addition, previous studies have been conducted to analyse the character of Zobrist from distinct points of view. As a subject matter, a notable study, “Christianity, Dante Alighieri’s biography, The Seven Deadly Sins, The Divine Comedy, The Black Death, Transhumanism,
and the Humanism movement”, by Kusumoriny and Amalia (2019) has examined Brown’s
*Inferno*; revealing signs and icons which are used to decorate the inherent features in order to
solve the plot of the story. Overpopulation, according to Zobrist, is a “monster” on the horizon,
a warning bullet that would produce more negative outcomes than positive outcomes
(Kusumoriny & Amalia, 2019). Zobrist, who has an authoritative tone of voice, plays the role
of the Master in *Inferno*, and he is represented “as [a] science celebrity and Transhumanist
prophet.” His messages convey a suppressed, latent desire and the eagerness to massively limit
population growth, which is boosted by an unconscious, surreal truth of the growing catastrophe
(Zwart, 2014, p. 376). On the other hand, Haag (2013) claims that the advancement of
technology paves the way for the appearance of Zobrist. Zobrist is an example of a
transhumanist who believes he can make the world a better place. In the same regard, Laskar
(2018) denotes the transhumanist notion of Zobrist which focuses on one main feature of the
anthropocene, namely overpopulation (Laskar, 2018).

Building on the literature above, the apocalyptic fiction, that depicts the imagined
dystopian future of humanity, is associated with the prevalence of technology and its
intervention with the biological environment of nature. In *Inferno*, this apocalyptic future of
humanity and the depiction of human extinction is the fundamental motivation for Zobrist that
propels him to implement his project. To prevent such a catastrophic future, the transhumanist
aspect of Zobrist dedicates a negative utilitarian solution that attempts to minimise the suffering
of humanity in the future. Accordingly, the gap of this study applies a problematisation of the
moral conduct of the transhumanist solution. Also, the gap examines the interaction between
negative utilitarianism and transhumanism as a way to avoid an apocalyptic future or suffering
of humanity in Brown’s *Inferno*.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study problematises ideas of morality through the character of Bertrand Zobrist by
examining his transhumanist actions via a negative utilitarian framework. The conducted
methodology consists of extracting excerpts from the novel and applying textual analysis. In
other words, this methodology focuses on the intersection of concepts that are being studied
observationally. It is a range of processes that includes sorting out data in which the
problematisation of this study is debated. Data analysis is used in this study to uncover textual
evidence that supports a particular hypothesis, then a conclusion is drawn. For this study, the
basic research methodology is used to achieve its primary objective of better understanding and
highlighting the characteristics of a specific issue through character selection. In addition, the
findings of this study are based on the exploration of the negative utilitarian moral aspect of
transhumanism with respect to the depicted apocalyptic future of humanity in Brown’s *Inferno*.
By applying the concept of negative utilitarianism, the hypothesis of this study questions the
moral ideas of transhumanism to redeem humanity from extinction. In addition, the exhibition
of an actual global crisis is required to be discussed to indicate the theme of apocalyptic fiction
in the novel which is popularised in the science fiction genre. Therefore, to meet the objectives
of this study, the methodology examines the main principles of transhumanism in accordance
with the negative utilitarianism point of view.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Transhumanism
Transhumanism advocates the use of biotechnologies to alter and improve human nature, thereby transforming humans into a new species. It concentrates on human autonomy and self-design as well as eradicating pain and suffering, and defeating human nature as a final endgame objective. People who believe in transhumanism believe that our species is finally close to recognising the dream of immortality (Hauskeller, 2016). According to Doyle:

Transhumanism is a relatively recent intellectual and cultural movement that promotes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and evaluating potential means for enhancing the human organism, the human race and the human condition as well as removing some of its limitations. The potential goals of transhumanism are numerous and diverse but, as a rule, transhumanism seeks to produce “posthumans” who will variously live longer, be smarter, be stronger, be more peace-loving, or otherwise constitute an improvement over regular humanity in some nontrivial manner. (Doyle 2018, p. 57)

As stated above, transhumanism regards the utilisation of technology to improve human ability and obtain immortality. Thus, the utilisation of technology may involve some moral dilemmas to achieve its goal. Tennison (2012) claims that transhumanism may demonstrate an enhanced version of what humans have done which is considered to be morally acceptable; however, the risks posed by technological development will also be renewed. If it is agreed that transhumanism is a desirable or unavoidable outgrowth of the role that science and technology play in our lives, then we ought to think about improving not only those aspects of ourselves that give us positional leverage over others. Enhancing the capacity for prosocial, moral development and behaviour is something we need to give consideration (Tennison, 2012). By reviewing the imagined potential of transhumanism, Hughes (2012) proposes that the notion of ‘bioutopianism’, which was resurrected in the 1960s, occurred due to the emergence of the counterculture that “advocate[s] alternative healing, appropriate technologies and the revolutionary potential of psychopharmaceuticals.” (Hughes, 2012, p. 762).

Utilitarianism
The history of utilitarianism is rooted in the Greek philosophy. Plato’s Republic acknowledges the existence of only one ultimate standard, and that is the interest of the state (Popper, 2011). Anything that helps it along is good, virtuous and just; anything that impedes its progress is bad, wicked and unjust. Actions that benefit it are considered moral while those that placed it in danger are considered immoral (Popper, 2011). However, the far-famed foundation of the theory was founded by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill; it was Bentham who conceptualised ‘the great happiness theory’ and Mill revised and wrote his reflection on the theory which is known as utilitarianism (Bentham & Mill, 2004).

In the study of moral judgment and decision-making, scholars usually refer to two types of moral judgments (Conway & Gawronski, 2013; Gold, 2017; Playford et al., 2015). The first one is referred to as deontological moral judgment which inclines to determine the nature of the morality within any action according to the essence of the action. In other words, the wrong deeds are unacceptable whether it holds beneficial results or not. Accordingly, the deontological moral judgment aims to create a systemic method of morality that limits decisions and ignores any flexibility that attempts to discuss any positivity in the consequences of wrong actions. On the other hand, the second type of moral judgment is referred to as utilitarian moral judgment by which there is much flexibility in the moral aspect of any decision. Thence, the action is not
observed by its nature; rather, it is determined by its consequence and whether it brings happiness to the majority.

Transhumanism and its proponents justify the variety of the utilizations of technology that seek to ensure the advanced future of humanity. Thus, this idea is associated with the theory of utilitarianism which legalizes the utilization of methods to guarantee the happiness of the majority. Utilitarianism basically “tells us to sum up the various good, bad, or indifferent consequences for everybody of each possible action we could perform and then choose the action that brings about the greatest net happiness. This is the action that is morally right and, hence, required of us.” (Shaw 1999, p. 11).

Transhumanism and Negative Utilitarianism
Since transhumanism seeks to improve the quality of human life and enhance the biological condition of humanity to reduce the suffering of pain or death, negative utilitarianism aims to ensure minimum suffering and misery. In this aspect, transhumanism cooperates with another form of utilitarianism which is negative utilitarianism. The fundamental principle of negative utilitarianism builds on the reduction of human suffering and misery to the absolute minimum (Smart, 1989). To differentiate between the main fundamental principles of utilitarianism and negative utilitarianism, the latter considers that promoting pleasure is the marginal value compared to reducing pain. Hence, if pleasure is unknown, it is not missed. People are less likely to agree on what benefits they would like to gain than the miseries they would like to avoid (Smart & Williams, 1973).

As Popper (2011) claims that suffering is what makes moral appeal, the fundamental criticism of utilitarianism lies behind its priority to maximise pleasure. However, the eradication of pain and suffering should be prioritised in order to fulfill the moral point of view and “pain cannot be outweighed by pleasure and especially not one man’s pain by another man’s pleasure. Instead of the greatest happiness for the greatest number, one should demand, more modestly, the least amount of avoidable suffering for all.” (Popper 2011, p. 771). Theoretically speaking, there is a mutual ground that gathers transhumanism and utilitarianism in the form of negative utilitarianism. In other words, the intervention of biotechnology, genetic engineering and nanotechnology to develop and promote humanity aims to reduce suffering and pain rather than guarantee happiness. It attempts to put an end to death and diseases. Similarly, negative utilitarianism shares the same vision as transhumanism. The theoretical concepts match and share the same objective which is a consideration to minimise the suffering of humanity.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
Brown’s *Inferno* comprises generic themes of popular fiction that encompass the dystopian future of humanity and apocalypse. It discusses the speculative intervention of biotechnology to come to terms with a real global crisis. Overpopulation is regarded as a deleterious factor that negatively affects the natural resources of planet Earth. The novel takes into account the apocalyptic future of humanity; therefore, the suggested transhuman solution by Zobrist’s project — to resolve the overpopulation global crisis — is discussed in this study. As discussed in the literature review, the apocalyptic theme of *Inferno* shares the thematic elements of popular culture and science fiction to depict the frightening future of the human race.

Overpopulation and Apocalypse
The apocalypse of humanity represents the ultimate concern of the transhumanist scientist Zobrist. Zobrist, as a biologist, reaches statistics that prove humanity is moving toward its end. Zobrist relies on surveys that allege a serious global crisis which is overpopulation. As he tells the general director of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Elizabeth Sinskey: “Any environmental biologist or statistician will tell you that humankind’s best chance of long-term survival occurs with a global population of around four billion.” (Brown 2013, p. 139). This crisis has been identified by various environmental organisations as a serious problem that can negatively affect the future of the human species in addition to climate change. From this point on, Brown takes this real crisis into account through the character of Zobrist whose research is built on the disaster that states, “the history of our human population growth is even more dramatic” (Brown 2013, p. 134). In addition, the common recognition of such a crisis requires two solutions for it. The first solution, which can be recognised as deontological, is that people should realise the danger beyond the consequence of ignoring such a crisis and reducing the population by conducting strategies such as birth control. The second solution is utilitarianism in which someone conducts an unethical method to avoid overpopulation in the future. Zobrist’s solution supports the latter one which goes against the first solution conducted by the WHO; “Zobrist’s article accused many of the world’s leaders of being in extreme denial … putting their heads in the sand. He was particularly critical of the World Health Organization.” (Brown 2013, p. 282). Consequently, Zobrist decides to violate the procedures that the WHO conducts to decrease the percentage of the population. Zobrist disagrees with Elizabeth who informs him that “the WHO takes overpopulation very seriously” and that the WHO “spent[s] millions of dollars sending doctors into Africa to deliver free condoms and educate people about birth control” (Brown 2013, p. 282). However, Zobrist thinks that “[w]hat the World Health Organisation fails to recognise is that there is only one global health issue.” (Brown 2013, p. 135-136).

The discussed future apocalyptic scenario in the novel is not fictional or imagined by Brown. Whereas the number of population has increased in the last and current century, competent scientists have shown their concerns about the disadvantageous consequences that reflect on the future of planet Earth. Overpopulation is the reason behind the continued ecological damage, growing insecurity and unachievable sustainable development. Hence, the reduction of the global population would result in beneficial outcomes that escalate the quality of life and cause less environmental deterioration (Cassils, 2004). As stated by the United Nations Population Division (UNPD), “[w]orld population reached 6.1 billion in mid-2000 and is currently growing at an annual rate of 1.2 per cent, or 77 million people per year […] By 2050, world population is expected to be between 7.9 billion (low variant) and 10.9 billion (high variant), with the medium variant producing 9.3 billion” (UNPD, 2001, p. v). The suggested catastrophic consequences are stated in the graph published by the WHO. The apocalyptic future of humanity is depicted according to predictions that result from the growing overpopulation, which are “[d]emand for clean water, global surface temperatures, ozone depletion, consumption of ocean resources, species extinction, CO2 concentration, deforestation, and global sea levels” (Brown 2013, p. 182). In the same regard, Zobrist surveys the human consumption of the natural resources of planet Earth and he realises that humanity is irresponsible about its future with respect to the escalating percentage of the population. His study is based on a real-world problem that is supposed to be solved by different governments in a form of birth control for their citizens. However, this problem seems unsolvable for most of countries. Thus, Zobrist demonstrates the threatening crisis of humanity:
It took the earth’s population thousands of years—from the early dawn of man all the way
to the early 1800s—to reach one billion people. Then, astoundingly, it took only about a
hundred years to double the population to two billion in the 1920s. After that, it took a
mere fifty years for the population to double again to four billion in the 1970s. As you
can imagine, we’re well on track to reach eight billion very soon. Just today, the human
race added another quarter-million people to planet Earth. A quarter million. And this
happens every day—rain or shine. Currently, every year, we’re adding the equivalent of
the entire country of Germany. (Brown 2013, p. 135)

Zobrist’s Transhumanist Project
The transhumanism philosophy states that “humans should use technology to transcend the
weaknesses inherent in our human bodies. In other words, the next step in human evolution
should be that we begin biologically engineering ourselves” (Brown 2013, p. 382). Zobrist
represents the transhumanist body of thoughts through which he argues the “mankind’s
evolutionary obligation to use all the powers at our disposal—germ-line genetic mutation, for
one—to improve as a species” (Brown 2013, p. 382). However, his thoughts of removing
human traits could cause catastrophic results (Brown 2013, p. 383). Zobrist believes that
“[t]ranshumanism is mankind’s only hope for long-term survival” (Brown 2013, p. 376). As a
result, he takes the responsibility to be “a proponent of the Population Apocalypse Equation”
(Brown 2013, p. 232). In this sense, Zobrist embraces the transhumanist philosophy that aims
to extend human cognitive responses and enlarge the lifetime of humanity.

Zobrist’s project comes as a response to address the global crisis in which the danger that
threatens the future of humanity is not “fire, brimstone, apocalypse, or nuclear war” (Brown
2013, p. 281). Instead, “it will be total collapse due to the number of people on the planet”
(Brown 2013, p. 281). Zobrist’s transhumanist project is a virus that conducts the same way as
the plague or black death that invaded Europe in the 14th century. The virus causes impotence
to the global population randomly. According to utilitarian morality, Zobrist states a dilemma
that literally matches the trolley dilemma and raises the following question; “[w]ould you kill
half the population today in order to save our species from extinction?” (Brown 2013, p. 287).
In this vein, Zobrist predicts that the increasing number of human species will lead to extinction
in the next century; “unless we have some kind of mass extinction.” (Brown 2013, p. 232).
Thus, Zobrist plays God by inventing “the field of germ-line manipulation” (Brown 2013, p.
231) through which he can repeat the catastrophe of the black death that balanced the equation
of natural resources and population:

a plague that kills half the world’s people is the answer to overpopulation. Nor am I saying
we should stop curing the sick. What I am saying is that our current path is a pretty simple
formula for destruction. Population growth is an exponential progression occurring within
a system of finite space and limited resources. (Brown 2013, p. 283)

Before his decision to implement the vital project, Zobrist is immediately criticised from
all sides, including politicians, religious leaders and representatives from the WHO. All of them
accuse his project of prompting chaos and attempting to provoke public panic. They are
outraged by his claim that puts in the picture the danger of the continued reproduction of the
current generation. He argues that, if the reproduction of human remains without birth control
or procedure that impedes it, the extinction of the human race will be the unavoidable path. Zobrist uses the term “Doomsday Clock” to indicate the final seconds of an hour, this indication is founded on the assumption that the whole duration of human existence on earth is timely briefed within one hour.

The Negative Utilitarian Plague
Zobrist believes that the black death or plague pandemic that invaded Europe in the 14th century was the divine intervention to rebalance the human population from an apocalypse. Therefore, Zobrist’s biological project represents the second plague of the world with a reference to Dante’s *Inferno*. Zobrist applies the ultimate principle of negative utilitarianism that prioritises the reduction of pain and suffering in comparison to maximising the happiness of the majority. Zobrist believes that reducing the global population to half, by spreading a virus that causes impotence randomly, could preserve the natural resources of the earth, then guarantee happiness and a bright future for the other half of the population. Morally speaking, what Zobrist conducts is not a clear criminal way; in other words, he does not murder people for the sake of reducing the population. However, he invents a method that seems ethically justified by him. Zobrist undertakes a utilitarian decision that seems more cognitive than emotional as killing one person instead of five in the trolly dilemma. Therefore, Zobrist invents a method that brings happiness to half of the human race and the next generations. Consequently, this method guarantees the remaining of humanity rather than the investable extinction in the next hundred years. As a result, Zobrist’s project commences with a negative utilitarian foundation then it ends with utilitarian outcomes.

To discuss the psychological motivation that propels the implementation of such a project, Zobrist considers himself the saviour who takes the responsibility of humanity to stop their extinction. Zobrist reflects his concern about the rising number of global populations and he claims that his project, by which the population reduces to half, is a gift for humanity:

Dearest God, I pray the world remembers my name, not as a monstrous sinner, but as the glorious savior you know I truly am. I pray Mankind will understand the gift I leave behind.  
My gift is the future.  
My gift is salvation.  
My gift is Inferno. (Brown 2013, p. 18)

As seen from the portrayal by Brown, Zobrist is not the only one who observes the crisis of overpopulation and its consequences. However, there are many transhumanists who support his project. Zobrist has proponents who believe in his project and go against Langdon who wants to deactivate the virus. One of his proponents is Sienna who accompanies Langdon through his trip. Zobrist has his supporters who believe that genetic engineering is not only useful to prevent harmful diseases but also to create a disease that is supposed to serve the future of humanity.

As a result, the transhumanist perspective of Zobrist dedicates his knowledge in biology to creating a specific virus that aims to reduce the population of human beings due to the overpopulation crisis and its impact on natural resources. He sees that his way of dealing with the global crisis is moral since his virus does not intend to infect certain people. Alternatively, Zobrist’s virus infects half of the population randomly. What makes Zobrist’s solution...
considered negative utilitarian is his justified method to save half of the population and ensure that the following generations, who are the majority, can live peacefully instead of facing apocalyptic extinction.

CONCLUSION
In conclusion, this study examined the transhumanist primary principle through the lens of negative utilitarianism. Transhumanism looks forward to utilising a wide range of technological applications to guarantee the progression of humanity in the future. The overpopulation crisis is a reflection of the apocalyptic plot in Brown’s *Inferno*. It represents the fundamental drive behind the transhumanist scientist’s use of biotechnology to save humanity from extinction. Zobrist is a transhumanist scientist who attempts to rescue the future of humanity through the application of biotechnology by devising a method to restructure the population of the world. Through the problematisation of Zobrist’s moral conduct to his biotechnological project, this study has shown that transhumanism can share a mutual ground with the concept of negative utilitarianism which validates the employment of strategies to place a higher priority on the reduction of suffering. However, the transhumanist project of Zobrist aims to reach a satisfying destination that guarantees maximum happiness for the majority. In other words, Zobrist’s virus causes impotence to half of humanity for the sake of natural resources. Consequently, it results in an advantageous future for half of the human race and the next generations.

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