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What is the value-added of being human? The beginning of a conversation

The force of this question comes from two sides – the *transhuman* and the *posthuman*, the machine and the animal. While we aspire to build machines that can outperform us in the things that we value most, we are also discovering that animals are doing things that we have not valued sufficiently. On the one hand, the human being may be replaced by something that is better at what we consider worth doing; on the other, the value of being human itself may be reduced by the entry of other beings who bring their own sense of value, which deserve formal recognition. It may not be long before economists and policymakers start to factor these emerging tendencies in their welfare functions and accounting schemes. At that time, the question will most certainly be forced upon us: What is the value-added of being human?