

APPENDIX GA36a

LEVEL 4 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:	EIZZ SYAHMINA	Student number:	ID 2436812
Programme:	Bachelor of Professional Communication		
Module:	Ways of Thinking		
Module code:	IUMW4005	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	100%
Lecturer:	Kylie boon	Internal Verifier:	Timi O'Neill
Assignment Title:	Developing a voice (Portfolio of Writing)	Word count (or equivalent):	1500 Words
Submission deadline:	12th of September	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	10th of October
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 40%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

The Contemporary Human

Sometimes I wonder what it really means to be a human today. I wake up not to the rising sun, but to the vibration of my phone alarm instead. Before my eyes are fully open, I am already scrolling through messages, my social media, and my personalized feeds, which are curated to highlight what I should care about. Already, my thoughts are not fully mine but shaped by systems that are larger than me. Jean-Paul Sartre once said, “*Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself*” (Esther, 2023).

Every day, I would ride the train to go to class, and the scene remains unchanged. Each individual is absorbed in their own world, scrolling through their phones, wearing headphones to listen to music, or simply just to block out the noise. It is almost impossible to see a genuine human-to-human interaction. Then, consider this video I came across recently, where this girl told her family she had to go take her AirPods in the car so she could watch her show while eating dinner with her family, even though they were currently at a restaurant. These scenarios are what reflect contemporary humans.

Humanism believes in empathy, compassion, and the importance of subjective human experiences; however, with post-humanism, it is almost like we have lost touch with these qualities. Post-humanism highlights how people today are very immersed in technology, especially their mobile phones. People often seem more concerned with their own digital worlds rather than what is happening around them.

Nevertheless, humanism remains vital and still exists among us. Nowadays, people still fight for justice, speak up for those who can't, and make initiatives to provide peace and prosperity for people and the planet, such as the Sustainable Development Goals created by the United Nations (THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development, n.d.). Movies like *Dead Poets Society* remind us that love, poetry, and compassion are what we live for (Venkatraman, 2024). When communities unite to demand for equality or when locals come together for environmental initiatives, I can see the spirit of humanism is still alive; despite human flaws, we are still capable of shaping a better world.

But post-humanism may interrupt these certainties. Post-humanism is like showing us that we ourselves are part of an algorithm rather than the world's ruler. One obvious example would be how social media platforms use algorithms to determine what content the users see, hence influencing their behaviour and opinion. Not to mention the advancement of Artificial Intelligence, which is slowly tearing us apart. In the movie *Companion 2025*, the companion

robot kills its owner after finding out they were going to shut her down; a reminder for us that what we create can escape and surpass us.

The contemporary human is, therefore, a paradox. We invent technologies to make our lives easier; however, those same tools make us dependent and lazier. We create the internet to help us connect with anyone in the world, yet sometimes we feel lonelier than ever. *We have come a long way as a species, but we still haven't conquered ourselves and our minds* (Kumar, 2024). I believe the contemporary human is an ongoing thing. We are still asking, searching, inventing, meanings for ourselves in a world of systems that constantly remakes us. To live today is to have both humanism and post-humanism values.

Problem Solving

In the 21st Century, contemporary humans are surrounded by technologies. The advanced technologies now may offer efficiency and help us throughout our daily lives; however, this has also led to digital overload, where we are bombarded with too much digital information, notifications, and screen time every day (Adhikari, 2025). This can be seen throughout our daily lives, where students wake up to notification reminders of their assignments due, and office workers attend virtual meetings, plastering a happy face, even though behind their smiles are people who are not getting enough sleep. Digital overload is not only a health concern but also shifts how society connects with one another.

According to Adhikari (2025), digital overwhelm can negatively impact mental health, lower productivity, and cause distraction. Doom scrolling is the infamous thing contemporary humans do, which is due to social media's algorithm that endlessly shows you new content to watch. Being online too long can lead to sleep procrastination, comparison with other individuals, and worsened social health (Bowman, 2024). As a result, this would risk society becoming a passive participant rather than making actual human interactions, which reflects post-humanism theories where technology is constantly shaping human experiences.

Humanism focuses on individual human responsibility, authentic relationships, and selfhood; thus, if we are to look at a humanist perspective, restoring human values and subjective experience are vital to address this issue. A humanist thinker would encourage practices that can restore a healthy lifestyle by doing digital detoxes, setting technology boundaries such as turning on "do not disturb" mode, and getting enough sleep. By practicing these, one can increase human-to-human interactions and promote individuality by shaping one's own life rather than being controlled by technology.

On the other hand, looking through the post-humanist lens like Bernard Stiegler, it does not reject technology; however, it focuses on how technology mediates thought, human development, and memory. Rather than avoiding technology, humans should learn how to co-evolve with machines and media. For example, designing technologies that are beneficial and promote a healthier lifestyle, such as the "Fitness" app that helps track one's walking and running steps. Kevin Kelly once said, *"This is not a race against the machines. If we race against them, we lose. This is a race with the machines."*

To conclude, the best way forward is to combine balance and digital awareness. By setting boundaries with technology, such as screen-time limits, it will allow people to have space to

reset and rewind, and connect with other people. A study conducted in the Journal of Experimental Psychology found that individuals who took a 24-hour break from social media showed a 23% improvement in working memory tasks (Smith & Doe, 2022). Also, by having awareness of how technology can shape one's attention and behaviour, individuals can make thoughtful choices on how to control them.

Who am I?

Aristotle once said, “*Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom*” (The European Leaders, 2025). But the real question is, who am I, really? What is my individuality? What is my purpose in this society? In this contemporary world, is it even possible for someone to live authentically, to truly be themselves without being influenced by other people’s expectations?

Approaching this third essay, I would like to put myself in the shoes of my fictional character named Augustine. Augustine is a teenage girl who constantly compares herself with other people. She is always envious of her peers’ lives, which are often showcased on social media, seeming to have the perfect lives: happy families, successful groups of friends, and excellent grades. Augustine is the girl who is never natural at anything, the one who is always trying, the one who is second to everything, the average-looking girl, the one who gets good grades but is never enough. She is a pathological people pleaser who always tries to do the right thing, even at the expense of her own happiness. If Augustine were an object, she would be a mirrorball. A million pieces of shattered glass pieced together, trying to shine for everybody else.

Technology is a big part of Augustine’s inner world. Every day, the first thing she would do is grab her phone, scroll through notifications, and open all of her social media accounts that contain posts that are constantly reminding her of the lives she does not have. Her supposedly “For you page” is swamped with girls with clear skin routines, an aesthetic lifestyle, and other people’s achievements. This curated perfection seems to slowly undermine her self-esteem rather than boosting it. In a way, social media is a mirror she uses to reflect on what she should become.

What she desires is shaped by the digital world. She would only do things that she finds “Instagram-worthy,” and even her sadness is influenced by things she sees online, where more and more people are romanticizing mental health struggles rather than normalizing talking about it in a positive way (Salum, 2025). Augustine would often count her likes and comments, post only good and aesthetic enough pictures of her life, trying to live for the approval of invisible audiences. If Dorian Gray, who is obsessed with beauty and reputation, were to live in the modern world and, of course, be a girl, he would be Augustine.

However, technology is not entirely her enemy. Sometimes, Augustine would find some sort of connections and comfort through the digital platforms. There are a lot of influencers and

writers who spread the topic of self-acceptance and online awareness that sparks some changes in her perspective. She also finds online communities that share the same struggles as her, where she finally feels visible and understood. Slowly, Augustine realizes how technology does not have to define her, but she can control her relationship with it.

After all, it is no wonder that I can fit in Augustine's shoes, as her story speaks for a lot of youngsters today. The challenge is not to avoid technology or any sort of digital media; however, it is to learn on how to move forward along with it. By practicing self-acceptance, setting boundaries, and as what people are saying nowadays is to "Connect with nature," Augustine can finally live authentically and be a mirrorball that shines for herself and not for others.

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