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Smug, nerdy, and in full I-told-ya-so form, inventor Ray Kurzweil expounded to an audience of hipsters, futurists, and mad scientists at the Danforth Music Hall last Thursday night. Kurzweil talked about

the future of artificial intelligence and a few topics from his upcoming book, ***How To Create A Mind***. Some of the highlights included:

» **What really separates the men from the monkeys:**

According to Kurzweil, it's not our DNA but the volume of our neo-cortexes—the wavy gray matter that allows mammals to pattern and emulate. The sheer size difference between a human and, say, a baboon gives us the upper hand.

» **We can be chameleons:** Kurzweil feels that our evolution has stagnated over the last few hundred years, but he thinks that wearable augmented and virtual reality technologies are the answer. We will be able to radically change our appearances via chips that let us implement new clothing or facial features, like in a computer game.

» **Greener foods will save us all:** Food shortage and animal cruelty could become a thing of the past when we start growing a bountiful and clean source of sustenance with vertical greenhouses and synthetic muscle tissue bred in labs without hormones or steroids.

» **Forget Cold-FX—send in the Nanobots:** Twenty years from now, our bloodstream will be filled with millions of microscopic robotic devices acting as caretakers for lagging red or white blood cells, programmed to fight off whatever ails us, and extending our lifetimes indefinitely.

» **The “curse” of eternal life is very real:** While some might ask “who wants to live forever?” Kurzweil summarizes the issue succinctly. “I’ve spoken to many 100 year olds, and if you ask them if they want to live to 101, they will tell you they do.”