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The Philosopher's Stone

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Technology: Pandora's Box or Klein Bottle?

Philosophical Discussion Group, Armstrong State University

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The Philosopher's Stone

The Newsletter of The Philosophical Debate

Technology: Pandora's Box or Klein Bottle?

Some things to consider. . .

Do Philosophical discussions, arguments, or writings have any effect on the population in general? Does anyone but a handful of academics feel the effects of the writings of philosophers? How much of what we believe is derived, regardless of whether we realize it, from the works of great philosophers? Do anything that humans create qualify as natural, or is everything that results from human intelligence somehow artificial? Why does technology and the devices and constructs it creates inspire such fascination in people? Why do people enjoy spending hours on end collecting useless information on the Internet? Is the feeling of power that people get from vast amounts of information real, or is it merely an illusion? Is change inherently good or bad, or is it merely a fact of human existence? To what extent do the mass marketing techniques of corporate America affect the average American? Just because technological developments made with no overall control are perceived as threatening, somehow, are they? What exactly IS religion? What causes it?

GEEP?

[Genetic technology](#) has recently created a hybrid creature with the head of a goat and the body of a sheep. Although this seems, at first glance, to be a meaningless use of genetic technology, the implications of such a feat are staggering. What will science be capable of in ten years? In twenty? Is humanity ready for the effects of such technology? If we can create a hybrid goat-sheep, after all, what is stopping science from creating a hybrid man-animal? What are the moral implications of such an action? Very little thought seems to have been devoted to the possible results of such research. There was a public outcry when genetic engineers created a new,

sturdier breed of tomato. What will the reaction be if and when genetic engineers turn their attention to creatures other than produce and barnyard animals? The possibility of an entire set of custom-tailored organisms designed solely to serve the purposes of mankind may seem appealing to some, and the possible benefits of such technology are staggering, but are we justified in playing God?

Highlights from the last meeting. . .

The last meeting of the Philosophical Debate Group covered a wide range of topics, from the meaning of religion to the implications of an entire new generation raised in an information age.

In an earlier discussion, the Debate Group discussed the possibility of technology replacing religion in the minds of many Americans. This time, the question was raised: can technology replace religion? Is religion merely the need to feel connected to the universe at large, or is there some basic need that religion fills that technology never can? Science grew out of early philosophy and religion, so would technology be a form of derived religion? Today's generation is growing up in an environment radically different from that of any generation in history. For the first time, the environment that a new generation is growing up in is fundamentally and profoundly different than that of the previous generation. Children are exposed to modern television and other forms of mass media, and are later exposed to such technology as the Internet earlier than their parents ever were. What effect will this have on their perception of the world? Will the youths of today view the world in a radically different way than any group of people has before? Technology is one of the primary distinguishing features of humanity; it has existed for as long as the modern human race. Is something wrong merely because it brings about change? Change has been resisted throughout most of history, but modern man would live in a much different world if the changes of the past had been stopped or diverted. Has technology changed in nature in recent years? Modern technology evolves faster, and is harder to predict than earlier technology.

Developments in modern technology, however, seem to expand exponentially. Whereas in the past an inventor could at least predict many of the changes that an invention would cause in society, modern inventors are often hard pressed to predict what effects an innovation will have.

Join Us!

The Philosophical Debate Group will meet on Tuesday, April 30, in Gamble 109, at 8:15pm. Everyone is invited to join our discussion. Bring your own ideas and/or literature that you have read and would like to share about our current topic, *Ethics and Technology*. Our purpose is to gain insight into current issues in philosophy, to provide an informal discussion of ideas, and to learn from one another.

If your schedule prevents you from attending our discussions, or you would like more information concerning The Philosophical Debate group, you may contact us through the Learning Support Office, C/O Tiffanie Rogers, student tutor, or e-mail us at nordener@pirates.armstrong.edu. We will be glad to publish some of your questions and our responses in our newsletter.

Announcements

Dr. Richard Nordquist is offering a course in rhetoric this summer. For more information contact Dr. Nordquist in the Office of Nontraditional Learning, G-104.