

Philosophy Society Discussion Group - 25/09/2018

THE PHILOSOPHY OF TECHNOLOGY

1. What can be defined as technology? Does an abacus count? A rock tied to a stick? Therefore, what makes something a technology?
2. Is technology (e.g. cars and bikes) a part of nature? If so, how can it be that we don't find complex technologies naturally occurring? If not, how can something exist in a domain apart from nature? Where, if not in nature, is technology located? Is that a part of nature?
3. Many philosophers argue that humans define themselves relative to their environment – when born, you're given a name, you have a favourite colour, song, etc. Can technology, therefore, become a part of what it means to be 1) a human, and 2) oneself? How has what it means to be a human changed in various historical eras? What does it mean today?
4. Is technology a 'means to an end' or 'an end in itself'? If it is a means to an end, what is this end? Is there a morality to technology, and thus can advancements be denied on moral grounds? Or is technology in itself neutral, and thus able to be put to good or bad ends?
5. Many philosophers (Rousseau, Marx, Taylor, etc.) have thought that technology is destructive to tradition and meaning – can technology help to give our lives meaning, or does it take it away (or neither/both)?

Bonus question: Can artificial or technological beings (androids, clones, etc.) ever become, or be considered to be human?