



Living with the Genie: Essays On Technology And The Quest For Human Mastery

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"A group of remarkably penetrating, frank, and expert scientists, techno-wizards, activists, and writers raise provocative questions about what is gained and what is lost in a world enthralled by technology in this wonderfully soulful forum on life in the 'Wired World.' " -BOOKLIST

Biotechnology, Cloning, Robotics, Nanotechnology...

At a time when scientific and technological breakthroughs keep our eyes focused on the latest software upgrades or the newest cell-phone wizardry, a group of today's most innovative thinkers are looking beyond the horizon to explore both the promise and the peril of our technological future.

Human ingenuity has granted us a world of unprecedented personal power -- enabling us to communicate instantaneously with anyone anywhere on the globe, to transport ourselves in both real and virtual worlds to distant places with ease, to fill our bellies with engineered commodities once available to only a privileged elite.

Through our technologies, we have sought to free ourselves from the shackles of nature and become its master. Yet science and technology continually transform our experience and society in ways that often seem to be beyond our control. Today, different areas of research and innovation are advancing synergistically, multiplying the rate and magnitude of technological and societal change, with consequences that no one can predict.

Living with the Genie explores the origins, nature, and meaning of such change, and our capacity to govern it. As the power of technology continues to accelerate, who, this book asks, will be the master of whom?

In Living with the Genie, leading writers and thinkers come together to confront this question from many perspectives, including: Richard Powers's whimsical investigation of the limits of artificial intelligence; Philip Kitcher's confrontation of the moral implications of science; Richard Rhodes's exploration of the role of technology in reducing violence; Shiv Visvanathan's analysis of technology's genocidal potential; Lori Andrews's insights into the quest for human genetic enhancement; Alan Lightman's reflections on how technology changes the experience of our humanness.

These and ten other provocative essays open the door to a new dialogue on how, in the quest for human mastery, technology may be changing what it means to be human, in ways we scarcely comprehend.

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Betsy Aguilar:

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