

# Technology and the tragic view

Literature



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Technology and the Tragic View Samuel Florman's 'Technology and the Tragic View' considers contemporary approaches to technological intrusion on the cultural landscape. Within this context Florman further explores notions of the nature of the mythological tragic hero and contrasts this articulation with modern notions of progress or technological advancement. For Florman, these become contrasting elements as the tragic hero demonstrates a willingness to strive forward towards achievement only to falter, while the modern notion of technological advancement fully embraces the notion of progress. These elements are combined into the tragic view of technology, which notes the importance of progress even in the face of its obvious shortcomings. This essay examines this notion from a variety of perspectives.

When considering the notion of technology and the tragic view one must consider potential objections to the understanding that technological progress necessarily leads to partial betterment. One of the most pervasive such converse notions in these regards is the notion of the noble savage. Generally attributed to Rousseau, this concept argues that technology hinders the true essence of existence by intruding on its true reality.

Rousseau states, "Natural equality disappeared" from the moment one man began to stand in need of another" (Rousseau, p. 91). This indicates that troublesome social relations emerged with the advancement of technology.

When considered in light of the notion of technology and the tragic view, such a perspective contends that technology has no heroic quality, but rather reduces the quality of modern existence.

While the notion of a noble savage that experiences life for its true essence has highly romantic connotations, ultimately such a negative view of

technological progress is a negative one. In articulating his tragic view of technology, Florman writes, "I mean to ally myself with those who, aware of the dangers and without foolish illusions about what can be accomplished, still want to move on, actively seeking to realize our constantly changing vision of a more satisfactory society" (Florman, pg. 44). Within this context of understanding Florman acknowledges that with the advancement of technology also comes negative elements - consider the atomic bomb. Still, the nature of technological progress is one that enriches our daily lives through an increased understanding of our surroundings, increased medical treatment, and increased efficiency in accomplishing the tasks we desire. One simply need consider that during certain periods of the Middle Ages, "famine is so common that starving people resort to eating dogs, cats, the dung of doves and their own children" ("Time Travelers Guide to Great Britain"). While medical advancements constitute the most pronounced means of technological progress, one also need consider the great discoveries society has made in terms of science; for instance, the theory of relativity, and the Copernican Revolution. It should go without saying that a world lived in ignorance, is a world not worth living.

In conclusion, this essay has reflected on Samuel Florman's text 'Technology and the Tragic View'. While opposing viewpoints were considered, specifically the notion of the noble savage, it was ultimately argued that technological progress is a social necessity. Through examining great advancements in medicine, scientific progress, and the human will, it's clear that technological progress is an innate human need.

#### References

"channel4." Time Travelers Guide to Great Britain. N. p., n. d. Web. 21 Sep  
<https://assignbuster.com/technology-and-the-tragic-view/>

2011.

Florman, Samuel. "Technology and the Tragic View." *Technology and the Future*.

11th Ed. Albert H. Teich. Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009. 36-44. Print

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. "University of Oregon." *Rousseau and the Noble Savage*. N. p.,

n. d. Web. 21 Sep 2011. .