

Discussion Questions for “Why the Future Doesn't Need Us”

Joy, Bill. "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us", *Wired* 8.04 (April 2000), accessed 27 March 2012, <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.04/joy.html>.

Why the Future Doesn't Need Us

1. Who is Bill Joy? What authority does he have to write on technology?
2. Does Joy agree or disagree with Kurzweil's basic claims? Explain.
3. Why, in Joy's opinion, is humility necessary in developing technology?
4. What is Joy's dilemma, with respect to knowledge? How does he view it, compared with Oppenheimer?
5. In the passage beginning “If we could agree, as a species, what we wanted ...”, do you get the feeling Joy is expressing a longing? What is it for?
6. Summarize Joy's thesis.
7. On what ethical principles would you say Joy bases his critique of technology?
8. Joy believes that “we must find alternative outlets for our creative forces, beyond the culture of perpetual economic growth ...” What should we say to future generations who will face prospects of less prosperity than their parents if we curtail the technological development that drives economic growth?
9. “Each of us has our precious things,” Joy says, “and as we care for them we locate the essence of our humanity. In the end, it is because of our great capacity for caring that I remain optimistic we will confront the dangerous issues now before us.” Do you share his optimism? Explain.
10. Are you more in agreement with Kurzweil or with Joy? Why?