

Humanities wasn't always important to me, at least not in comparison to math or computer science. Humanities was just a course requirement. But then in sophomore English, I was introduced to Basquiat's colors and Orwell's pen.

Basquiat's paintings slowly shifted from a random hodgepodge of words and figures to a statement on the complex identity of a Black man in America. Orwell's *1984* became more than another dystopian novel, instead serving as a catalyst to discussions with close ones about their times under communism. Analyzing such works compelled me to reflect on our present-day governments and the suppression and exploitation of minorities in our country. I realized that every silent struggle, every outrageous whisper is intimately documented by artists from a multitude of perspectives.

In a world where technology is rapidly growing smarter, learning to appreciate art develops a voice which prompts me to take a step back. No matter how adrenaline inducing an innovation is, I push myself to ponder how these advances could ultimately affect us. Will self-driving cars handle the trolley problem presented in *The Good Place* responsibly? Will CRISPR gene editing bring us one step closer to Huxley's World State? Will police facial recognition only perpetuate the racial injustices J. Cole raps about?

The question now isn't "*will we be able to do this*" but instead "*if we should*" and "*if we do, how should we regulate it*". But removing the blinders we put on when solving an exciting technological problem is difficult. In this way, art is a grounding force that inherently pushes us to look at the bigger picture through the questions it sparks.

Technology's societal impact is a necessary conversation. And it needs to happen now, because technology is only developing faster. The disconnect between areas of technology, policy, and ethics is staggering. A disconnect that's perfectly demonstrated when technological figures like Mark Zuckerberg are brought before the Senate, and representatives don't even understand what the internet is.

How are we ever supposed to open the dialogue about regulation and the effects of technological development on the working class when technological giants and legislative representatives don't even have the same vocabulary?

These are the types of questions we need to be asking, and questions we need to ask now. Jobs are being displaced with no safety nets, ethical dilemmas are posed left and right, and technological giants are only gaining more power.

I am invigorated and excited by this age of continuous technological innovation just as much as anyone else, especially in regards to artificial intelligence. I think it is absolutely magnificent that there are so many applications of artificial intelligence that can only benefit society—and AI is simply just interesting to study.

But those questions still need to be asked if we are to develop and incorporate technology within society in a responsible and ethical manner. Questions that initially can be sparked by the Humanities.