Is the pace of life in your society too fast for its own good?

From a small, undeveloped, sleepy port, Singapore has advanced rapidly over the past few decades to become the cosmopolitan hub she is today, abuzz with activity. As we become more and more interconnected with the rest of the world, engaging in the trade of goods and services as well as adopting the latest technology to boost production, our pace of life has inevitably become much faster than before. With the increasing emphasis on efficiency and productivity, many have begun to wonder if our pace of life is too fast for our own good. I am of the opinion that although this increased efficiency has undoubtedly resulted in astounding economic growth for Singapore and that we, arguably, cannot afford to slow down in the face of numerous changes occurring in our highly volatile world today, our fast pace of life has compromised other more important aspects of life such as social relationships. It has also resulted in high stress levels, poor health and an increasingly ungracious society. It is in this light that I agree with the statement that the pace of life in Singapore is too fast for its own good.

Proponents of the stand that our pace of life is in fact not too fast are quick to point to how our emphasis on efficiency has spurred much economic growth over the years. They claim that in this aspect, it can be said that our pace of life is not too fast. I acknowledge that our astronomical growth rates can be largely attributed to our fast pace of life. Over the years of nation-building, our government has always devised methods to boost productivity by purchasing the newest machinery or investing in the development of human capital. In recent years, the government has set aside a handsome sum of money for the Skills Development Fund, which aims to retrain workers and upgrade their skills. All our pursuits of higher efficiency have evidently produced results: Singapore has recently been ranked the country with the highest Gross Domestic Product per capita in the world. This high efficiency directly benefits Singaporeans due to the increase in household incomes over the years, leading to higher material standards of living. Our businessmen grab business opportunities quickly and our swiftness attracts investment from all over the world, thus fuelling our rapid economic growth which trickles down to the basic building blocks of society – the households. As such, it may be claimed that our pace of life has helped us to achieve economic growth and higher incomes, allowing us to enjoy a higher material standard of living and our fast pace of life is in fact good for us.

Others claim that our pace of life is not too fast for our own good and should be maintained simply because we cannot afford to slow down today, given the rapid development of the rest of the world. As our world becomes increasingly globalised, minute changes in one economy can have gargantuan effects on our own economy, as evidenced by how the global financial crises blazed through the world's economies, leaving many large economies in temporary turmoil or even stasis. Technology is developing at an accelerated pace with countries adopting each other's production methods and the newest technologies to produce popular goods such as smart-phones and plasma television sets. Novel inventions are constantly being created as firms and researchers worldwide are constantly on the go. Should Singapore slow down, we may

be left behind in the waves of globalisation. This is because we have no hinterland and there is a dearth of natural resources or raw materials in our country. Our small population – and thus limited human resources - further aggravates this problem. To compensate for this lack of resources, Singapore has no choice but to acquire new skills, resources and knowledge from other countries and this necessitates a fast pace of life to a very large extent. Thus, it may be said that our rapid pace of life is necessary and not too fast for our own good.

Having said that, let us take a step back and observe that the above arguments are in fact rather myopic as they focus only on economic progress and fail to consider the impact our efficiency has on other aspects of life which are arguably more important.

Many Singaporeans find the pace of life too fast because it compromises social relationships. With the advent of technology making video-conferencing and instant messaging possible, people are able to communicate with one another regardless of where they are or what time zone they are in. While this brings about manifold benefits in terms of allowing separated relatives to keep in touch with one another, it has simultaneously further accentuated our desire for efficiency and instant gratification. People find themselves spending more time replying to electronic mail (e-mail) than talking to their friends or families since the accessibility of e-mail allows them to remain contactable 24/7. Studies have shown that smart-phone owners are more likely to go to bed with their smart-phones than their spouses. This shows how our fast pace of life has affected our quality time with loved ones. The flourishing of Short Message Service (SMS) attests to the alluring nature of brevity and quick, prompt responses. Rather than having a face-to-face conversation, people are growing increasingly accustomed to and comfortable with messaging, littered with various abbreviations that were inconceivable in the twentieth century. In Singapore, on public transport such as trains or buses, teenagers and adults alike can be seen fiddling with their telephone and iPads rather than engaging in conversation with one another. It is evident that the influence of a fast-paced lifestyle is pervasive in Singaporean society and has resulted in social relationships being compromised.

Our pace of life can also be deemed as too fast due to the negative effects it has on our stress levels and health. As Singaporeans constantly – and even mindlessly – strive for efficiency in the rat race, many people lose track of the need for time to unwind and relax, or find their precious recreation time eroded due to never-ending demands from their superiors. Our government can spend an inordinate sum on nature reserves, parks and entertainment centres but all these would have no positive effect on society if Singaporeans simply do not have the time to engage in recreational activities. According to the annual report by the Institute of Mental Health, there has been an increasing trend in the cases of high anxiety and depression among young adults and working adults. Apart from mental health, physical health is also a concern in Singapore. Fast-food outlets like McDonald's or Kentucky Fried Chicken are never short of customers; many people resort to such unhealthy diets simply because it is the most efficient way to settle a meal. In such a case, eating is perceived as merely a task to replenish one's energy for the demands of the rest of the day and people thus crave this convenience. The result? A rising trend in obesity among young children as well as cardiovascular-related problems in adults. This shows that our obsession with efficiency and productivity has taken a toll on our health. As such, it would be preposterous to claim that this fast pace of life is good for us; it is too fast for our own good.

Finally, the pace of life in Singapore has resulted in a more ungracious and uncaring society and is clearly too fast for our own good. Due to our preoccupation with achieving our goals quickly at all costs, we have invariably done so at the expense of others. Gone is the traditional 'gotongroyong' spirit in which neighbours and friends were ever willing to lend each other a helping hand voluntarily in spite of inconveniencing themselves; it has been replaced with rudeness and self-centredness. This phenomenon manifests itself in daily occurrences such as pushing and shoving one another on trains or reserving seats at hawker centres with packets of tissue paper. Even on roads, drivers honk at each other incessantly at the slightest irritation or inconvenience and let out profanities when others overtake them in their lane. It has come to a point where the Singapore government has to constantly remind Singaporeans to be gracious. Popular local artistes like Gurmit Singh and the Dimsum Dollies have their images plastered on train carriages and platforms to remind Singaporeans to make way for those alighting. The government has also introduced a scheme to promote good road etiquette. In my opinion, this is humiliating and very unbecoming of a developed and educated country like Singapore. Thus, I feel that the fast pace of life in Singapore has resulted in a loss of social etiquette and society becoming more ungracious, and is certainly not good for us.

In conclusion, I feel that despite the economic progress brought about by efficiency and the necessity to stay ahead to remain competitive, our fast pace of life has resulted in more severe costs to our society in terms of the decreased quality of relationships, health as well as graciousness. Although it must be acknowledged that what is good for society depends on what the society prioritises as most important, I would like to proffer the view that in the light of Singapore's current strong economy, it is unwise for society to pursue efficiency at the expense of other more important aspects of life which ultimately have a bearing on our economic progress in the long run. An unhealthy society cannot maximise its potential, and an ungracious society will not make foreigners feel welcome. Hence, I am of the opinion that the pace of life in Singapore is too fast for our own good.

Marker's Comments:

An enjoyable read that shows a good grasp of local issues and sensible connections between trends (attitudes, behaviour) and the main points of your arguments. Good job! Ideas are sensible and well-argued.

'Inequality is a fact of life.' To what extent should we accept this?

Inequality has afflicted humanity since the dawn of civilisation. Two millennia ago, Roman masters made use of slaves to do their bidding. Now, Indian tycoons in Bangalore live next door to slums that serve as homes for the poor. Whilst many believe that greater equality is desirable, I find that we must embrace inequality as a fact of life. Historical trends have shown that it is indeed possible to push for and attain greater levels of equality, but it is important to recognise that it is only because of the existence of the haves and the have-nots that those who have can have what they have. I believe that we need not completely accept that inequality is a fact of life as doing so would slow or even impede the push for greater equality. However, that being said, it is necessary to keep in mind that complete inequality is largely impossible, and accept that inequality is an unavoidable fact of life.

One reason why we should not accept inequality is that refusal to embrace inequality has led to many historical examples of movements for equality, which ultimately helped to empower and grant greater status to those who were underprivileged. The French Revolution was sparked by the large income inequality between the rich and the poor in France. The feminist movement was caused by the disparity in rights and treatment of men and women. The black equality movement in 1950s and 60s America was aimed at seeking greater equality between the whites and the blacks. In all these cases, the plight of those who were at the losing end was ameliorated, and the push for equality led to better lives for them, as well as social development and the improvement of human rights. In such cases it would be better not to accept that the inequality between one group and the other is a fact of life, for the simple reason that it need not be. It is the refusal to accept inequality that drives the push for change, change that is often for the better and helps nations and societies move forward into a better future.

One area where we should not accept inequality is the area of rights. All men and women deserve equal rights and opportunities, and the examples of the feminist movement and the black equality movement given in the previous paragraph are examples of groups of people fighting for greater rights and eventually attaining them. Equal rights and treatment would serve to benefit society, as each member of society could then work to his or her full potential. Consider the issue of female scientists. Before the 1900s, most prominent scientists were men. This is due to the fact that women were not given the opportunity to contribute to science; it is not a reflection of the fact that women had little to contribute to science. Greater rights, treatment, and opportunities for women led to more equality, and female scientists like Marie Curie emerged. Equality allows a previously marginalised group to contribute better to society in more fulfilling ways, and thus for the sake of their rights, fair treatment, and opportunity, we should not settle for or condone inequality, for seeking equality would be beneficial to society.

One area, however, in which we should accept some levels of inequality, is that of income. While large levels of income inequality are not welcome as they may have

a destabilising effect on society, complete equality is undesirable as well. Different workers will do a different amount of work in an economy, for every individual is unique and does what they are capable of. A skilled politician may work harder than a cleaner in a hawker centre. Should perfect income equality exist, what incentive has he to continue working harder? In the materialistic and consumerist world that we inhabit, the monetary incentive is a significant one. People enrol themselves in universities so that they may draw better incomes when they start working. Should there be income equality, the incentive to work harder or to contribute more to society would be diminished if not eliminated. Income inequality is necessary for a society to function. Equality is not only undesirable; it would be detrimental as well. In recognition of this, we should accept that some inequality is a fact of life and we should not seek to change it.

Another area in which inequality is necessary is that of inequality between communities. Many communities exist in this world, some more prosperous than others. It is impossible for all communities to enjoy the same wealth. For every bustling metropolis like Hong Kong, there must exist farmers to cultivate its food, miners to mine the materials it needs, and so on. It is only because of other supporting societies that some communities may prosper. For every developed country with a financial and service-based economy, there must be a developing country with a large agricultural sector working to support it. Different levels must exist in order to reflect differences in function. As such, inequality is to some extent unavoidable and we should accept it as a fact of life.

Yet another area where inequality is necessary is that of status. Not everybody can be of equal status; it is necessary for some to be above others. Herds of animals each have an alpha male that leads the animals along as they forage for food or shelter. Society is no different. In order for society to function as a coherent whole, some citizens must submit to others and grant them the right to rule. Within a corporation, the bosses are needed to determine the direction of and make decisions regarding the company. In an army, a General is needed in order to lead the soldiers and coordinate attacks. For any form of organisation, there must be a pecking order, a hierarchy that places some individuals above others. This is due to the fact that a large group of people would require oversight and coordination in order to function effectively as a coherent whole. In the case of unequal status in organisations and society, some inequality is definitely necessary.

In conclusion, we should refuse to accept inequality as doing so leads us to push for greater equality. However, we must keep in mind that perfect equality is undesirable, and that some inequality is always necessary for society to function. Thus, we must acknowledge small degrees of inequality as a fact of life, for perfect equality would not only disrupt the workings of society but also echo the society of Communist Russia and the dystopian worlds of '1984' and 'A Wrinkle in Time'.

2012 Year 5 General Paper Promotion Examination

'Protecting our environment is a futile pursuit.' Discuss.

essay 9

Teo Hoong Chen I 13A03A

Former US President Jimmy Carter once said, "I want to make it clear,if there is ever a conflict (between environmental quality and economic growth), I will go for beauty, clean air, water, and landscape." Protecting the environment often comes at such economic cost that many consider that the benefits from protecting the environment do not outweigh the cost, and it is therefore futile. Political barriers and the fact that climate change is now irreversible are also reasons cited by detractors of environmental protection. However, this essay will argue that there are many ways to deal with the political barriers and that environmental protection can generate significant economic benefits and improve the quality of life, making it not a futile pursuit, despite the difficulties involved.

Divergent national agendas have led many to conclude that it is politically impossible for the world to agree on a binding environmental protection agreement. Without it, a tragedy of the commons would result and individual environmental protection efforts would prove futile. After the Kyoto Protocol expired, efforts to enact another greenhouse gas emissions limit among countries have come to naught. In a scene replayed at talks in Copenhagen, Durban and Cancun, developed and developing countries continue to disagree on who should be responsible for more of the cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. Given the stubborn refusal of many countries to yield on their position in order to reach an agreement, a tragedy of the commons is fast developing. The cost of pollution, in the form of rising global temperatures and sea levels as well as more extreme weather, such as droughts in the USA at the moment, is not borne fully by the polluters themselves but instead is a burden shared by the world. No single polluter has clear incentives to reduce their pollution, therefore pollution and environmental degradation continue unabated as the world suffers greater consequences. Due to the lack of international cooperation, many people feel that it is thus futile for individuals or even individual nations to protect the environment as the impact of pollution from others will continue to affect them, as well as the whole world.

Despite the political difficulties on the international level, individual nations and regional groupings can still make a significant contribution to environmental protection, allowing it to become a fruitful rather than futile attempt. According to Dr Eloi Laurent of Sciences Po Paris, European Union (EU) policy has influenced the world and created a global impact. Given its position as one of the world's largest and most wealthy consumer bases, the EU has taken advantage of this to roll out regulations on the efficiency of motor vehicles and their emissions. Carmakers seeking to enter the EU market must meet these requirements, so companies such as Toyota and Ford are forced to develop new technology to meet these regulations. Such environmentally-friendly technology is then applied to vehicles from the same manufacturer sold in other countries, for the sake of product consistency. Besides influencing environmental policies of other countries, the EU has, in a tangible way, reduced motor emissions worldwide through its unilateral action, without being bogged down in lengthy and often futile international negotiations. As we can see, if thoughtfully planned and

crafted, individual nations and regional groupings can achieve the goal of greater environmental protection through their own environmental policies. Environmental protection can therefore be a fruitful endeavour.

Critics of "tree-hugging" environmentalists also claim that it is too late for mankind to do anything about the onset of global warming and climate change. In such a scenario, many contend that a conservationist approach, where humans utilise natural resources to the fullest extent possible, would be the better option. Many of them would undoubtedly agree with the economist John Maynard Keynes' famous saying, "The long run is a misleading guide to current affairs. In the long run we are all dead." Given that the concentration of carbon in the atmosphere has already reached 393 ppm CO2 as of April 2011, way beyond the safety threshold of 350ppm prescribed by scientists from the United Nations (UN) Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC), many scientists have likened this to a hurtling freight train, which would end in tragedy even if it is stopped immediately. Indeed, it is true that even if the world were to stop all carbon emissions immediately, ominous phenomenon such as sea level rise, melting Arctic ice and global warming would still continue. Many people baulk at the task of reducing carbon emissions given Al Gore's famous hockey-stick model showing exponentially rising emissions. The enormity of this task and the inevitability of environmental damage lead many people to conclude despondently that environmental efforts are futile even if attempted, because it is simply too late to effect any meaningful change.

However, on a small scale, it has been proven that conserving the environment can have immediate, tangible economic outcomes. While world leaders squabbled endlessly in climate talks, communities in Thailand have quietly taken things into their own hands. As Benjamin Franklin once said, "When the well is dry, we will know the worth of water." Depleting fish stocks in the mighty Mekong River severely affected the livelihoods of numerous Thai fishermen, driving home Franklin's point about scarcity, prompting them to stop taking the environment for granted. Together with non-governmental organisations, fourteen villages in Northern Thailand participated in the Thai Baan programme by setting up conservation zones around the Mekong. Villagers took turns to conduct night patrols, with hefty fines of thousands of Baht for poachers caught. Innovative methods such as having monks tie saffron robes to trees to ordain them were also used to deter loggers. Fishermen of villages like Ban Muang Choom observed that fishes were able to spawn inside the conservation zone, aided by the holistic protection of the surrounding ecosystem, resulting in significantly increased fish yields outside the conservation zone. Given the concrete economic benefits of environmental protection, the villagers are thoroughly convinced that it was a fruitful pursuit. This shows that while communities cannot play a significant role in reducing global carbon emissions and alleviating the problem of climate change, they can still make a tangible and significant improvement to their own communities.

On a national scale, given political will, countries can protect their environment and achieve economic outcomes while maintaining their standard of living. The small Himalayan nation of Bhutan has resisted the exploitation of its forest resources unlike nearby Nepal, requiring permits for any tree to be felled, even for firewood or religious purposes. It has aimed for a 'no net loss' policy towards forest cover, unlike rampant deforestation in Nepal and India. As a result, Bhutan has maintained a positive environment that has attracted many high value tourists, who must pay a levy in excess of US$200 per day. Not only has Bhutan gained significantly from

tourist income, it has also maintained its standard of living by preserving nature. To the Bhutanese people, environmental protection has been an immensely fruitful and meaningful pursuit. However, the unique position of Bhutan in having a stable political system, effective governance and policing as well as popular and political will to enact strict environmental laws may mean that not every country can do the same. Nevertheless, it is still an example of how achieving fruitful outcomes from environmental protection is possible on a national scale so long as certain conditions are present.

In conclusion, environmental protection need not be a futile pursuit if nations and communities avoid being bogged down by international politics and instead focus on effecting change within the limits of their ability and control. Political will and public support can make national environmental protection a fruitful pursuit. As former US President Ronald Reagan once said, "There are simple answers; they just are not easy ones." While environmental protection may be difficult, it can and will produce positive outcomes if we stop dwelling on what we cannot accomplish and instead channel our efforts towards what we can do.

Marker's Comments:

Hoong Chen, the value of your essay is not so much that you argue well and have a myriad examples to draw on –it is that you actually offer us insights into the issue of environmental protection. Keep this up!

2011 Year 5 General Paper Promotion Examination

essay 8 | **Discuss the view that science and technology give us hope for the future.**

Yao Yuan | 12S06K

The Age of Enlightenment is often remembered as the era of rationality. In this post-Renaissance period, science began to develop its systematic and rigorous nature as we know it today, and began to be applied extensively in our daily lives. The steam engine, electricity, the telegraph are just a few examples of the numerous inventions which first made their appearance then. It seemed, with scarcely a doubt, that continued development of science and technology is the way to go in securing a future with high standards of living, which is the "hope for the future". However, in light of more recent developments in the fields of science, it is my view that science and technology at once bring hope and potential disaster to mankind's future.

Proponents of the view that science and technology will bring us hope for the future often point to the immense successes that have been achieved through scientific and technological pursuits. In the last two centuries, much of the world has experienced significant improvements in standards of living, and there is convincing evidence that scientific methods in other fields of study such as economics prompted the Industrial Revolution, which greatly increased the productivity of Western economies and their wealth. Medical advancements in the Western world also greatly improved the lives and extended life expectancies of its inhabitants. These advancements no doubt improved the standards of living in countries where science and technology were pursued and gave the inhabitants hope for the future, in stark contrast with more technologically backward nations of the time such as those in Africa or most of Asia.

Because of these past successes, there is an oft-held belief that science and technology will continue to improve lives by solving problems that the world faces today. Two of the major issues that we face today include climate change and environmental degradation. Many of our industrial activities pollute the Earth's atmosphere, land and seas, creating negative side-effects such as global warming. Many science and technology proponents thus argue that science can be one way to solve this problem. Advancements in technology for alternative energy sources such as solar panels and nuclear power plants, for example, can potentially avert climate change disasters by greatly reducing the pollution that our energy generation activities produce. Yet another impending global crisis science is claimed to be able to be solve is the food crisis. Currently, there are 7 billion people in the world, and this number is projected to increase to about 9 billion by 2040. Already, a large proportion of our world today are living in abject poverty, and are starving. With a further 2.5 billion mouths to feed, most of them in the developing world, there is much doubt about the sustainability of our current food sources. Science, once again, is proposed as the way to avert such a Malthusian catastrophe. Genetically modified (GM) food has revolutionised the harvest of crops, allowing not only higher yields, but also earlier harvests, and is expected to be able to continue to do so. Should worse come to worst and our planet Earth becomes uninhabitable, there even exists the possibility of 'terraforming' other planets and changing our home planet! Thus, prima facie, it seems that science and technology can solve many problems that we face today, and continue to bring us hope for yet higher standards of living.

However, recent developments in science and technology have also proven that the opposite can be true. Instead of improving lives, science and technology can also create its own disasters. Perhaps the most tirelessly clichéd, yet ultimately pertinent, examples would be the two World Wars in the early half of the 20th century. The First World War saw the advent of chemical warfare. Phosgene, chlorine and mustard gas were employed on the battlefields as deadly weapons and so were novel weapons such as the heavy machine gun and trench warfare. The First World War eventually ended with over a million fatalities, an unprecedented number compared to earlier conflicts. The Second World War, of course, notoriously saw the development of the Atomic bomb, which incidentally killed almost a million Japanese civilians alone. The atomic bomb project,

Project Manhattan, was also singlehandedly run and seen through to success by brilliant scientists of the day such as Oppenheimer and Szilard. After the World Wars, the two major emergent superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States, then stood on opposing ends of the Cold War, with the prospect of a nuclear Armageddon and mutual assured destruction hanging on a balance. How, then, have science and technology given hope for the future in these cases? To those embroiled in never ending wars that employ large-scale killing machines, and for us who come after, we must always remember that technology also has the potential to destroy lives on an unprecedented scale.

Thus, we see that technology has also had a history of destroying hopes of a better future, and it is my view that apprehensions of a repeat of such a history are not unfounded. Though there exist international conventions banning the use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, there is a chance that they will be used as long as they exist. For one, rogue nations like North Korea and Iran are notorious examples of states which defy these conventions and conduct unauthorised nuclear weaponry development programmes. The recent escalations in tensions between North and South Korea last year over the sinking of a South Korean ship in disputed waters ended with North Korea threatening to use its nuclear weapons – a grave reminder to the world that the horrors of nuclear weaponry can potentially resurface in today's world. For sure, terrorist organisations feel no obligation to be bound by such conventions, and the Sarin attacks on the Tokyo subway in 1995 is again a reminder of the horrors of chemical warfare. Thus, I see a definite potential for science and technology to create disasters in the future, instead of creating hope.

It is also my answer to proponents of science and technology that while science and technology have the potential to resolve the world's problems, there are also many costs to such developments. While I agree wholeheartedly that further research should continue to be funded and supported in the hopes of finding the silver bullet to the world's imminent crises, I must also warn against the naïve view that these advances come at no cost, and with no further intentions other than to contribute to the betterment of society. It must be recognised that many scientific and technological pursuits today are driven by impetuses other than innocent goodwill. The Internet, for example, was first developed as a communications network for military use. Even the rocket that, literally, fuels space exploration was developed as a side-product of intercontinental ballistic missiles, hence, of course, its significance in the Cold War. Because of these other intentions, there are many costs involved in scientific and technological research other than monetary ones. For example, the proposed use of nuclear power plants to generate electricity so ardently supported by proponents of science and technology runs the risk of causing nuclear proliferation. In other words, since the technology of nuclear energy is similar to that of developing nuclear weapons, there is a possibility that it will exacerbate the destruction of hope caused by nuclear warfare. Iran, for instance, hid its nuclear weaponry development programme under the claim of developing nuclear energy. Also, there is a chance of accidents at nuclear plants such as the ones in Chernobyl and Fukushima, causing a nuclear fallout that can spread over a large area and affect the health of millions: not just their own health but also that of their unborn children. While I agree that such possibilities are low, the extremely devastating effects that they can bring about should it occur make it a significant risk to be considered. Also, there are also many potential devastating effects concerning Genetically Modified foods. Having ethical grey zones aside and simply considering practical results, we must consider the possibility of an ecological disaster. By creating new species of animals, for example, it is possible that they can overturn the food chain and the delicate ecological balance, creating far-reaching effects that are unable to be predicted even with our best technologies. Furthermore, the proliferation of herbicide-resistant crops, for example, only prompts farmers to spray more herbicide, knowing that their crops are resistant. This will only serve to worsen the land and pollution of underground water, at the same time creating the possibility of super weeds that are resistant to our best herbicides. Not surprisingly, of course, research into GM food is largely funded by agrochemical conglomerates such as Monsanto which also produces and markets herbicides. This similar concept of resistance can be carried over to the field of medicine, where there are signs of emerging strains of viruses and bacteria seemingly resistant to our current antibiotics and antiviral drugs. It is postulated that these "superbugs" developed as a result of the

overuse of such drugs. Thus we can see how there are costs in scientific and technological pursuit that may lead to its own host of problems for the world instead of hope for solving the world's problems.

Ultimately, the effects of science and technology depend on the user. Should a new kind of immense energy be discovered, it is up to the wielder whether he would want to create or destroy with this power. Science and technology can indeed give us hope for a better future and solve our problems, but the opposite is an equally possible prospect that we must also consider. Otherwise, we may end up being destroyed by our misplaced faith and crushed hopes.

Marker's comments:

This is one of the more mature and balanced essays on the topic. Coherent and persuasive arguments supported adequately by apt exemplification. Well done!