

Ask A Genius 21 - The Future of Genetic Engineering 1

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Scott: What about the future of genetic engineering - crops, animals, or people?

Rick: Let's talk about people. Science fiction says we're going to do a lot of it. Rich people will own it at first and use it to make their kids extra special, which is felt by many including the writers of this stuff to be anti-egalitarian, anti-democratic that rich people get to hog the resources. Nothing is a bigger resource than your own characteristics.

Other stuff said by science fiction is that gender fluidity will be more easy. Young punky people will use genetic engineering to radically transform their bodies to freak people out like people wearing piercings do now. I have a seen a goth teen a couple times, or a rebellious teen, transform him or herself into a version of T-rex. Some of that stuff will come to pass.

Some of it won't. There's going to be, once any of this stuff gets going to any extent, particularly in America a conservative backlash saying people are messing with something best left to God. People will start doing it to pets and to farm animals, which is a way to do it at a more genetic level that which we've been doing for thousands of years anyway.

Dogs, cats, and all domestic animals are products of genetic engineering, even though we didn't know how genetics worked for most of the time we were doing it. They were still genetic products. The products and will get weirder and more radical, sophisticated, within the next

century. With pets, we will get perma-puppies like permanent puppies or kittens for their entire lives, even having 30 year lives, extended lives.

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