

Martin Heidegger on Technology: A Response to Essentialist Charge¹

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Abstract: Martin Heidegger is one of the major philosophers influencing discussions of the condition of technology in the modern era especially with his very much debated article, "The Question Concerning Technology." However, his views of technology are variously interpreted. Andrew Feenberg and Don Ihde accuse Martin Heidegger of being "essentialist." Feenberg also implies that Heidegger is a technological determinist and a strong pessimist. On the other hand, Iain Thomson asserts that Heidegger's view of technology is not essentialist in the traditional sense. David Edward Tabachnick also underlines that essentialism in Heidegger does not necessarily include determinism. In this article, I defend Heidegger against Feenberg's essentialist charge. First, I summarize Feenberg's interpretation of Heidegger. Secondly, I criticize Feenberg to show that his accusations against Heidegger are unjustified.

Keywords: Martin Heidegger, technology, Andrew Feenberg, essentialism, technological determinism, anti-technology, autonomy of technology

Martin Heidegger'in Teknoloji Görüşü: Özcü Eleştiriye Bir Cevap

Özet: Martin Heidegger, özellikle çok tartışılan "Teknolojiye İlişkin bir Soru" makalesiyle modern dönemde teknolojinin durumuyla ilgili tartışmaları etkileyen en önemli filozoflardan biridir. Ancak, onun teknoloji görüşleri çeşitli şekillerde yorumlanmıştır. Andrew Feenberg ve Don Ihde, Heidegger'i, özcü olmakla suçlarlar. Feenberg, ayrıca da Heidegger'in teknolojik determinist ve güçlü anlamda pesimist olduğunu ima eder. Diğer yandan, Iain Thomson, Heidegger'in teknoloji görüşünün geleneksel anlamda özcü olmadığını iddia eder. David Edward Tabachnick'de, Heidegger'de özcülüğün, determinizmi içermediğinin altını çizerek. Bu makalede, Feenberg'in özcü suçlamasına karşı Heidegger'i savunacağım. İlk olarak, Feenberg'in Heidegger yorumunu özetleyeceğim. İkinci olarak, Heidegger'e karşı suçlamalarının temelsiz olduğunu göstermek için Feenberg'i eleştireceğim.

Anahtar sözcükler: Martin Heidegger, teknoloji, Andrew Feenberg, özcülük, teknolojik determinizm, teknoloji-karşıtlığı, teknolojinin özerkliği

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Originally published in 1954, Martin Heidegger's work "The Question Concerning Technology" had a great impact in a newly systematized discipline namely, philosophy of technology. Although it has pessimistic overtones, the article is interpreted in various ways by different philosophers. On one side, there are philosophers, who say that he defends an essentialist view of technology. On the other side, there are philosophers, who state that his view cannot be accepted as essentialist. My aim, in this article is to discuss Heidegger's view of technology in the light of these interpretations.

Heidegger emphasizes that a free relationship to technology is possible by questioning it. He contrasts *techné* in ancient Greece with the technology we have in the modern world. In ancient Greece, aesthetic bringing-forth is correlated with the Aristotelean four causes that is material, formal, efficient and final causes. For example, in case a silver chalice is going to be produced, not only silver, as a material, but also a silversmith, who shapes the silver in the form of a sacrificial vessel to be used in a ritual of consecration, are necessary. In craftsmanship, a kind of artistic bringing into existence occurs. In this process, what is hidden in the material, in silver chalice's case, an aspect of silver becomes visible in an attuned whole. This is what Heidegger calls revealing, and revealing in ancient Greece makes truth visible.

In the modern era, on the other hand, technology is still revealing, however rather than making truth visible, it conceals truth because of Enframing. According to Heidegger, the revealing in the modern era is related to challenging-forth. He says; "The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging [*Herausfordern*], which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such" (Heidegger, 1977, p.14). He contrasts modern technology with the old one and says that an old "windmill does not unlock energy from the air currents in order to store it" (Heidegger, 1977, p.14).

In the same way, while the work of a peasant does not challenge the soil, the cultivation of the field through modern agriculture challenges nature (Heidegger, 1977, p.15). Heidegger stresses that in modern technology's revealing itself, human beings as well as the sciences become a mere means in the process.

Before I go any further, I want to concentrate on Andrew Feenberg's

essentialist interpretation of Heidegger's view of technology.

I. Essentialist Interpretations of Heidegger's View of Technology

Not only Bruno Latour and Wiebe Bijker, but also Andrew Feenberg and Don Ihde characterize Heidegger's view of technology as essentialist. Ihde underlines that in "The Question Concerning Technology" Heidegger defines technology with its essence (Ihde, 2010, p.102). He thinks that this Heideggerian attitude is naïve and romantically biased and should be criticized from a pragmatic and anti-essentialist point of view. The anti-essentialist view presupposes that "there are many varieties of technological experience" and hence, "one size does not fit all" (Ihde, 2010, p.102). In this article, I primarily concentrate on Feenberg's critique of Heidegger.

Feenberg defines Heidegger's view as substantivist. Feenberg states that substantivism is different from the instrumental view of technology in defining technology with a content of mediation. This means that technology encompasses all spheres in such a way as to transform our understanding of human. Substantivism also implies that technology is value-laden in the sense that any tool we have, affects the form of human life. According to Feenberg, substantivism sees modernity as an epistemological occurrence, which shows the essence of technology. The essence is characterized with an autonomous process, correlated with pure technical reason, which is directed to rational control and efficiency in modern era. Feenberg also underlines that substantivism has close similarities with technological determinism, because for both, technological progress has an automatic and unilinear trait (Feenberg, 1999, pp.2-3).

Technological determinism is defined with its two characteristics: unilinear progress and determination by the base. The first one presupposes that technological "development follows a single sequence of necessary stages" (Feenberg, 1999, p.77). The second one, on the other hand, assumes that application of a technology requires implementation of certain practices that are connected with it. For example, railroads require scheduled travel, which resulted in people getting watches (Feenberg, 1999, p.77). Val Dusek also defines technological determinism as technology's causing and determining the structure and the rest of society and culture (Dusek, 2006, p.84). "Autonomy of technology," on the

other hand, is another concept related with determinism and it is defined as technology's following its own logic and in this sense, it's being beyond human control (Dusek, 2006, p.84).

Feenberg states that "standing-reserve," which is characterized with technology's turning everything it touches into raw materials and functions; constitutes the essence of technology in Heidegger (Feenberg, 1999, p.183). According to Feenberg, because essentialism goes hand in hand with an autonomous view of technology and technological determinism, Heidegger's view implies technological determinism and an autonomous view of technology, which results in the elimination of agency. Besides, autonomy of technology implies a-historical understanding of the technological era.

II. Is Heidegger's View of Technology Essentialist?

Because Feenberg accuses Heidegger of defending four interrelated theses of technology that is essentialism, technological determinism, autonomy of technology and anti-technological attitude: it is better to consider each of these charges one by one to show that Feenberg's accusations are unjustified.

Essentialism:

As stated earlier, Bruno Latour, Don Ihde, Wiebe Bijker and Andrew Feenberg, assert that Heidegger defines "technology" with its essence; therefore, he is a "substantivist" thinker (Feenberg, 1999, pp.1-9). However, Heidegger cannot be regarded as "essentialist" or "substantivist" in the traditional sense of the word. Some of Heidegger's remarks justify this interpretation for example when he says, "The essence of modern technology shows itself in what we call Enframing" (Heidegger, 1977, p.23); he seems to be defining technology's essence. He underlines that because of Enframing, human beings can no longer encounter themselves and their essence today. Enframing covers up truth: as he says, "Enframing blocks the shining-forth and holding sway of truth" (Heidegger, 1977, p.28). Truth and untruth are combined with one another in such a way that historical human beings "are covered up and distorted" (Heidegger, 2006, p.146). In modern technological societies, we, as human beings, cannot be ourselves and lose our genuineness in societal context in which technical reason predominates.

Heidegger also underlines that because work in technological societies is neither only a human activity, nor a mere means within such activity, the merely instrumental and merely anthropological definition of technology are in principle indefensible (Heidegger, 1977, p.21). Therefore, technology should be defined with its essence. How does Heidegger define the essence of technology? The essence of technology in a way determines the course of history; it is identified as Enframing, which presents danger for future generations.

According to Heidegger, Enframing, which is the essence of technology, challenges human beings. However, "essence" here is not defined with genus and *essentia*. He says that when we speak of the "essence of a house" and the "essence of a state" we do not mean a generic type, "rather we mean the ways in which house and state hold sway, administer themselves, develop and decay" (Heidegger, 1977, p.30). Elsewhere he points out that "All essencing endures" (Heidegger, 1977, p.30). What kind of endurance is this? He asks, "Does the essence of technology endure in the sense of the permanent enduring of an Idea that hovers over everything technological, thus making it seem that by technology we mean some mythological abstraction?" (Heidegger, 1977, pp.30-31). Heidegger responds to this question by appealing to Goethe. Goethe makes a distinction between *fortgewähren* (to grant permanently) and *fortwähren* (to endure permanently). Heidegger points out that Goethe here hears *währen* (to endure) and *gewähren* (to grant) in one unarticulated accord. Hence, "what it is that actually endures and perhaps alone endures, we may venture to say: *Only what is granted endures. That which endures primally out of the earliest beginning is what grants*" (Heidegger, 1977, p.31).

Heidegger's remark is very important in showing that "essence" here is not understood in the traditional sense. The traditional meaning of "essence" has nothing to do with granting. "Granting" presupposes human involvement: nonhumans cannot grant. Heidegger does not use the concept "essence" in the traditional sense of the word; therefore, he cannot be considered a "substantivist" in this sense.

This also disproves the affiliated thesis of Feenberg saying that Heidegger's view implies the autonomy of technology. As stated earlier, Feenberg distinguishes two approaches in science, technology and society studies; that is essentialism and constructivism. According to Feenberg, Heidegger sees technology as an autonomous force, while constructivists

like himself see it as merged with politics and culture. Essentialism should be criticized for being deterministic and for eliminating agency by promoting inaction. However, Heidegger points out that “Challenging is anything but a granting” (Heidegger, 1977, p.31). Because granting relies on human will, it is not possible to say that “essence” here refers to the substantial endurance of “Enframing.”

Heidegger also states, “The essence of technology is in a lofty sense ambiguous. Such ambiguity points to the mystery of all revealing, i.e., of truth” (Heidegger, 1977, p.33). He implies that where technology is transformed into artistic bringing into appearance, it regains the ancient Greek meaning of *techné*. Because the ordering nature of technical reason and the restraint of the saving power are very close, transformation is possible. Since challenging occurs with the will of human beings, then it is possible for it to be transformed by human will. Therefore, the affiliated thesis that Heidegger’s essentialist view implies the autonomy of technology is also unjustified.

Iain Thomson criticizes Feenberg’s evaluation of Heidegger. He says that according to Feenberg, Heidegger’s essentialism implies three points: ahistoricism, substantivism and one-dimensionalism. Thomson puts forward the view that Heidegger’s view of technology does not imply any one of them. It is not a-historical because in Heidegger the essence of technology has something to do with historical understanding of the ontology of technology, which complies with redefining our ontological self-understanding continuously (Thomson, 2000, p.434). In this sense, technology in Heidegger is an “*ontological condition* that requires a *transformation of our understanding of Being*” (Thomson, 2000, p. 436).

According to Thomson, Heidegger is not essentialist with regard to one-dimensionalism, which presupposes that all technological devices reveal the same essence. Heidegger’s response to the question whether there is one common essence revealing the nature of technological devices such as autobahn, power plant, and cellular phone is negative. That is to say, unlike Plato, who thinks that for example the essence of a tree is a genus subsuming different types of trees such as oaks, maples and birches: Heidegger avoids underlining the commonalities shared by technological devices (Thomson, 2000, p.438). Thomson also states that Heidegger does not define different periods of technology as a unified and continuous onto-historical flux as Feenberg assumes. On the contrary, he

points out the differences between modern technology and pre-modern craft. Hence, he defines a series of overlapping, but distinct ontological epochs (Thomson, 2000, p.434). Because he does not make the modern period transcendental and in this sense, he is not essentialist.

As stated, another thesis interrelated with the essentialist view is technological determinism. In the next section, I concentrate on this issue to disprove that Heidegger's view of technology implies technological determinism.

Technological Determinism:

As said earlier, technological determinism assumes that technology, which in an indirect way constituting infrastructure determines superstructure namely, cultural and political institutions and the rest of society. Besides, its track is defined with a single sequence of necessary stages (Feenberg, 1999, p.77).

Heidegger's approach does not fit into technological determinist understanding for several reasons. Firstly, Heidegger does not distinguish two different realms such as a technological realm and a socio-cultural realm, which are completely independent from one another. He also criticizes the representational theory of truth from the perspective of existential phenomenology. As will be reviewed in "Anti-technology" part below, he talks within the phenomenological whole. This phenomenological whole consists of not only artifacts, but also things, equipment, earth, the world, divinities and mortals. Hence, all of them exist in this multi-relational whole. This reminds us of system definition of technology, according to which, to be part of technology, an artifact, and hardware should be a component of the context including skilled human beings and organization (Val Dusek, 2006, p.33). Hence, because Heidegger sees equipment and hardware as part of a technological system, which can be evaluated within socio-cultural life, it is not possible for him to imply that technology determines superstructure namely socio-political life. This is because; any small change within the system affects all, namely, there is not a foundation, on which a framework is built.

Heidegger's view of technology does not fit into the second point, which is related to truth and essentialist view of technology. "Unilinear direction" presupposes an essentialist analysis of hardware and equipment,

which implies that intrinsic quality of things, paves the way for a certain design. Here, efficiency of material is the only factor determining the quality of design. Besides, because of the intrinsic quality of materials, there is one efficient way of designing them. In addition to this, the track of technical progress is from “less to more advanced configurations” and it follows a single sequence of necessary stages (Feenberg, 1999, p.77). This is related to truth in science, which has correspondence as appropriate and efficient technological configurations, in technology. However, it is not possible for us to talk about one efficient and appropriate technological configuration in Heidegger. As will become clear in the anti-technology section below, Heidegger correlates art and *techné*. Both of them are related to “bringing-forth,” which is constituted with beauty and truth, and truth is to let the things appear in an attuned whole. Clearly, there is no one way of making a thing and equipment visible in the whole, therefore, there is not one truth only. Additionally, in Heidegger in a dialectical manner, truth is never complete because it always carries with it untruth. It is subject to the rift between concealing and clearing. This incompleteness comes from the conflict between earth and the world.

Because of this, although we can talk about a crystallized beauty showing truth in a complete whole, we can never say that it is the only, and one appropriate model showing beauty and truth (Heidegger, 1971, pp.59-62). In this sense, there are multiple and many ways of constructing and making artifacts and designs in technology. There cannot be just one paradigmatic model.

David Edward Tabachnick criticizes Feenberg’s evaluation of Heidegger by showing that essentialism does not necessarily imply determinism in Heidegger’s account.

Tabachnick classifies three different essentialist attitudes: 1. an aggressive essentialism implies the total rejection of technology; 2. a moderate essentialism requires alteration in our relation to technology by the improvement of political, social and cultural institutions; 3. a passive essentialism, on the other hand, acknowledges that we cannot regulate or act against technology (Tabachnick, 2007, p.488).

Under the category of aggressive essentialism, Tabachnick classifies thinkers and activists rejecting technology completely such as Neo-Luddites. He thinks that Heidegger’s view of technology cannot be

considered within an anti-technology inclination. Heidegger's main worry regarding modern technology is the elimination of values constituting our traditions, culture, and long-term horizons in favor of material needs. In this sense, although he is a kind of romantic, he is not passive, as asserted by Feenberg, but urging people to take resolute action to return to an authentic existence through environment-friendly technology (Tabachnick, 2007, pp.492-493).

Tabachnick states that Heidegger's position complies with what he calls moderate essentialism because of several reasons. First, Heidegger is not anti-technologist, he does not in any way suggest the demolishing of technology, but rather he wants the production of genuine artifacts to be revived through artistic bringing forth. Secondly, Heidegger gives some examples of contemporary technology such as; a highway bridge as implementing an authentic artifact. Thirdly, even acceptance of one instance of modern technology, which is a highway bridge on Heidegger's side, is adequate to show that we can affirm some contemporary devices, while getting away with Enframing or dehumanization. Since, this suggests that it is possible for us to transform our relationship to technology; Heidegger's essentialism does not imply determinism (Tabachnick, 2007, pp.496-497).

As for passive essentialism, Tabachnick says that Heidegger prefers passivity maybe intentionally, because any involvement in a system results in being absorbed by it. He says, "according to the passive essentialists, in order to escape encompassing technology, we must do nothing. Otherwise, their actions will be sucked into the dynamo once more and turned out anew on the other side" (Tabachnick, 2007, p.500).

Hence, Tabachnick states that these entire essentialist types including aggressive, moderate and passive essentialism reject deterministic attitude toward technology. Because Heidegger's approach is closer to the moderate approach, we cannot say that his view implies determinism.

Feenberg also implies that Heidegger is a kind of anti-technologist philosopher. In the next section, I discuss whether Heidegger exhibits an anti-technologist attitude.

Anti-Technology:

Can we say that Heidegger is a kind of Neo-Luddite, who challenges

technology? This is hard to say, because in the article "Building Dwelling Thinking," with detailed analysis, he shows us that "building" (*bauen*) is related to family of concepts such as "cherish" and "protect" as well as "preserve" and "care for." It also has the meaning of constructing in the case of shipbuilding or temple building. In all cases, the concept of "building" has something to do with cultivating and culture, which has connection with dwelling. In this sense, dwelling means to encourage the things to grow as well as constructing buildings (Heidegger, 1971, pp.147-148). As a concept, "dwelling" is also related to remaining at peace within the free sphere that preserves each thing in its nature (Heidegger, 1971, p.149). Dwelling also means humans' being on the earth. According to Heidegger, "on the earth" here means a primal oneness of the four namely, earth and sky, divinities and mortals (Heidegger, 1971, p.149). This fourfold constitutes a simple unity. "It is not that there are men, and over and above them *space*; for when I say 'a man,' ...I already name the stay within the fourfold among things" (Heidegger, 1971, p.156). In Heidegger these fourfold including earth, sky, divinities and mortals constitute a phenomenological whole. *Techné*, which is correlated with building as constructing, is to let things appear within this attuned whole. To let things appear within this attuned whole reveals truth. Heidegger's detailed description of a farmhouse in the Black Forest and Van Gogh's "A Pair of Shoes" are an exemplary way of thought paving the way for truth to appear within the whole producing a total beauty. Heidegger shows how gathering appears and clearing or truth manifests itself in these descriptions. However, because there are many ways of describing these gatherings and there is no one way of describing it, truth cannot be defined with one way only. In a sort of phenomenological analysis, Heidegger articulates in a poetical way that a pair of peasant shoes discloses truth in the painting. Disclosing cannot be explained by evaluating an equipment in the painting with its corresponding object. This is because "The equipmental quality of equipment consists in its usefulness" (Heidegger, 1971, p.33). In this sense, a pair of shoes can be explained in the worldly horizon, in which it is used. The worldly horizon does not only consist of the fact that this pair of shoes is worn in the field by the peasant woman, but also the fact that she stands and walks in them, takes them off late in the evening and reaches out for them in dawn (Heidegger, 1971, pp.33-34). The equipment, in this case a pair of shoes, discloses us truth in the art work by revealing its multi-relational existence with earth and the world as well as with human beings and other equipment.

In the same manner, he describes a farm house in the Black Forest to show how it enables gathering. Does this mean that Heidegger with a nostalgic description of a farm house is in a romantic mood and wants us to return to past? This is not so. Actually, he stresses that the reference to the farm house does not mean that we should go back and build such houses, it is a way in which to show that “Enough will have been gained if dwelling and building have become *worthy of questioning* and thus have remained *worthy of thought*” (Heidegger, 1971, pp.160-161). This also implies that he does not have an anti-technologist attitude, but thinks that any technology adopted should take place within the whole of fourfold that is earth, sky, divinities and mortals to be as part of this attuned whole, without destroying its total beauty. He says, “For all of us, the arrangements, devices, and machinery of technology are to a greater and lesser extent indispensable. It would be foolish to attack technology blindly. It would be shortsighted to condemn it as the work of the devil. We depend on technical devices; they even challenge us to ever greater advances” (Heidegger, 1966, p.53). For example, he has positive opinions about technological artifacts; he thinks that not only a city bridge, and old stone bridge, but also a highway bridge creates a unity in the whole of network. He says, “The highway bridge is tied into the network of long-distance traffic, paced as calculated for maximum yield. Always and ever differently the bridge escorts the lingering and hastening ways of men to and fro, so that they may get to other banks and in the end, as mortals, to the other side” (Heidegger, 1971, pp.152-153).

Hubert Dreyfus thinks that Heidegger underlines that “Even a technological object like a highway bridge, when experienced as a gathering and focusing of our practices, can help us resist the very technological ordering it furthers. Heidegger describes the bridge so as to bring out both its technological ordering function and its continuity with pre-technological things” (Dreyfus, 1995, p.102).

Despite this affirmative attitude, Heidegger has worries about the future of technology. What must be done to get rid of the danger we are confronted in modern technological societies? This topic is discussed under the title of autonomy of technology.

Autonomy of Technology:

As stated earlier, autonomy of technology presumes that technology has

its own logic and therefore, it is free of human interference. This also implies the elimination of agency. Apparently, autonomy of technology is also related to technological determinism and essentialism. Can we say that Heidegger defend autonomy of technology?

In some of his writings, Heidegger seems to be supporting autonomy of technology. For example, when he says, "Modern technology as an ordering revealing is, then, no merely human doing" (Heidegger, 1977, p.19); he seems to be eliminating human interference in modern technological occurrence. However, he also shows us the way out of the Enframing by expressing the reasons why we come to this point in technological societies.

Heidegger makes a distinction between calculative and meditative thinking. According to Heidegger, technical reason is constituted with calculative thinking and it computes more promising and economical possibilities. He says, "The world now appears as an object open to the attacks of calculative thought, attacks that nothing is believed able any longer to resist. Nature becomes a gigantic gasoline station, an energy source for modern technology and industry. This relation of man to the world as such, in principle a technical one..." (Heidegger, 1966, p.50). Calculative thinking plans, calculates, automates and organizes, which results in the loss of originality and autochthony (Heidegger, 1966, p.49). How does this happen? Technological devices such as radio and television full of movies create, on the one hand uncommon, but on the other hand common "realms of the imagination, and give the illusion of a world that is no world" (Heidegger, 1966, p.48). In this sense, because the autochthony of humans is under threat in these conditions, technological world creates a kind of homelessness and rootlessness (Heidegger, 1966, p.49). What is the solution? Heidegger offers meditative thinking instead of calculative thinking. He states that a contemporary man is "in-flight-from-thinking" in the sense of meditative thinking. Meditative thinking, which finds its expression in his detailed analyses of a Farmhouse in the Black Forest and Van Gogh's "A Pair of Shoes," is above ordinary understanding and requires a greater effort and delicate care (Heidegger, 1966, pp.46-47). Meditative thinking is possible if one does not take an idea one-sidedly and does not proceed with one way of evaluating ideas (Heidegger, 1966, p.53). Perils of one-sided thinking are also emphasized in Heidegger's student Herbert Marcuse's writings, especially in *One-Dimensional Man*.

The solution does not only come from meditative thinking, but also comes from our attitude toward technical devices. That is to say we can let these unavoidable devices get into our lives, as well as leave them outside not to ruin our lives. Heidegger calls this ambivalent attitude “releasement toward things” (Heidegger, 1966, p.54). To be open to the concealed meaning of technology, which is identified as “openness to the mystery,” is also the complementary attitude. This releasement toward things and openness to the mystery flourish in courageous thinking (Heidegger, 1966, p.56) and this ground produces creativity.

Hence, we cannot say that Heidegger’s view implies autonomy of technology, because he does not think that technology has its own course and free from human interference. He tries to draw attention to the perils implied in technological way of life. He also has worries about one way of thinking, namely calculative thinking to the extent that it becomes entrenched, prevents all other forms of thought, and dominates them. Only in that case, can we say that Enframing becomes a permanent form of life and it creates an indifference toward meditative thinking and results in total thoughtlessness (Heidegger, 1966, p.56).

Heidegger’s view does not imply autonomy of technology in another sense too. This is because the saving power is implied in technology.

Saving Power:

As truth and untruth are combined with one another, danger and the saving power of technology have a joint existence. Heidegger underlines that the essence of technology preserves in itself the growth of saving power. The saving power belongs to the very origin of technology. *Techné* in the ancient Greece has something to do with bringing forth; Enframing, which characterizes modern technical reason, on the other hand, blocks *poiêsis*. Heidegger says, “Once there was a time when the bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful was called *techné*. And the *poiêsis* of the fine arts also was called *techné*” (Heidegger, 1977, p.34).

Danger comes from Enframing; but where danger is, there is also the saving power. This finds its expression in Hölderlin’s poem:

“But where danger is, grows The saving power also.” (Heidegger, 1977, p.34)

Hence, the path of history may change in case the saving power implied in “*techné*” is activated. How does this happen? “Here and now and in little things, that we may foster the saving power in its increase. This includes holding always before our eyes the extreme danger” (Heidegger, 1977, p.33). The closer we come to the danger, the more brightly the saving power shines and the more interrogative we become. Free relation to technology is possible through a new kind of thinking, which implies questioning; as he states, “questioning is the piety of thought” (Heidegger, 1977, p.35). What can be these little things nurturing the saving power? Hubert Dreyfus offers a solution by interpreting Heidegger. He says that in Heidegger the distinction between technology and technological understanding of being should be taken into consideration. For example, mixed ways of understanding of being coexist in Japanese form of life. On the one hand, they have fine porcelain cups, on the other plastic cups. Their television sets take their place with traditional house hold gods (Dreyfus, 1995, p.101). This means that it is possible to adopt technology without adopting technological perception of being. It is achieved, for example, in a celebratory meal, where we find ourselves gathered by things, rather than controlling them (Dreyfus, 1995, p.102).

Dreyfus also underlines that in Heidegger the saving power of insignificant things is also important in our way of living; practices such as friendship, backpacking into the wilderness, trekking with friends are important. In case, these saving practices become a new cultural paradigm for us, efficiency becomes marginal (Dreyfus, 1995, p.105). Hence, a new cultural paradigm is created by preserving “the endangered species of pre-technological practices that remain in our culture, in the hope that one day they will be pulled together into a new paradigm, rich enough and resistant enough to give a new meaningful directions to our lives” (Dreyfus, 1995, p.106).

According to Heidegger, questioning helps us transform a path of thinking by experiencing and testing “itself as a transformation of its relatedness to Being” (Heidegger, 2006, p.154). Transformation, on the other hand, helps us become free individuals by being in the world as a part of an attuned whole.

“In *The Turning*,” Heidegger points to the turning point by saying “in-turning [*Einkehr*] ...the lighting-flash of the truth of Being” is entering (Heidegger, 1977, p.45). He implies that only by a transformation of our

daily activities, which helps us understand our genuine needs, can we achieve truth and freedom. In this sense, he is not a strong pessimist with regard to the future of technology as stated by Feenberg. On the contrary, Heidegger states that truth and untruth co-exist; while truth is related to freedom and unconcealed, untruth is related to concealment: truth reveals itself as correctness and concealing shows itself as untruth. Human beings' transformation of its relatedness to the existence is possible by questioning the Enframing. In this sense, truth is not defined by representations and concepts furnishing our minds, rather it is questioning the existence in modern social world to transform our historical position. This attempt also overlaps with Heidegger's effort to overcome metaphysics. In this sense, Heidegger rejects autonomous technology, because he thinks that our free relation to technology starts with questioning and continues with actualizing our genuine existence. Enframing, which characterizes modern technology is not a transcendental process defined by necessary stages repeating itself continually, but it is a historical period, which can be transformed through our deep ontic understanding of existence in practices. Hence, our creating a genuine existence in transforming practices is prior to essences. In this sense, Heidegger is far from defending autonomy of technology, which implies a-historicity.

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