Essay1

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What is the thing that comes into your mind when you think of technology? People mostly come up with robots that can behave and even talk on their own like a human. Then, what people will think of in the future when they hear the word, technology? What is the origin of the technology? How many steps were there in the past until the technology was developed so far? In my opinion, these are the two essential questions to handle technology more deeply: what is technology? And how the direction of technology was changing so far. With these questions, we can see the essentials of technology and reach its origin of it by narrowing down this huge concept. Moreover, these two questions must be considered when future technology will be handled.

Firstly, what is the definition of technology? It is hard to define this huge concept easily because we do not know how the technology began, and how it has been improved so far. Technology was the strongest power of humans to enable what human being needed the most regardless of the historical eras. For example, in early civilization, the most important thing to people’s living was food, clothing, and shelter to fulfill the most basic instincts of humans. Therefore, hunting tools were the main inventions to facilitate more efficient hunting. They developed atlatl to throw the spear to the far away games and make stone points by grinding stones as a head of spears. Moreover, they began to cook what they hunted with the appearance of fire. In the Neolithic era, textiles came out for the first time by using fibers from plants or animals. It was the origin of technology(Cahn, Lecture 1, Slide 32). At that time, a human could survive with the development of domestication and cooking.

Then people progressed technologies only for their survival so far? In the Medieval era, energy was one of the fields that were developed greatly in this era. China developed a water wheel that allowed water to flow through the wheel. They used this force to grind grains. However, some places went through a drought which means that they could not the force of flowing water. In this case, they alternatively used the force of streams of wind. In the lecture, “The first horizontal axle windmill was built in 1185 CE in Yorkshire, England(Cahn, Lecture 3, Slide 13). The second field developed in the Medieval era was a way to measure time. According to the lecture, the sundial divided into equal hours was first created in the 13th century by Abu al-Hassan al-Marrakushi, and in the night or cloudy days when they could not use the sundial, people used water clocks or clepsydras. It was a revolutionary advance although all had limits like sun, water access, or temperature. Lastly, the transportation aspect was developed in this era. The carts pulled by horses were generalized as the main transportation because horses could pull the weight three to four times more than their weights(Cahn, Lecture 3, Slide 17). These three categories seem not related to the survival of human beings. People needed the energy to replace their labor from human to energy to make their people’s lives more convenient and richer. With the replaced labor, they could enjoy their own time with higher efficiency. In the community, time is the absolute rule and standard to live and work together efficiently. The time enabled people to live and work with improved solidarity. Moreover, transportation extended the regions where interact with. Each community could trade their products with each other and exchange their knowledge as well.

In this way, technologies always enabled what human being needed the most and improved the efficiency of something to make people’s lives richer in each era. In early civilization, people needed food, clothes, and shelter by default following instinct. With the development in terms of weapons and cooking, they could survive, and the way of hunting of cooking became more effective with technologies. However, in the Medieval Era, they did not need to worry about survival anymore, instead, people needed something to make their lives more efficient. Therefore, people started to use energy, clocks, and transportation to make their lives convenient. Even though the things that each era needed the most were different, technology was always the strongest power of human beings that enabled what they needed.

Then, how the purposes of technology were changing so far, and what will the direction of technology development in the future? The direction of technology follows what human being needed the most as the first question managed above. Knowing the purposes of technology in each era historically is the first step. In Early Civilization, people needed food clothes, and shelter instinctively. That is why the areas developed in this era were hunting, cooking, and storeroom with many kinds of spears and potteries, and granaries through Paleolithic Era and Neolithic Era. However, in the Ancient era, people already started to make communities together with improved agricultural skills and water supply technologies. Water was supplied to the people by canals, dikes were used to prevent their crops from being washed away by flooding waters In Mexico, there was even a new style of agriculture using Chinampas which is a small rectangular island separated by canals(Cahn, Lecture 2, Slide 19). Therefore, their top priority is constructing a kind of infrastructure as a whole society. With the born of iron which is the most relevant metal, the age of construction came. The changed role of water in the roman empire is an example showing the changed purpose of technology. Water had only a single role in society before, only for agriculture. In the Roman Empire, the availability of water supplies was seen as a symbol of wealth and power, and there were several constructions related to water. There was a bath at the center of Roman culture life with sports, music, and arts. Eleven major aqueducts served the water to around one million inhabitants of Rome. Sewers were allowed to filter unhealthy and dirty impurities, and bridges were also constructed in this era(Cahn, Lecture 2, Slide 19). Not only that, the roads to connect each province in Rome were developed simultaneously. Even though all the roads were connected to Rome, there were a whole bunch of roads to Rome as it felt like that(Cahn, Lecture 2, Slide 26). With the many constructions and roads, the solidarity among people living in the same society was improved, and it enabled the establishment of many strong empires in this era.

In the Medieval Era, the technologies were improved sufficiently, but there were not enough materials within their territories. There were two options, trading their products with each other, or conquering other empires and taking them. That was the reason the revolutionary advance in terms of transportation rose. The roads were already well constructed before, but they need ways of traveling long distances at this time. They developed a wagon that was pulled by a horse and carried many people in there(Cahn, Lecture 3, Slide 17). However, there was another use for a horse at that time. People invented stirrup which is a thing to sit on the horse easier and cavalrymen came out for the war to expand their territories. In this era, many kinds of advanced weapons were come out like crossbows, lances, new armor, and trebuchet to defeat other empires(Cahn, Lecture 3, Slide 9-11). With the trends of globalism in this era, the technologies for long-distance trade and wars developed greatly.

History and technology have been interconnective until now. History can explain the direction of technology, and technology can explain the flow of history in other words. In the Prehistory Era, only survival was matters with more advanced skills for hunting and cooking food. Many potteries and stone spear points which were the inventions in this era prove this fact. In the Ancient Era, many infrastructures were constructed as a big community, and many roads were connected to each province compactly. People already overcame survival, and they focused on being united with each other. In the Medieval Era, they decided to trade or fight with closer other communities to the lack of materials itself. Globalism developed a way of transportation for long-distance trips and weapons to defeat other empires more easily. Then, what is the direction of future technology? These days, we are already enjoying enough rich and more convenient lives thanks to technology. We start to make a new type of intelligence and make another virtual world. People start to focus on the ability to construct a new world and play the creator role. On other hand, pollution is also a serious problem these days. To keep our daily routines in the future, people also focus on saving our environment or escaping to another planet.

We should know what technology exactly it is, and what direction that technology has been developed so far. The history explained those two themes with specific examples. Historically, technology was the most powerful strength of human beings to enable what humans needed the most in each era. The direction that technology towards was different depending on what people needed. From the Prehistory Era to the Medieval Era, the purposes of technologies also changed from survival to globalism. Through the several examples managed in this paper and lectures, I thought the two themes I suggested were the essential way to handle history. As time goes on, and the purposes of the technology will be changed depending on the trend of each Era, the role of the technology itself will not change. In the same manner, we could know the direction of future technology by thinking deeply about recent top priorities in society and trends.

Works Cited

Lecture 1 Slides

Lecture 2 Slides

Lecture 3 Slides