

Q2.

What Constitutes the essence of technology for Hiedeggar. Do you think Heidegger's understanding of technology is monolithic and deterministic? Discuss with respect to the post-phenomenological critiques advanced by Verbeeck and others.

Constitution of essence of technology for Hiedeggar :

According to Hiedeggar the essence of modern technology shows itself in Enframing.

There are different point of views to look at technology, such as the instrumental view(technology as means) technology can also be viewed as a bringing-forth (of culture/traditions of society, skill of technicians, etc) called revealing. Technology is a way of revealing. When we look at technology as revealing we find a difference between revealing of older technology and the modern technology. The revealing throughtout modern technology has the character of a setting-upon.

[what is setting-upon;] in the sense of a challenging forth. [Here setting-upon means a setting that challenges ,claim, invitationf for fight sort of a thing ??]

This challenging is that modern technology ,in contrast to older not only utilizes the energy of nature by as it is i.e., as that energy is used in nature like washing in a runnung river or sowing seeds in the ground and letting them grow using the water and nutrients in the soil, but the energy hidden in nature is transformed to other forms, stored for future use, this stored energy is distributed wherein it is again transformed or used or redistributed . This is the challenge. The unlocking ,storing ,distributing and switching are all forms of revealing of modern tech while in older tech it would stop at unlocking. These processes repeat in cycles such that two more features - regulating and securing - go with the revealing. The peculiarity of the unconcealment / unlocking that happens in challenging-revealing is that that which is being unconcealed is ordered(made to) to stand by ,to be immediately available , the unconcealed is made available always ,till further ordering as to what is to be done with it. Hiedeggar calls this which is unconcealed then made to stand by a "standing - reserve". The standing-reserve is more than a mere object. A standing-reserve can be understood as follows - an airliner that is ready to go - sure its screws nuts and bolts are all in place and contribute to its being ready , but its the readiness to take of on command that makes it a standing reserve ,though it is an object.

Explaining the terms - "setting-upon", "ordering", "standing-reserve".

setting-upon - the setting , stage
ordering - commanded sorta
standing-reserve - self explanatory
presencing

Man is ,even before nature ,is challenged to exploit the energy in nature. Thus man is "ordered" before nature by the Enframing (essence of technology) but does not become a standing-reserve, (as nature becomes). This is because the ordering of man is a form of revealing itself. The moment a man is challenged forth revealing of "the real" has started but this is not yet the unconcealment brought about by technology. Man is the one who drives technology ,so after he/she finishes that which is ordered upon him/her , he then proceeds to operate the technology, which orders nature thus leading to revealing. This prevents man from becoming a standing-reserve. Though man does take part in ordering and revealing, the revealing itself is never brought about by man and he has no control on it. The quality of revealing is decided by the technology alone.

The unconcealment begins the moment man is challenged to strive ,to work to "presence" technology ,he approachces nature as the object of his research till nature becomes beyond object ,the standing-reserve. The unconcealment has already come to pass when man is called into modes of revealing allotted to him. Thus there is a hand beyond man's in modern technologies ordering revealing (ordering revealing = the revealing which is brought about by nature being ordered into its modes). This is the challenge that brings man under order and sets man unto ordering nature/real as standing-reserve in accordance with which it does show itself is the Enframing. Enframing means the gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon man i.e., challenges hin forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering ,as standing-reserve .The nuts and bolts of technology which work to make unconcealment happen ,this act is acting upon the challenge of Enframing but it does not comprise Enframing itself.

Hiedeggar's explanation of modern technology and modern physics - modern technology "sets upon" modern physics into the mode of ordering to gather for the revealing which will eventually unconceal modern technology .This has parallels to Hiedeggar's explanation of why man does not become a standing-reserve though man enters mode of ordering earlier than nature in that moder technology does not become the standing-reserve and it stays in the end though

it enters earlier. Chronological does not determine that which orders initially only reveals itself ultimately.

Enframing means the gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon man i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve. Enframing means that way of revealing which holds sway in the essence of modern technology and which is itself nothing technological.

The essence of modern technology starts man upon the way of that revealing through which the real everywhere, becomes standing-reserve. This "sets upon" of "to start upon", that which first starts man on the way of revealing destining. Enframing is an ordaining of destining i.e., enframing is under order of destining, along with all the ways of revealing. This the sending-to-gathering in no way compels man in a certain direction (fate). Thus in the realm of destining man is free. Man experiences Enframing as a destining of revealing. Thus man while is experiencing Enframing is in the realm of destining hence under no compulsion to push on with technology and having the freedom to rebel. This may lead man in the mode of ordering to form impressions of his own. If the man misinterprets the unconcealed, and at the point when man comes close to becoming the standing-reserve, though he does not become, he might interpret him-self one and when this happens, Enframing now instead of unconcealing conceals not only the real but the revealing also hence this destining is grave danger, on the other hand. Thus to overcome this we make destining into granting which grants man the freedom to think and create. But in this case Enframing becomes a danger as now there may not be one real or revealing. Thus Hiedeggar concludes by admitting his theory of essence of technology is ambiguous. This granting however does give a saving power that man may reflect and hence may experience revealing.

Enframing is in no way a common genus to all that is technological. Enframing is not a tool or apparatus. Enframing is not the essence of technology in the sense of a genus.

Thus the essence of technology (or more specifically modern technology) is Enframing. It is the challenge that gathers man. Enframing is the gathering of all unto the setting which challenges (or compels) man to reveal the real. It is not a genus to the technological. Man experiences Enframing as a destining of revealing. Enframing is an ordaining of destining.

monolithic -

formed of a single large block of stone.

(of an organization or system) large, powerful, indivisible, and slow to change.

Deterministic -

relating to the philosophical doctrine that all events, including human action, are ultimately determined by causes regarded as external to the will.

Yes, I think Hiedeggar's philosophy of technology, pivoted by the essence of technology, is deterministic. Hiedeggar's revealing happens not beyond human doing but neither in man or through man. The destining of man blah blah Enframing ordering challenging. Man stands within the essential realm of Enframing and in mode of ordering but the true result of his doings - the real - only come forth lately and he cannot through his doing affect the revealing but rather the revealing orders him what to do posing as a challenge, the quality is only determined by the technology made by man in mode of ordering; he has no understanding of the real when in this mode nor can he influence it in any way.

Hiedeggar in his work Question concerning Tech claims that his Enframing is not a genus for every thing technological but makes no attempt to look at technology in a different light and is seemingly firm in his theory/ideas of technology so Hiedeggar is essentially monolithic.

This (Hiedeggar being monolithis in his idea) forms the basis for the critic of Verbeeck and the post-phenomenologists. Hiedeggar's insistence to look at technology as something beyond 'mere' objects and there is the 'danger' of destining and other ideas that ring similar to the alienation of technology idea of Karl Marx.

Verbeeck and post-phenomenologists main critic of the classical philosophers is as follows :

classical philosophy of technology is merely as illustrations of the origins or presuppositions of the technology and not as points of departure for investigation into how technologies concretely shape human life (hiedeggar technology beyond object).

Verbeeck on Classical philosophers on technology :

Classical philosophers of technology have painted an excessively gloomy picture of the role of technology in contemporary culture, worrying that technology would end up alienating human beings from themselves and reality, human beings

from approaching reality as inherently valuable and would instead encourage them to approach it as raw material. In the technological organization of contemporary social life, human beings no longer appear as unique individuals but only as functional workers needed to keep the highly structured apparatus of mass production working. (Marx)

The phenomenological tradition, or at least the work in the philosophy of technology that takes its cue from Heidegger, conceives of technoscience as a particular kind of interpretation of reality, and fails to see its operativity, Heidegger and Jaspers have drawn attention to an important dimension of technology; namely, the relation between technology and the way in which human beings interpret and engage their world. That perspective, however, can be filled in much better by seeking a closer contact with technology itself, which is precisely what becomes possible via an analysis of technology in terms of its concrete artifacts. —would substitute forward for backward thinking. The work of Jaspers and Heidegger represents the two poles of the phenomenological tradition within the philosophy of technology: existential phenomenology, in which the central question is how human beings realize their existence and thus are present in their world, and hermeneutical phenomenology, which examines the ways in which reality is interpreted and thus is present for human beings.

Accusations regularly made on Heidegger's: such as that it is "monolithic," "abstract," and "nostalgic." Heidegger is often charged with having had too little contact with concrete technological practices and with wrongly opposing himself unilaterally to the changes wrought by technology.

Verbeek, though he largely agrees, still feels the critiques are themselves superficial. They remain too external to Heidegger's analysis and therefore are in their own specific ways too monolithic and abstract as well. Verbeek elaborates and relates to Heidegger's transcendentalism that will make clear that Heidegger can support his nostalgic preference for traditional technology only by selectively drawing from two different—and incompatible—approaches to technology: historic and ahistoric technology.

Feenberg critique of Heidegger: Abstract and monolithic - Heidegger's Transcendentalism\

He observes that Heidegger hopes for "a vaguely evoked spiritual renewal" but finds that his work is "too abstract to inform a new technical practice."⁶ Heidegger's abstract reasoning means that "he literally cannot discriminate between electricity and atom bombs, agricultural techniques and the Holocaust" (Feenberg 1999, 187). This high level of abstraction makes Heidegger's philosophy of technology at the same time too general: by declaring modern technology a stage in the history of being, Heidegger leaves no room for the development of alternative technological practices. Technology simply has the essence of the Gestell. Not technology itself, but our way of thinking and disclosing reality will change in the next epoch of the history of being—one for which we can only wait expectantly.

Feenberg ignores Heidegger's claim that the essence of technology is itself nothing technological. Feenberg is addressing the way in which Heidegger looks at technology—not at the specific technologies of our world, but rather at technology as a form of world-disclosure. And the manner in which technologies disclose reality, according to Heidegger, is not determined by these technologies themselves, but rather by "being." The "revealing" of technology always already receives its form from the ruling way of the "unconcealment" of the Gestell.

Verbeek argues that this Feenberg's drive to to develop a new technological practice would be just another expression of the will to power and would simply reinscribe the Gestell in a more sophisticated way. Heidegger does not want an alternative technological practice, for he does not want to think on the ontic level (that of beings), but rather on the ontological level (that of being). Feenberg's thus would have to claim that only an ontic approach to technology is adequate, or he would have to critique Heidegger's ontological analysis, which was not done. According to Feenberg, that leads Heidegger to lump together agricultural techniques and atomic bombs is that he sees technology "merely as different expressions of the identical enframing". Heidegger does not approach technology (ontically) in terms of concrete technological artifacts, but (ontologically) as a form of world-disclosure. And the manner in which technologies disclose reality, according to Heidegger, is not determined by these technologies themselves, but rather by "being." The "revealing" of technology always already receives its form from the ruling way of the "unconcealment" of the Gestell. Technology thus does not itself create, according to Heidegger, a specific form of world-disclosure, but is instead a manifestation of one.

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is not determined by these technologies themselves, but rather by "being." The "revealing" of technology always already receives its form from the ruling way of the "unconcealment" of the Gestell. For Heidegger, it is not technologies that disclose reality but the ruling way of unconcealment. Technologies are only manifestations or expressions of a form of disclosing reality. Heidegger appears to be proceeding not ontologically but ontically. His words reveal that, for him, what is happening is not that the construction of an electrical generating plant has brought about the transformation of the Rhine into standing-reserve, but rather the other way around—that the unlocking of the Rhine as standing-reserve has brought about the construction of an electrical power plant in it.

Seubold therefore concludes that technological devices "can only be made when the technological way of revealing has already set in" (Seubold 1986, 195). But the connection between "ontic technology" and "ontological technology," according to Seubold, is more than that the latter is the condition of the former.

Feenberg claims that Heidegger's work is too abstract to inspire a new technological practice—but if Heidegger is right in claiming that each technological practice depends on the Gestell as a specific "sending of being," there cannot be an alternative technological practice.

[Verbeeck] Heidegger is thus "abstract" in a quite specific manner: he abstracts from concrete technology by reducing it to its condition of possibility. According to Verbeeck - while Heidegger may be right that a specific, technological way of interpreting reality (on the ontological level) is required for modern technology to come about, we should also conclude that the role of technology (on the ontic level) in our culture cannot be understood in terms of this specific way of interpreting only. When they are used, technologies may make it possible for human beings to have a relation with reality that is much richer than those they have with a manipulable stock of raw materials. We should also analyze in what ways they, in their functioning, create new ways of access to reality for human beings. In Hottois's terms, philosophy of technology needs to try to elucidate its operativity.

A philosophical analysis of the role of technology in the modern world cannot rest with reducing technology to forms of interpretation, but needs to devote its attention as well to the ways in which specific technologies and artifacts help to shape specific forms of praxis and interpretation. It needs to think "forward" rather than "backward" about technology.

Ihde : Heidegger's Nostalgia of traditional/ancient technology -

According to Ihde, Heidegger's descriptions of traditional and modern technologies are colored by the "romantic thesis" that traditional technologies are preferable to modern ones. Heidegger's comparison between the windmill and the hydroelectric plant in "The Question Concerning Technology," "The hydroelectric plant, according to Heidegger, is connected with the disclosure of the Rhine as standing-reserve—the Rhine is "ordered" to supply energy. The windmill, by contrast, does not disclose the wind in the same way: "its sails do indeed turn in the wind; they are left entirely to the wind's blowing. But the windmill does not unlock energy from the air currents in order to store it. For Ihde, there is no difference in kind, only difference in degree, between a hydroelectric plant and a waterwheel; even the waterwheel "sets" a river "to supplying its hydraulic pressure". Heidegger makes plausible neither why traditional technologies could not reveal reality as raw materials nor why modern technologies would not be able to reveal the fourfold. Verbeeck understands because Heidegger reduces technology to the way of disclosing reality that underlies it, he discerns only that specific way of disclosing when he analyzes technology; he finds only what he has already projected.

In earlier sendings, being was not yet concealed, and because of this, Heidegger also lets the specific technologies of these periods help to reveal being. In the contemporary sending of being, however, being hides itself, which Heidegger connects with the way in which modern technologies reveal reality. Heidegger, that is, does not investigate the differences between the ways in which traditional and modern technologies reveal reality, but instead infers the way of revealing from the sending of being that underlies the specific technologies. Only by making use of these two perspectives simultaneously can Heidegger support his nostalgic preference for traditional technology. An ambiguity thus eventually emerges in Heidegger's conception of being. Heidegger's understanding of modern technology in terms of alienation, in which something originary gets lost, would not have been possible without applying a double standard. Heidegger develops his two standards in two different contexts. The historical standard, which forms the background from which he analyzes modern technology in "The Question Concerning Technology," approaches technology as "producing" or "making." The ahistorical standard, from which he analyzes traditional technologies in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" and "The Thing,"

The mill is not a consequence of a historical epoch in the history of being, as is the hydroelectric plant according to Heidegger; rather, it makes visible being itself. Ihde's charge that Heidegger's nostalgic contrast between tradition and modernity is untenable can now be more fundamentally supported. Heidegger measures tradition and modernity with different scales. When he speaks

about traditional technology, he does so in ahistorical terms; when he speaks about modern technologies, he is a historian. Heidegger's "path of thinking," as Pöggeler indicates, i.e., Heidegger's philosophy (Pöggeler 1991), appears to be a two-way street.

Heidegger's hermeneutic philosophy of technology appears to raise two problems. His approach is abstract and monolithic in that he reduces specific technological artifacts to historical products of the history of being, a history that develops itself beyond human control; and he has a nostalgic preference for traditional technology, supported by an ambiguous approach to the relation between technology and being. When he compares specific technologies of past and present with each other, he applies two different standards, reserving a historical perspective for an analysis of modern technologies and an ahistorical perspective for traditional technologies. His early writings especially is a fruitful point of departure for a philosophy of technology that takes artifacts seriously, both as a material culture in which reality acquires new meanings and as objects that provide human beings with new means of actualizing their existence.

From the above discussion we can conclude that Verbeeck and the post-phenomenologists thought Heidegger was monolithic - which is true if you look at one work of Heidegger regarding technology but if one considers his other essays on art and things there is a little akin to artefact approach and other ideas so Heidegger's philosophy while abstract is not altogether monolithic. But if one strictly considers "Question concerning tech" then it is monolithic - as in he searches for essence, the enframing and revealing which have the same framework for all technology.

Verbeeck on Heidegger's Determinism :

In the epoch of modern technology, according to Heidegger, reality is disclosed as a standing-reserve of raw material and energy available for our use—not because we humans will it to be that way, but because this is the way the world manifests itself to us. To retrieve openness to being, according to Heidegger, humans have to await the arrival of a new way of being.

A condition for the emergence of a new way of being is that humans neither hold themselves apart from technology, nor fully give themselves over to it. It requires, rather, an attitude of "releasement" vis-à-vis technological artifacts, in which humans use them without letting them fully determine their relation to the world. Such releasement preserves the space to be open for the coming into being of entities and for the possibility of a new way of being, in which being itself is no longer concealed.

The most important critique to be made of this approach is that Heidegger does not fully succeed in developing an adequate hermeneutical perspective on technology, for he reduces technology to its conditions of possibility and thereby fails to connect with specific technologies. Technology is reduced to its conditions of possibility, such as a technological way of thinking and a functional outfitting of society, that are required to keep our technological culture working. But the conclusions that this way of thinking and this social organization lead to loss of meaning and loss of self is much too premature.

From the above passage and Feenberg's critique above where he claims man keeps waiting for the new revealing to change the course of technology, and in the essay [Question concerning technology] itself Heidegger speaks of man in ordering, man being granted, man set upon the way to reveal the real, man misinterpreting the unconcealed and the danger which can only be overcome through reflecting and nothing active on the man's part, Heidegger is plainly deterministic in his views on essence of technology.

