

better or worse; these are non-competing capabilities that we will retain even as AI advances (Margaret A. Boden 2016).

Our ancestors were confined by the limitations of their physical environment, but we stand on the cusp of transcending such constraints. The shift from physical to intellectual labor, from manual dexterity to cognitive flexibility, marks not an alienation from our abilities but their adaptation and evolution to meet the demands of our time. This metamorphosis signifies not a loss but a gain, a step toward a more liberated, intellectually engaged human existence.

It is important to acknowledge the significant energy demands and potential environmental impact associated with the development and deployment of AI systems. The computing power required to train and run these systems can contribute to the stress on an already heating planet. However, it is also worth noting that AI may have the potential to contribute to energy conservation and the production of cleaner energy. AI-powered systems could help optimize energy usage, improve the efficiency of renewable energy sources, and assist in the development of new, sustainable technologies. While the environmental concerns surrounding AI should not be overlooked, a balanced perspective that considers both the challenges and the potential benefits is necessary.

The dialectical concept of becoming, foundational in various philosophical traditions, asserts that evolution requires shedding one's current self. Nietzsche is "Übermensch" advocates for self-overcoming as a route to a higher existence. Kierkegaard conceptualizes becoming as a ceaseless, self-driven transformation, urging individuals to transcend their current limitations. Sartre's "Existence precedes essence" implies that individuals continually redefine their essence through choices and actions. These diverse philosophies converge on a singular truth: to evolve into the person one aspires to be, one must transcend their current self.

Yet, these and other philosophical frameworks often overlook the liberatory potential of technology and its economic consequences. Technology offers liberation as a process of shedding not just physical labor but also routine cognitive tasks, thanks to increasingly advanced tools. Technology is not just a byproduct of this transformation; it is a critical catalyst. As we develop increasingly advanced tools, we are not just changing the way we interact with the world; we are fundamentally altering what we consider to be our own essence. These shifts are especially impactful because they touch upon productive labor, a concept deeply ingrained in our ontology as a species.

One possible exception is Martin Heidegger. In "The Question Concerning Technology," he argues that technology is not merely a set of tools, but a way of thinking that reveals the world as a "standing reserve" of resources to be exploited. He introduces the concept of "enframing" (*das Gestell*) as the essence of modern technology, which

transforms not only nature but also humans into resources. Heidegger contends that this mode of revealing poses a danger because it limits our understanding of the world and ourselves, but also suggests that a more thoughtful engagement with technology could offer a "saving power" (Heidegger et al. 1977).

The first point of contention with Heidegger's analysis is his assertion that technology serves as a mode of revealing nature. He posits that enframing reduces the natural world to a "standing reserve," a resource for human exploitation. However, this perspective overlooks how technology often reveals more about humanity itself than it does about nature. Wolfram's argument is very compelling; indeed, AI has shown us something about ourselves.

Second, Heidegger's notion of "enframing" places an undue emphasis on the objectification and exploitation of nature, making it seem as if humanity's primary interaction with technology is to manipulate the natural world. This argument lacks a holistic view of the myriad ways in which technology is employed. In areas like healthcare, education, and communication, technology primarily facilitates human interactions and societal functions. Virtual classrooms, telemedicine, and instant messaging are not revealing anything about nature; rather, they are enhancing the scope and quality of human relations. By focusing solely on the natural world, Heidegger fails to address the comprehensive impact of technology on human culture and interpersonal relationships.

Lastly, the assumption that understanding the "essence of technology" will lead us to a more authentic way of revealing can be challenged on the grounds that it presumes a singular essence exists to be discovered. Technology is an ever-evolving construct, shaped by the cultural, ethical, and practical needs of its time. What it "reveals" is not fixed but varies with its application, purpose, and the societal context in which it operates. It is not so much a static entity that enframes nature but a dynamic one that frames, and is framed by, human choices and values. Hence, the true essence of technology might well be its ability to reveal the changing tapestry of human civilization, not the static tableau of nature that Heidegger suggests.

Focusing on our relationship with technology shows that these tools—ranging from simple stone implements to complex artificial intelligence systems—are not passive artifacts but active extensions of our evolving selves. They embody the skills and capacities we have externalized and shed, serving as repositories for our relinquished responsibilities. In doing so, they liberate us from not only the drudgery of manual labor but also from the constraints of routine cognitive tasks. This liberation allows us to focus on what remains at our core after these layers are shed: uniquely human traits like creativity, agency, and the capacity for joy.