

## THE HUMAN PERSON AND IMPLICATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY TECHNOLOGIES

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### Abstract

*The concept of 'dehumanization' experienced through technology has been an age long problem in our society today. Many thinkers have written so much about this cancerous malaise but none has been properly exhausted to meet the desired result. The technological take-over is predominantly prevalent around man, and unfortunately it is gradually leading to its oblivion. This has left diverse thoughts twisting in worry, at the possibility of an era when the human person will go into extinction. In the face of this obvious threats therefore, Heidegger's philosophical analysis and critique of modern technology ought not to be ignored. He opines that the current relationship and view about technology ought to be transcended. To attain a better relation with technology, one must avoid an interpretation that is itself beholden to technology. Hence the onus of this paper is to analyze and critically expose Heideggerian view of a possible and new relation to technology; a new relation which must therefore question the essence of technology. Hence, the work will attempt to answer such questions as; how can man create a better approach to technology? What is actually the essence of technology? Is man still in charge of technology or vice versa? Furthermore, this work written in the spirit of Heidegger who through his philosophical binoculars reflects and projects that the search for better ways of controlling technology is not embedded in the area of philosophy, rather in arts and poetry aims at unravelling how this consciousness can be used as essential tool for lasting solution, with the sole aim at restoring the meaning of life in our meaninglessness situation. In that vein, it recommends certain strategies that ought to be adopted so as to save the situation, thereby returning humanity to its past culture. The method of this paper is essentially analytical, expository and evaluative.*

**Keywords:** Human person, Technology, Dehumanization, Society

### Introduction

This paper is a philosophical inquiry that attempts to examine the connection between the subjectivity of man as a person and the structure of the human community as was developed in the anthropological works of one of the greatest thinkers of our time - Martin Heidegger. The question of the incidence of technology on the human person remains one of the unresolved contemporary problems still yawning for attention. Today, we are living in a crucial period of human history! A glorious age marked by stupendous scientific and technological achievements which has put man in possession of ever-greater power. Unfortunately, man is today threatened by the product of his own ingenuity and the result is what we are seeing today—a strong feeling of futility and anxiety in a world which offers modern-man the means to power and success.

From our own African (Nigerian) world view, the story is not different, it is always the same story of man cruelties against man in terms of communal clashes; break-ups in marriages, armed robbery, kidnapping, money rituals etc and the devastating horrifying on-going terrorist activities from Islamist fundamentalists—*Boko Haram and Fulan Herdsmen* which have claimed thousands of innocent lives are still very fresh in our memories. We live in a world full of paradoxes. On one hand we see great economic strides, comfort and luxury; on the other hand, extreme poverty, hopelessness and misery. In the face of such endless tale of woes and societal threats, our cultural values religion, tradition, family, relationships and morality are all at stake.

In response to the ultimate search for solution to the current global crisis, Martin Heidegger, one of the well-known existentialist philosophers tried to address what might be termed "the spiritual roots" of the present world crisis, the disorientation, misdirection, and deformed human self-understanding which has prevented the human spirit from realizing its potential for a life of caring, sensitivity, openness, and freedom. He acknowledges that the modern era has seriously deformed human self-definition, human relationships and foundational values of our society.

This work, will try to analyse his (Heidegger's) attempt to expose concretely the detrimental effects of technology on the human person, together with the solutions proposed by him concerning the ways in which the society can be mended.

We were challenged by the relevancy of his "concrete thought" to focus on questions about the meaning of life in the challenging situation of ours. This

aptly describes the situation in Nigeria today and indeed in the entire globe, hence, our resolution that this research which is written in the spirit of Heidegger will attempt to elaborate in concrete terms on the essence of despair and relationships in today's world beginning from the writer's immediate world view. Focusing on Heidegger's philosophical works, we are motivated to show that interpersonal relationships have been greatly affected by modern technology. We are challenged to embark on analytical confrontations of present life's experience with Heidegger's anthropological thought, so as to dig out the root of this misery and proffer a guide as to how the human person in our own time can overcome the present challenges so as to attain his own fulfilment.

### **Theoretical Framework**

It was Gabriel Marcel who in giving a detailed and balanced picture of the incidence of technology on the human person, underlines that "technology while facilitating material living conditions, enhancing productions of goods and controlling nature, operates in the abstract, on the level of opinion, and in the supposition of equality leaving out of contradiction, the concrete, the truth, and fraternity. There results a lack of integrity with regard to the whole self of the human person, a lack of authenticity in the revealing of the true self as a person, and a lack of fidelity in participating in a community of persons. The human person is frustrated in its aspiration for an integration of its being with existential transcendence for a revelation of its being in communicating with others, and for a creation of its being in communion with others. Technology leaves the self with a sense of loss of uniqueness, of a solid foundation, and of togetherness."<sup>1</sup>

In a similar line of thought, Neil Postman discussed the development, nature and characteristics of a culture that has been immersed and taken over by technology. For him, technopoly is the deification of technology in the society in that the culture of the society is emancipated in technology. Hence, the authorization, the satisfaction and the ordering of the society is based on technology. Such a society is "characterised by a surplus of information generated by technology, which technological tools are in turn employed to cope with, in order to provide direction and purpose for society and individuals."<sup>2</sup>

Postman postulates that the history of humanity has undergone three cultures which are differentiated only by their different views and altitude towards

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<sup>1</sup> G. MARCEL, *The Existential Background of Human Dignity*, 161-163.

<sup>2</sup> Neil, Postman. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, New York: Vintage Books. 71-72.

technology. These cultures are: tool-using cultures, technocracies, and technopolies. The tool-using culture is a culture based on using technology for the service of man. In this culture, technology is geared towards helping man solve his physical problems and solve his religious, art and political issues. One notable thing is that in this culture, the technics did not subdue them because of the theocratic nature of the culture. "This theocratic nature forces tools to operate within the bounds of a controlling ideology and made it almost impossible for technics to subordinate people to its own needs."<sup>3</sup>

According to Postman, the consequences are, first, a demarcation between those who create technology and use them from those who are outside this elite group. Postman refers to this situation as knowledge monopoly. In such condition those outside of this monopoly are led to believe in the false "wisdom" offered by the new technology, which has little relevance to the average person."<sup>4</sup> Secondly, in the technopoly, "information appears indiscriminately, directed at no one in particular, in enormous volume at high speeds, and disconnected from theory, meaning, or purpose."<sup>5</sup> Hence, Postman concluded that technopoly is a reductionist culture which "trivialises significant cultural and religious symbols through their endless reproduction."<sup>6</sup> "It creates an avenue were people are characterized like information-processing machines. In essence, it reduces the human person to machines that are programmed."<sup>7</sup>

In a well-articulated Lecture at Grifford on technology, Ian Babour discussed the three approaches and views of technology today, namely; technology as a liberator; technology as a threat and finally technology as instrument of power. The conception of technology as a liberator according to him is well evidenced in human history, yet it has not only threatened the environmental aspect of man but human values too. Babour categorized these threats to human values as follow; (i) uniformity in a mass society; (ii) Narrow criteria of efficiency (iii) impersonality and manipulation. (iv) Uncontrollability(v) Alienation of worker.

Technology creates a uniformed society and this character of technology has led to the adverse "loss of individuality, obliteration of local and or regional differences in the homogeneity of industrialization."<sup>8</sup> In such situation,

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<sup>3</sup> Neil, Postman. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, 26.

<sup>4</sup>Neil, Postman. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, 11.

<sup>5</sup> C.f. Neil, Postman. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*,67-70.

<sup>6</sup> Neil, Postman. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, 165.

<sup>7</sup> C.f. Neil, Postman. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, 113.

<sup>8</sup> Ian, Babour. *Ethics in an Age of Technology*, London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993, 10.

technology hinders interaction as it becomes "mechanized and objectified."<sup>9</sup> Secondly, the rational and efficient organization that is characteristic of technology creates fragmentation, specialization, etc. In such situation the side effects are totally ignored. According to Babour the "worker becomes the servant of the machine, adjusting to its schedule and tempo, adapting to its requirements."<sup>10</sup> Thirdly, "relations in a technological society are specialized and functional."<sup>11</sup> There is no genuine community and interpersonal interaction. Furthermore, "in a bureauacracy, the goals of the organization are paramount and responsibility is diffused, so that no one feels personally responsible."<sup>12</sup> Hence, Babour sees the community becoming one in which the human person becomes too concerned with the personal self.

The fourth characteristic of technology is its uncontrollability. On this, Babour writes that "separate forms of technologies form an interlocking system, a total, mutually reinforcing network that seems to lead a life of its own."<sup>13</sup> Humanity has set in motion something that it cannot control. Technology for some "is not just a set of adaptable tools for human use but an all-encompassing form of life, a pervasive structure with its own logic and dynamism."<sup>14</sup> The fifth characteristic of technology is its alienation of work. The human being in its nature is a working being. Babour cites Karl Marx's central theme of the workers' alienation.

In his explanation of modernity, Smith points out that the only thing the "moderns aimed was an explanation of the world based on choice and not the prevalent accidental conception of the world."<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, he states that "the very goal of resilience to the reason has been called into question as a result of the ecological imbalances, noxious industrial residues, decreased privacy, etc, experienced in the world."<sup>16</sup> These are, however, antithetical to the vision of the moderns. Nonetheless, Smith proffers ways by which the situation could be saved. He advocates for the post-modern spirit. He thinks of post-modernity as an opposition to modernity. It brings nothing new but rather brushes up the old ways of nature and humanity. It only brushes up the old traditions without entirely relegating them. This according to, Smith, was the aim of Heidegger.

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<sup>9</sup> Ian, Babour. *Ethics in an Age of Technology*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Ian, Babour. *Ethics in an Age of Technology*, 10.

<sup>11</sup> Ian, Babour. *Ethics in an Age of Technology*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Ian, Babour. *Ethics in an Age of Technology*, 11.

<sup>13</sup> Ian, Babour. *Ethics in an Age of Technology*, 11.

<sup>14</sup> Ian, Babour. *Ethics in an Age of Technology*, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Gregory, Smith. "Heidegger, Technology, and Postmodernity", 369.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Gregory, Smith. "Heidegger, Technology, and Postmodernity", 370.

Describing the telos of post-modernity, Smith affirms that post-modernity in the social sciences deals with post-industrial society. In philosophy it deals with Post-structuralism. The former consists of a decentralized and globalized society. The later, conceives human and non-humans as being malleable. Nevertheless, the complex nature of human beings makes it unable to constitute reality consciously or rationally. Smith states that the "postmodern aimed to re-arrange the past, the postmodernist art and pop-culture."<sup>17</sup> Noting Heidegger's juxtaposition and analysis, Smith comes to the conclusion that Heidegger was an advocate for post-modernity.

Nevertheless, Smith thought that the problem to be encountered in this attempt of transcending the modern spirit is the risk of losing what is valuable in the process. "The danger is that in transcending the features of late modern life that is the ground for significant dissatisfaction, we run the risk of throwing the baby out with the bath water."<sup>18</sup> Hence, Smith just like Babour recognizes the fact that despite the threat technology poses to human values there is nevertheless a liberating aspect of technology, thus he advocates that in order not to lose entirely the valuable things in the modern conception of reality, humanity should accept Heidegger's critique without accepting everything in his teaching.<sup>19</sup> He concludes with the following statement, "modern political life should be re-grounded upon a non-modern notion of reality qua physics, self-presenting etc. That would represent a novel synthesis that was neither modern nor pre-modern."<sup>20</sup>

The scholars reviewed so far in this work seek for a return to the past in order to checkmate the effects of technology. Mumford seeks for a return to the non-instrumental conception technology of the primitive man, while Postman described the technology of the first stage of the three cultures as being checkmated by its theocratic belief. This model of return to arts and poetry-forms the central aim of Heidegger in his postulations of a better relation to technology. Smith asserts that the "actual overcoming cannot in Heidegger's understanding, be accomplished by philosophy; it will be accomplished by poetry and art."<sup>21</sup> However, it is quite impossible to make a return to the ancient times. Therefore, Gregory Bruce Smith using Heidegger as a springboard gives a

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Gregory, Smith. *The Social Science Journal*,372

<sup>18</sup>Cf.Gregory, Smith. *The Social Science Journal*,374

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Gregory, Smith. *The Social Science Journal*,387.

<sup>20</sup> Gregory, Smith. *The Social Science Journal*, 387.

<sup>21</sup>Gregory, Smith. "Heidegger, Technology, and Postmodernity", *The Social Science Journal*, vol. 28, No 3,New York: Jai Press Inc, 1991, 380.

well detailed critique on modernity, technology, and metaphysics and as a solution opts for post-modernity.

## **Implications of Contemporary Technologies**

### **Ethical implication**

While we cannot overlook or deny the tremendous positive contributions of technology which tend to make life more pleasant, more humane and safer today, however, “technology, as a mode of production, as the totality of instruments, devices and contrivances which characterize the machine age is thus at the same time a mode of organizing and perpetuating (or changing) social relationships, a manifestation of prevalent thought and behaviour patterns, an instrument for control and domination”<sup>22</sup>.which have affected the very basis of human praxis, morality, culture and politics—just to mention but a few.

However, this is to say that our negative criticisms are not intended to reject technology or to seek for its destruction, but rather to identify the unintended and unforeseen negative consequences in it. The danger comes from the fallouts connected with technology that places the integrity of the human person at risk, and as such triggered in the threat of *depersonalization* followed by *Estrangement and abstraction* which are inevitable consequences of the reduction of modern man to mere function. The approach is a cautionary one, warning on the imminent dangers involved in allowing technology to take over our cultures, thereby reducing the human person to the status of being a mere technical man<sup>23</sup>. Among the ethical implications of technology are thus:

### **Man as Function**

It was Gabriel Marcel who identifies *misplacement* of the idea of function,<sup>24</sup> as one of the immediate causes of the broken world in which we live today. This he conveyed to us with concrete examples from ordinary life situations using the example of a railway employee to show the example of one hypnotized by his own work thus:

Travelling on the underground, I often wonder with a kind of dread what can be the inward reality of the life of this or that man employed on the

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<sup>22</sup> Herbert Marcuse, “Some social implications of technology”, *Philosophy and Social Sciences Vol. IX (1941)*, 139

<sup>23</sup> Cf. G. MARCEL, *Man against Mass Society*, 88.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. G. MARCEL, *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, 10.

railway-the man who opens the doors, for instance, or the one who punches the ticket. Surely everything both within him and outside him conspire to identify this man with his functions-meaning not only with his functions as worker, as trade union member or as voter, but with his vital functions as well.<sup>25</sup>

Marcel sees in this man, one without any inward reality. This is bad in the sense that ordinary language tells us that the man is reduced to his functions as mere instrument and as such he is nothing but his function. Only function defines the human person. One is defined as a teacher, a farmer or trader<sup>26</sup> etc, hence one exists inasmuch as one functions, otherwise one is dead. Marcel here condemned the present civilization which has succeeded in turning the technical man into mere social functions, thereby necessitating his loss of both the sense of human dignity<sup>27</sup> and that of the ontological mystery<sup>28</sup>.

The effect is then that the dignity and sacredness of the human person has now been replaced by his functional value. No longer is man considered in terms of his humanness; he is considered in terms of the functions he performs. Almost unconsciously, man himself begins to evaluate himself in his every action solely from the point of view of the functions he performs in the society.<sup>29</sup> Logically, from this functional view, those who have no 'functional value' are considered as 'broken machine' without any functional value. Marcel feels that this type of functionalized world becomes a process without a purpose, a utilization of means without any clearly defined end, a journey without a goal; and as such led to the loss of human dignity and purpose of life, which consequently leads man to — death<sup>30</sup>.

Consequently, a major characteristic of the modern man is that it is riddled with problems and is determined to allow no room for mystery and so there is much sadness in this outlook.<sup>31</sup> His inner reality deteriorates and he becomes a man in whom the sense of the ontological is lacking,<sup>32</sup> that is, the functional person loses his sense of ontological exigency.

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, 11-12.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, 10.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. G. Marcel, *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, 10

<sup>28</sup> K. T. GALLAGHER, *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel*, 56.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. M. COZZOLI, *L'Uomo In Cammino Verso...*, 52.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *L'Uomo In Cammino Verso*, 52.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. G. MARCEL, *Man against Mass Society*, 12

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Man against Mass Society*, 9.



## Alienation from Work

This was one of the maladies of technology which was foreseen by Bacon but was brought to limelight in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Karl Marx is Alienation. Alienation according to Marx is the state of being separated from one's true self.<sup>33</sup> This concept was introduced because for Marx, technology which is the conscious work and application of human intelligence has denied him of this interpersonal contact with his fellow human being. And this is well manifested in the way in which persons neglect human interpersonal communication but rather prefer to communicate in the 'world of salience' and this has in turn played out in the number of suicide cases being recounted in the world today. This bears witness to the fact that relationships created in this world of space are nothing but mere infatuation. This is also buttressed by Bolaji Abdullah in his book *Sweet Sixteen* when he quoted Albert Einstein saying that he predicted this day when technology would surpass human interaction and the world would become a generation of idiots.

Artificial intelligence today is far beyond man. The acclaimed scientist of the 21st century, Steven Hawking in an interview warns that "the development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race. It would take off on its own, and re-design itself at an ever-increasing rate. Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete and would be superseded."<sup>34</sup> Precedence has been given to machines than the human being in so many areas of work. And hence, as Mumford writes that "the situation has made man bystanders in what was originally his."<sup>35</sup> It is clear that "with the age of robotics and high-tech gadgets, it is increasingly becoming an undeniable fact that the human being, as *homo faber*, is no longer in direct touch with his work."<sup>36</sup> "Efficiency and productivity are commendable goals, but they tend to crowd out consideration of meaningful work and participation in decisions on the job."<sup>37</sup> Still emphasizing on the dangers in technology towards the aspect of work, Ekwuru laments that "human being needs a technology that exalts his personal energy and imagination, and ennobles his personality. But when it turns to deprive him of his fundamental right to work, and subjugates him as mere

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<sup>33</sup>William lawhead, *voyage of discovery: A historical introduction to philosophy* pg 385

<sup>34</sup><https://www.newsweek.com/stephen-hawking-artificial-intelligence-warning-destroy-civilization-703630> accessed, 9:05:19, 10:30 pm.

<sup>35</sup> Lewis, Mumford. "Technics and Human development," 315.

<sup>36</sup> George, Ekwuru. *Basic Introductory Themes and Issues In Philosophical Anthropology*, 193.

<sup>37</sup> Yuval Noah, Harari. *21 Lessons for the 21th Century*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2018, 22.

instrument of work, it becomes an oppressive tool and a true enemy. The worker should not become a thing, an appendage to the machine. Thus, amidst the technological advancement of our time, the human being must be given his rightful place as a working being, and not to be tooled by his own tools".<sup>38</sup>

### **Mechanization of the Human Person**

The human person in order to cope with the trend of the time is expected to become like these machines. More is expected of man to either prove himself better than the machine or submit to the machine. Thus, the competition becomes one between the machines and the human person. This facet unconsciously forms the attitude characterising human relationships. Some people, possibly those in power treat the weak as if they were machines to be ordered and pushed around. Technology is very much characterized with power and hence, when man's cognitive dimension becomes mechanized, it invariably leads to the loss of compassion, freedom, ingenuity and most especially the existence of being. Blitz writes:

We treat even human capabilities as though they were only means for technological procedures, as when a worker becomes nothing but an instrument for production. Leaders and planners, along with the rest of us, are mere human resources to be arranged, rearranged, and disposed of. Each and everything that presents itself technologically thereby loses its distinctive independence and form. We push aside, obscure, or simply cannot see, other possibilities.<sup>39</sup>

In contrast to the current situation, Mumford writes about the basic characteristics of man, that "the dominant human trait, central to all other traits, is this capacity for conscious, purposeful self-identification, self-transformation, and ultimately for self-understanding."<sup>40</sup> Mondin collaborates this when he points out that "all humanisms which have thrived during the last centuries agree in assigning to man, the human person, an absolute, inviolable, non-instrumental value, worthy of the greatest respect and considerations."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> George, Ekwuru. *Basic Introductory Themes and Issues In Philosophical Anthropology*, 201.

<sup>39</sup> Mark Blitz, <http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/understanding-heidegger-on-technology>, accessed 10:03:19, 11:30 Am.

<sup>40</sup> Mumford, Lewis, *Technics and Human Development: Myth of the Machine, Vol. 1*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1967,6.

<sup>41</sup> Battista Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology*, trans. Myroslaw A. Cizdyn, Bangalore: Theo. Pub India, 1985, 257.

The contemporary scientific evolution dehumanizes man to the point that man today regards and treats others as manufactured objects. Thus, Lygre writes that "our growing control over the mechanics of life brings a more subtle threat: turning people into things."<sup>42</sup>

### **Social Implication**

The human person is more than any other animal an interactive being. Consequently, there is that longing to share one's experiences, emotions, and so on with the other. Hence, this aspect of man to feel loved and live among his kind has been the major driving force of the advances in Info-tech. As such, this aspect of the discussion becomes the most affected area and endangered of all.

### **The Media**

In the past, the ability to communicate was challenging as it took maximum strength and time to get in touch with loved ones or business associates as the case might be. Technology comes in with the high hopes of alleviating such pains and stress from man through the dream and goal of globalization leading to the proliferation of social media. Today, at whatever that maybe involved, an individual can be able to know about another particular individual or a place without ever having any close contact. Space and time are now a thing of the past as people can at whatever place and time come to close contact with whomever they wish.

However, despite this glorious achievement, the question remains at what expense and cost? The continuous call for globalization has led to the manufacturing of different apparatus and gadgets that connect one to a global world and hence, creates a situation where technological relationships remain the only option at humanity's disposal. Despite the fact that people have homes, it is quite unfortunate to find out that they are homeless, lonely, frustrated and friendless. Lindsay William with regard to this laments that "it is quite unfortunate that many have no idea how to be friend, keep a friend or find a friend, , because we are now in a world overloaded with tweets, texts, WhatsApp etc. However, Lindsay writes the obvious failure to experience much life with

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<sup>42</sup> Lygre. *Life Manipulation*. New York, Walker Pub.Co. Inc. m1979. P.36.

friends which invariably leads to the feeling of discouragement, loneliness and frustration."<sup>43</sup>

In recent times, smart-phones and computers have made the scenario even more scary and alarming with no one sounding the alarm bells. Cell-phones, computers, television have divided man's presence in the world - online and offline. Being online becomes the major preoccupation of most persons today. At all levels, people are chained to their smart-phones at the expense of their education, profession, talents, marriage and family etc. As a result, man develops an "attitude of indifference, weariness, and exhaustion is frequently exuded."<sup>44</sup> In the words of Smith "absence takes precedence over presence in our life."<sup>45</sup> "And in a more poetic account of Heidegger's later work, modern man becomes homeless; he loses all rootedness in his native surrounding."<sup>46</sup> Harari further writes that "we are more interested in what is happening in cyberspace than what is happening down the street. It is easier than ever to talk to my cousin in Switzerland, but it is harder to talk to my husband over breakfast, because he constantly looks at his smart-phone instead of at me."<sup>47</sup> This is one of the major reasons of marital and interpersonal breakdowns in our society today and the effect is what we are suffering.

Harari criticizes this situation saying, "humans have bodies. During the last century, technology has been distancing us from our bodies. We have been losing our abilities to pay attention to what we smell and taste. Instead, we are absorbed in our smart-phones and computers."<sup>48</sup> Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, writes, that modern man is "everywhere and nowhere."<sup>49</sup>

The instauration of the youths today with technological devices, reminds one of the question "where have we strayed to?"<sup>50</sup> Poor education and mediocrity become the order of the day as little or no time is given to things that matter. Many youths today find it very hard to articulate themselves properly because they are dependent on the cyber aid as examination mal-practice becomes more

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<sup>43</sup> <https://relevantmagazine.com/culture/6-ways-social-media-ruining-our-friendships/> accessed, 4:03:19, 10:30 Am.

<sup>44</sup> Gregory, Smith. "Heidegger, Technology, and Postmodernity", 371.

<sup>45</sup> Gregory, Smith. "Heidegger, Technology, and Postmodernity", 376.

<sup>46</sup> Gregory, Smith. "Heidegger, Technology, and Postmodernity", 376.

<sup>47</sup> Yuval Noah, Harari. *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, 12.

<sup>48</sup> Yuval Noah, Harari. *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*. 88.

<sup>49</sup> Martin, Heidegger. *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper and row, 1962, 222.

<sup>50</sup> Martin, Heidegger. *Question Concerning Technology*, 12.

professionalized and technologized. If these devices have proven to be a better source of compassion, love, sympathy, recreational activities and so on than the human person, then does the human person really need the other person to live in this world?

### **Possible Remedy**

We cannot deny the benefit of technological innovations in our modern life. However, we cannot also deny the negative impact it has on our personal, professional and emotional lives. It is up to each and every one of us to control the use of technology. We must realize that technology should be used to help improve our lives instead of us becoming slaves to technological advances. Some of the things to put into consideration include:

1. The government through its crime fighting agencies should see to the enforcement of laws which restrict the abuse of the use of technology.
2. In the same vein, various religious and social groups should collaborate with government by way of admonition to their adherents against the wrong use of technology.
3. There is the need for sensitization of the masses on the side effect of technological abuse on children and humanity as a whole.
4. There should be a strict limitation to the use of technological devices(gadgets)
5. Cultivation of a good planning habit should be encouraged
6. Again, outdoor activities must be promoted so as to re-socialize the alternate human race.
7. Enthronement of family values that will enhance interpersonal relationships should be the preoccupation of the various governmental and non-governmental agencies.
8. Very importantly, the need for creation and actualization of substantial socioeconomic projects to cushion the effects of poverty in the society.

### **Evaluation and Conclusion**

The official slogan of the century of progress exposition in Chicago in 1933 was: "science finds-industry Applies- Man conforms".<sup>51</sup> The slogan properly captures entirely the so many existential realities recorded and unrecorded relating to the

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<sup>51</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Century\\_of\\_Progress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Century_of_Progress), accessed, 8:05:19, 10:08.

nihilistic imposition of technology on the essence of man. Through the exposition of Heidegger's notion of technology and the very danger the future might experience through technology, what does Heidegger contribute to this discussion? A lot! Writing in a time when contemporary technology could be said to be in its teenage years, Heidegger's analysis is of great importance to this era. Smith writes that

Every civilization has its own distinctive view of man, reality and the relation between the two. Our civilization is technological. That technological understanding threatens to become global, making any alternatives impossible. Heidegger offers an alternative. A civilization grounded in the way Heidegger proposes will understand how human existence stretches into the mysterious.<sup>52</sup>

The world is going through profound changes that are being driven by rapid advances in technology, globalization and changing social attitudes and demographics. The conversion of the human body into a standing reserve forms one of the challenges of the contemporary era especially in terms of the reductionist attitude imposed by scientific break-through on the human body and yet many remain ignorant. It is quite true that in a "world deluged by irrelevant information, clarity is power."<sup>53</sup> The question concerning technology and the question about the human person's relationship with it is one that must be brought to consciousness in this era.

Hence, it is quite necessary to espouse the danger that is often time bereft of the consciousness. The progress in technology and its impending danger to the future of man is existentially present in the fact that throughout the last century the "mass of new mechanical inventions had suddenly proliferated, sweeping away many ancient processes and institution, and altering our very concept of human limitations and technical possibilities."<sup>54</sup> These dangers have been both on a larger scale and individual scale. On the larger scale, the Hiroshima devastation and so many others come to mind. Individually, humanity has been regimented, mechanized, programmed, ordered, and controlled even in their daily interaction.

The enthronement of man and the de-enthronement of God has been the bane of humanity. The genesis of this super-technology had a promising face that assured humanity of a blissful time on earth. In contrast to this Promised Land

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<sup>52</sup> Gregory, Smith. "Heidegger, Technology, and Postmodernity", 379.

<sup>53</sup> Yuval Noah, Harari. *21 Lessons for the 21th Century*. xx.

<sup>54</sup> Lewis, Mumford. *Technics and Human Development: Myth of the Machine*, 304.

prophesied by scientists and philosophers, humanity is at all sides currently besieged by an impending doom on its essence. These scholars promised a future where the "past was merely the necessary means by which we arrived at our truly human present; but as our past traditions faded we came to feel anomie and longed to reinvigorate our fading customs."<sup>55</sup> In the words of Heidegger, everything has been converted into a reserve stand including human beings, which are always ready to be called into action and when used is done without passion.

The questioning of technology is something that relates to the human person since the creation, use and misuse of technology is solely about the human person. Thus, as earlier stated in this work, at the "centre of our discussion is man."<sup>56</sup> Heidegger recognizes this fact when he writes that the "...actual threat has already affected man in his essence. The rule of Enframing threatens man with the possibility that it could deny him from entering into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth."<sup>57</sup> It is very unfortunate that humanity today is being forced to live an inauthentic life through the controlling hands of technology. When humanity seeks to overcome aging, mortality, and so on, then humanity becomes inauthentic. In line with this Russell quoting John Macquarie writes "whatever kind of relation to the other that depersonalizes and dehumanizes is an inauthentic existence."<sup>58</sup>

In this era, which is the major concern of this work, man loses his place also to his creation just as God has lost His to man in the order of controlling nature. Technology is the new god and unfortunately it has taken place at the apex of creation consciously and unconsciously. In this epoch, the world experiences at every aspect, the mechanization of the human person and the humanization of the machine. This mishap and change of authority affects basically every aspect of nature. From the insatiable desire to control and manipulate nature to that of controlling and manipulating and predicting the emotions, desires, human biological processes and so on. Hence, Heidegger raises the question "Where have we strayed to?"<sup>59</sup>

In this very sense, what Heidegger is trying to point out is that "it is both arrogant and destructive to assume that humans are the masters of nature, or to follow Protagoras dictum that man is the measure of all things and it is this that

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<sup>55</sup> Gregory, Smith. "Heidegger, Technology, and Postmodernity,"

<sup>56</sup> Jerry, Obi-Okogbuo. *Modern Science: Threshold and philosophical Problems*, 340.

<sup>57</sup> Martin, Heidegger. *The Question Concerning Technology and other Essays*, 28.

<sup>58</sup> Bertrand, Russell. *The Impact of Science and Society*, London: Dover Publication, 1976, 87.

has invariably formed the problem of the destitution of culture and social dissolution."<sup>60</sup> Failure to return to the wisdom inherent in Being itself then it is quite not out of place that the prediction of the end of the world as found in the scriptures especially in the book of Revelation will be actualized through technological mishaps. This is because it is not far-fetched that a syndicate of these technologies will surely propound the end of humanity. Hawkings warns that "if people design computer viruses, someone will design AI that replicates itself. This will be a new form of life that will outperform humans."<sup>61</sup>

Scientists often in the infatuation of their inventions, produce destructive technologies instead of life technologies. Heidegger quotes the American chemist, Stanley, who says: "the hour is near when life will be placed in the hands of the chemist who will be able to synthesize, split and change living substance at will..."<sup>62</sup> Hence, Heidegger warns "yet it is not that the world is becoming entirely technical which is really uncanny. Far from being so is our being unprepared for this transformation, our inability to confront meditatively what is really dawning in this age."<sup>63</sup> Hence, the world of technology should be checkmated through governmental policies. Restriction and control should be the watchword over certain inventions undertaken by scientists and physicists in their laboratories. Scientific and technological break-through should not be for personal gratification only but rather should be a life-centred one.

However, it is pertinent to know that there exist challenges in taking into account Heidegger's propositions. First, it is totally impossible to go back to the ancient method of technology. If today's civilization is one that is technological, then, opining for a return to the revealing in ancient technology, humanity must then be at risk of losing that which is valuable in contemporary technology. Secondly, Heidegger seems to give a broad and theoretical analysis of technology and hence may not be able to address the situation at hand.

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<sup>60</sup> Brooke Moore and Kenneth Bruder. *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas*. California: Mayfield Pub.Com. 521.

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2018/10/16/17978596/stephen-hawking-ai-climate-change-robots-future-universe-earth>. accessed, 9:05:19, 10:30 pm

<sup>62</sup> Martin, Heidegger. *Discourse On Thinking*, 52.

<sup>63</sup> Martin, Heidegger. *Discourse On Thinking*, 52.