

The question concerning technology, martin heidegger essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Martin Heidegger tackles in his essay “ The question concerning technology” some of the most controversial ideas about technology and its relation with humanity. The German philosopher lived in the late 19th century and developed his works during the 20th which made him become one of the most influential philosophers of his century. In his essay he explains the differences between modern and traditional technology and the true meaning of the term.

All his ideas end up driving the reader to a conclusion in which he explains the danger that technology is driving humanity to and the only possible solution to overcome it. Following the order in which he explained his ideas this essay will go over them and briefly discuss them in a more concise way. One of the points Heidegger spends more time going over is the meaning of modern technology as “ Enframing” and its difference with the traditional technology (techne). Technology is most of the times described as an instrument to achieve an end by humans.

Although Heidegger is not completely against the instrumental definition of modern technology he stated that is an incomplete definition, which does not describe the essence of technology. To explain the original meaning of technology Heidegger explains the word it comes from “ Techne”. Techne does not refer to an instrument but rather to the way things are done. In a sense Techne is the knowing of how to do things which does not only refer to mechanical crafts but also to arts and everything in general. In Heidegger’s definition Techne can be also understood as expertise.

Heidegger then goes on to explaining modern technology as a way to “revealing” to comply with the human necessity of understanding everything in a scientific way. The philosopher also notes a difference between older and modern technology. For older technology he finds that in order to produce energy it used sources as the wind without exhausting it, opposite to modern technology which uses scarce resources like fossil fuels in order to function thus harming and transforming the environment. “Enframing” is a concept he uses to describe the relation of technology with humanity.

In a way he sees the use of technology as a way for humans to put everything into order and not let anything free, limiting human freedom as a consequence. We have the need to understand the world in a concise way in order to assess control over it. Heidegger reasons behind the statement that “modern science was technological, before it even became applied science” is simple. He explains it by arguing that all sciences have been so tied to technological advances that it’s impossible to understand science as “origin” of technology but rather as mutually related phenomena.

In the final part of his essay Heidegger criticized the actual relation of humanity with technology which leads him to the explanation of the biggest danger humanity will be facing if it continues in this kind of interaction. He explains the concept “Standing Reserve” which is closely tied with instrumentality. Heidegger explains the world in the eyes of humanity as a huge instrument in which nothing is good or seen as it is anymore or in essence but rather as an instrument to build something. The danger that

such a view carries is that even humans can lose their essence and become instruments.

Human activities are the force that start the whole technological process and in a way they can be seen as the original instrument to reach a mean. If technology keeps exhausting nature and only going after self interest humans can lead themselves to their own destruction. Heidegger sees two possible outcomes derived of the actions that humanity can take regarding it's relation with technology. Either it continues interacting in the same way which will lead to a final destruction or it changes the actual interaction.

Only by stopping the instrumental view of the world and seeing it as it is humanity and technology can interact in a healthy way. To do so he points out arts, which not only respect nature but try to find it's essence. In a sense I very much agree with Heidegger. His point about the possibility of technology destroying the whole nature and humanity is today more true than ever with the existence of atomic bombs and new advances in military. However if under control technology can become the solution to the world's biggest problems like hunger, sickness and inequality.