the critique of technology

heidegger and foucault

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Abstract

A critical confrontation between the later Heidegger's critique of technology and that of Foucault's genealogy of technologies of power yields an assessment of the dangers which technology—and in the case of Heidegger, its essence—poses. Specifically, Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of technology as a mode of world-disclosure in which things—even man—are revealed as objects-turned-resource; finds resonance in Foucault's own genealogical analysis of "technologies of power" in which the anatomo-politics of the body and the biopolitics of population lead towards the production of identities which are more efficiently managed towards economic and political ends. Such a confrontation, hence, can provide a keener understanding of and critical orientation towards the technological.

Keywords

Heidegger, Foucault, critique of technology, enframing, anatomo-politics

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Introduction

There is an obvious paucity in the scholarship surrounding the relation between Martin Heidegger's and Michel Foucault's thoughts. For while there are uncanny similarities between them, serious differences—if not contradictions—in their trajectories, aims, and methodologies hamper studies which trace Heidegger's possible influence on Foucault.

Very often, aside from the said similarities in their critiques, the impetus for undertaking the study of Heideggerian influence in Foucault is from the latter's claim which was made during his final interview in May 1984. In that interview by Gilles Barbadette and André Scala, Foucault disclosed how

> Heidegger has always been the essential philosopher. I began by reading Hegel, then Marx, and I set out to read Heidegger in 1951 or 1952; then in 1952 or 1953 – I don't remember any more – I read Nietzsche. I still have here the notes that I took when I was reading Heidegger. I've got tons of them! And they are much more important than the ones I took on Hegel or Marx. My entire philosophical development was determined by my reading of Heidegger. I nevertheless recognize that Nietzsche outweighed him. I do not know Heidegger well enough: I hardly know *Being and Time* nor what has been published recently. My knowledge of Nietzsche certainly is better than my knowledge of Heidegger. Nevertheless, these are the two fundamental experiences I have had. It is possible that if I had not read Heidegger, I would not have read Nietzsche. I had tried to read Nietzsche in the fifties but Nietzsche alone did not appeal to me – whereas Nietzsche and Heidegger: that was a philosophical shock! But I have never written anything on Heidegger, and I wrote only a very small article on Nietzsche; these are nevertheless the two authors I have read the most.[1]

Foucault's attribution to Heidegger as having been "the essential philosopher" for him has fuelled inquiries which initially sought to establish the relation between these two important figures in Western contemporary philosophy based on intellectual provenance. Such undertakings, however, have not prospered (in contrast, for instance, to those showing the relation between Nietzsche's and Foucault's works) owing to these two thinkers' differences which outweigh the links they may have shared. Hence, the obvious lacuna in this area of Heideggerian and Foucaultian scholarship often appears to be a philosophical cul-de-sac, hereby limiting studies with such aims.[2]

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[1] Michel Foucault, "The Return of Morality" in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 1988), 250.

[2] Currently, there are only two published books in English which dealt on the relationship between Heidegger's and Foucault's thought; one is written by Hubert Dreyfus

In his essay "Foucault's Encounter with Heidegger and Nietzsche," Hans Sluga has even expressed skepticism over studies that are directed towards ascertaining the influence of Heidegger on Foucault, cautioning against forcing Heidegger's and Foucault's writings to bear any marks of progeny. For Sluga, researches which purportedly "attempt at a deep reading of Foucault's texts and wish to discover behind their discursive forms the face of one German philosopher or another" must be foregone since Foucault himself cast suspicions—justifiably enough—on such "deep hermeneutics" as the means through which an originary meaning can be obtained.[3] Instead, Sluga favors other strategies in exploring the relation between Heidegger's and Foucault's thoughts. One such strategy, Sluga suggests, is "to determine at the level of positivities where [Foucault's] object of discussion and the strategies of his thought are those we find also in Heidegger…"[4]

Sluga was in fact commenting on one of only a handful of volumes dedicated to the task of "unearth[ing] the supposedly Heideggerian elements in Foucault's work," namely Alan Milchman's and Alan Rosenberg's anthology *Foucault and Heidegger: Critical Encounters*. While he does take issue with the different authors of the said anthology for their repeated appeals to reading and careful reading of Foucault; or to identifying the structure of Foucault's thought and the unthought contained therein and indicate structural correspondences with Heidegger's oeuvre; Sluga admits that his "summary

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and Paul Rabinow and another is written by Timothy Rayner. Dreyfus' and Rabinow's *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983) specifically argued for a "Heideggerian Foucault." In the meantime, Rayner's *Foucault's Heidegger: Philosophy and Transformative Experience* (New York: Continuum Press, 2007) is focused on the Heidegger which Foucault had read, and which—argued Rayner—shaped Foucaultian critique.

Meanwhile, a dissertation of Brad Elliott Stone which centered on the reconsideration of power in the Heidegger-Foucault interface, while that of Michel Roger Becker which aimed at demonstrating how Heidegger's and Foucault's analyses of technology serve to counter the prevailing instrumental notion of technology remain unpublished. See Brad Elliott Stone, *Dominions and Domains: Machination, Discipline, and Power in Heidegger and Foucault* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Memphis, 2003) and Michael Roger Becker, *Surmounting Technological Presence: Technology and Freedom in the Later Works of Heidegger and Foucault* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Purdue University, 1994).

[3] Hans Sluga, "Foucault's Encounter with Heidegger and Nietzsche" in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, 2nd ed., ed. Gary Gutting (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 219.

[4] Ibid., 220.

objections are [not] at all decisive [though] they are meant to indicate only that all these Heideggerian readings of Foucault require further buttressing. . . ."[5]

Sluga's point is cogent. Searching for the "Heideggerian Foucault" is fraught with the peril which Nietzsche—incidentally enough—cynically warned about: that of supposedly unearthing what we have actually buried ourselves. Accordingly enough, interpretations which ultimately portray Foucault as a crypto-Heideggerian need to confront this Nietzschean caveat.

Nonetheless, while Sluga did assess many of the works in Milchman's and Rosenberg's anthology, he fails to particularly mention or comment on the two editors' argument for a "critical encounter" or *Auseinandersetzung* between Foucault and Heidegger which informs the whole book. This is rather unfortunate; for were one to compare the argument espoused by Milchman and Rosenberg with the strategy suggested by Sluga for a more profitable study of Heidegger's and Foucault's works, one would notice clear affinities.

For the two editors, a "critical encounter" between the two influential thinkers must not focus on "the impact of Heidegger on Foucault, [or] the traces of Heidegger in the Foucaultian text."[6] Milchman and Rosenberg raise two important points against such an endeavor. First, despite Foucault's claim—quoted above—that he had "tons of notes" on Heidegger, none had so far surfaced. In fact, the Centre Michel Foucault in Paris, supposedly the repository of all of Foucault's works, does not have any of these "notes."[7] Whatever textual traces of Heidegger that are to be sought in Foucault's writings, therefore, will have to be confined only to the latter's very early writings (his *Mental Illness and Personality* and his introduction to Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*, both published in 1954) and perhaps, to his occasional references to Heidegger. Consequently, Milchman and Rosenberg ruled against efforts to establish Heidegger's influence on Foucault by citing instances of the latter's actual discussions of or the frequency of his references to Heidegger. They argued that another thinker's influence on another is not discerned mainly through explicit mention or reference to the said thinker. For Milchman and Rosenberg, the question of Heidegger's influence on Foucault is not answered by the actual discussion of the former and frequency of reference to him

[5] Ibid., 219.

[6] Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg, "Toward a Foucault/Heidegger *Auseinandersetzung*" in *Foucault and Heidegger: Critical Encounters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 4. Henceforth *Auseinandersetzung*.

[7] Jean Zoungrana, who is noted by Milchman and Rosenberg as one "who has written the most detailed and substantive analysis of the place of Heidegger in the Foucauldian corpus thus far," reports the absence of these notes at the Centre. Cf. Milchman and Rosenberg, "*Auseindersetzung*," 4.

Second, the two editors expressed aversion to studies which focus on showing how "Heideggerian" Foucault was, because in their estimation such efforts tend to obscure both thinkers' originality, hereby effecting a "disservice" to both Heidegger and Foucault.[8] The fecundity of both these philosophers' thoughts require that they be understood in their own terms and contexts, and not be reduced to an extension of each other: either as a disciple of Heidegger in the case of Foucault, or as the originary source of Foucaultian critique in the case of Heidegger. To Milchman's and Rosenberg's minds, such reductionism is to be avoided.

Instead they advance—akin to Sluga's suggestion—that a more fruitful and more viable approach to studying these two thinkers is by having both of them "confront" or "engage" each other in issues which both dwelt on. Such a confrontation or "critical encounter" is not pre-ordained towards agreement, however. Rather, it involves the sharpening of differences, the problematization of issues raised, and the interrogation of the very thinking from which these issues and their questions have emerged.[9] Like Sluga, therefore, Milchman and Rosenberg favors proceeding with a study of Heidegger AND Foucault through the identification of common themes or issues, and the facilitation of a critical engagement between both thinkers' ideas (even approaches or methodologies).

This essay is premised on such a procedure. In what follows is a confrontation between the *later* Heidegger's critique of technology and that of Foucault's. Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of technology which centered on its world-disclosure as *Enframing* in which things—even man—are revealed as objects-turned-resource finds resonance in Foucault's own genealogical analysis of "technologies of power" in which the anatomo-politics of the body and the biopolitics of population lead towards the production of identities (or subjectivities) which are more efficiently managed towards economic and political ends. Specifically, this essay focuses on both thinkers' assessment of the dangers which technology—and in the case of Heidegger, its essence—poses, underscoring the kinship and fissures contained therein. Such a confrontation is aimed at providing a keener understanding of and critical orientation towards technology.

Derived primarily from Heidegger's seminal work "The Question Concerning Technology" and supplemented by "The Turning," a discussion of the German thinker's critique of the essence of technology is initially undertaken in the first section. There, Heidegger's understanding of the danger that technology's essence poses for *Dasein*—namely and ultimately, the oblivion of the question of Being or *Seinsvergessenheit*—is expounded.

This is followed by an elaboration of Foucault's own critique of technology culled mainly from *Discipline and Punish*, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I*, and from short works

[8] Ibid., 6.

[9] Ibid., 10.

(essays, interviews) delving on disciplinary and biopolitical technology. There, he discloses how technology abets the operations of power relations in *disciplining* individuals and the *governance* of populations to assume specific identities, a process often resistant to discourses centered on human rights.

In the final section, areas of convergences and divergences in both thinkers' critiques are explored in order to facilitate critical reflection on technology.

Technology, Enframing, and *Seinsvergessenheit*

In "The Question Concerning Technology," the later Heidegger continues an aim which he began in his monumental but dense *Being and Time*, that of provoking "the question of the meaning of Being," albeit not through the phenomenological and anthropocentric analysis of *Da-sein*; but through an inquiry into the relationship humanity has with "technology" and into the freedom humanity has in relating to the essence of technology.[10] The inquiry or the "question" concerning technology continues Heidegger's *Seinsfrage* in as much as it is a question on how as a mode of world-disclosure, technology and its essence lead towards the oblivion of *Being*. The question concerning technology is, for Heidegger, a question concerning how we can respond to Enframing, technology's essence, "which sets upon man and puts him in position to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing reserve."[11]

At the outset of this essay, Heidegger makes some important distinctions. He distinguishes between "technology" and its "essence" which allows him to direct us to the problem which he discerns to be obtaining in our "technological age." Namely, it is not so much that technology is *there*, rather, the problem—or the *danger* as he would put it later—is humanity's orientation or relationship to technology. Through this distinction between "technology" and "the essence of technology," Heidegger brings us to reflect on how we *think* about technology.

How do we think about technology, how do we usually view it?

When Heidegger says that we construe technology as a "neutral instrument," there is nothing perspicacious about his assessment. During the Cold War era, the time when his essay was delivered as a lecture, technology was regarded—as is now by many—as being neither moral nor immoral. And although atomic or nuclear energy had elicited palpable concern among the public then (given recent detonations of the atomic bomb at the time), technology had only seemed to many a potent force the purpose or end of which is determined by the wielder.

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[10] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. with an Introduction by William Lovitt (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977), 3. Henceforth it will be cited as QT.

[11] QT 24.

Yet, Heidegger warns us that "we are delivered over to [technology] in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral; for this conception [*Vorstellung*] of it, to which today we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology." [12] He cautions us that the orientation towards technology as a "neutral" or value-free[13] instrument *conceals* the concealment inhering in technology's coming to presence. Heidegger's intent is clear: he wants us to push beyond the correct but superficial understanding of technology—one which dazzles but blinds us—into *thinking* technology's world-disclosure.

The instrumental understanding of technology—while correct—does not provide us with necessary insight with which we gain access to the truth or essence of technology. Instead, the essence of a thing pertains to its truth or to its coming to presence.[14] Employing an examination of the Greek word for truth, which is *aletheia*, Heidegger argues for an understanding of truth that extends beyond the confines of propositions, and is centered on the interplay of concealment and unconcealment.[15] The result is an *essential* understanding of truth which refers to how a thing is unconcealed as real. Technology's essence refers, thus, to how the real is revealed, to how the world is disclosed in and through technology. Thus, Heidegger asserts that "[t]echnology is . . . no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing."[16]

More specifically, modern technology's essence is Enframing or *das Ge-stell*:

> [It is] 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 technology and which is itself nothing technological.[17]

Now, Enframing which is modern technology's essence is a way of revealing or world-disclosure that is a challenging or *Herausfordern*.[18] As a revealing that is a

[12] QT 4.

[13] In Foucault, as we shall see later, there is a similar critique of how "neutral" or "natural" political and ethical configurations such as *norms* regarding the normal and abnormal, what counts as true or false, conceal assumptions which are themselves unfree of prejudices. In his book *Discipline and Punish*, for instance, Foucault examines the obvious "truth" that prisons rehabilitate delinquent individuals.

[14] For Heidegger's discussion of "essence" as "coming to presence," see QT 30-31.

[15] QT 11-14.

[16] QT 12.

[17] QT 20.

[18] William Lovitt is instructive here. He comments that the German *Herausfordern* is composed of the verb *fordern* which is "to demand, to summon, to challenge"; and the adverbial prefixes *her-* or "hither"; and *aus-* or "out." Literally, therefore, it means "to demand

challenging, modern technology "sets upon" [the German verb used is *stellen*] nature and transforms it into "standing reserve," "resource" or *Bestand*. As a challenging, modern technology "puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such."[19] Enframing reveals the world as *essentially* a storehouse of resources on standby for man's exploitation and use. "Under the dominion of this challenging revealing," Lovitt remarks, "nothing is allowed to appear as it is in itself."[20]

Enframing is not humanity's doing, however. Rather, Heidegger says it is a *destining* of Being, that is, the "holding sway" or prevalence of a particular world-disclosure. Hence, man himself is already caught up in it, having been thrown into this world, in which nature is ordered into being a resource for man. Nonetheless, while this *destining* is not determined by man, it occurs through him,[21] that is, the unconcealment of nature as "standing reserve" happens through man. Man becomes an agent of Enframing inasmuch as he "investigat[es], observ[es], ensnares nature as an area of his own conceiving."[22]

The challenging character of Enframing contrasts sharply with another kind of revealing and destining, that of *poiesis* or *Hervorbringen* which is translated into English as "bringing-forth."[23] In *poiesis*, things appear into unconcealment not as resources or energy supplies but as what they are *as such*.

> Through bringing-forth, the growing things of nature as well as whatever is completed through the crafts and the arts come at any given time to their appearance. . . . [Moreover] bringing-forth brings hither out of concealment forth

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out hither." See William Lovitt, "Introduction" to *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, note 13.

[19] QT 14.

[20] Lovitt, "Introduction," xxix.

[21] ". . . [B]ecause man's coming to presence belongs to the coming to presence of Being—inasmuch as Being's coming to presence needs the coming to presence of man. . . ."

See Martin Heidegger, "The Turning," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. with an introduction by William Lovitt (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977), 38. Henceforth it will be cited as T.

[22] QT 19.

[23] Lovitt details in a translation note that this particular German verb which Heidegger employed as a noun is intended to connote several meanings all at once. These are: to bring forth hither, to produce, to generate or beget, to utter, to elicit. See Lovitt, "Introduction," note 9.

> into unconcealment. Bringing-forth comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment.[24]

Heidegger offers the examples of the water mill and the hydroelectric plant in the Rhine River as illustrations of this contrast. The hydroelectric plant, he says, unlocks the energy latent in the river and transforms that energy. This transformed energy is then stored up and entrapped for later distribution. In the case of the water mill, however, the interlocking processes of unlocking, transformation, storage, and entrapment are not present. The river is not subjected to control and manipulation, but instead is allowed to be *what it is* and to function naturally.

It is this predominance of the challenging-revealing, of the ordering of nature as resource, or the *destining* of Enframing's revealing which Heidegger deemed as the danger (*die Gefahr*) in the modern technological age. While he acknowledges that any *destining* as such poses a danger, that which reigns in the mode of Enframing is the supreme danger.[25]

Enframing's danger is twofold; the first is it "endanger[s] man in his relationship to himself and to everything that is."[26] Inasmuch as everything presences as resource and man himself is caught up in being the "orderer of the standing-reserve," there is the risk that man too becomes nothing more than just another supply or resource.[27] In the revealing in which Being presences as resource, *Dasein* is threatened by the distinct possibility of having to come to presence solely as another standing-reserve. In fact, the term "human resources management" bears witness to the imminence of this threat: human beings being viewed and treated solely as labor supply that is to be utilized in achieving economic and political ends. More insidiously, the trend among learning institutions to "train" students to become "more competitive labor force" in the global market—as opposed to educating them—bespeaks of the danger of Enframing.[28]

Such a threat to man, however, prompts him to seek ever new and effective ways of subduing technology (alas, with all the likelihood of using technology itself for that purpose); clinging to the notion that it is simply an instrument that he wields. Success at controlling technology eventually deludes him into exalting himself as lord of the earth,

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[24] QT 11.

[25] QT 26.

[26] QT 27.

[27] QT 26-27.

[28] One may perhaps add to this the intensifying criticisms that had been launched against "humanities education" coming from various quarters—including within educational institutions themselves—that accuse it of being "useless" (at its most benign) or "counter-productive" (at its most vociferous) in the *training* of students as future human resource for the domestic and foreign markets.

master of all that is; and believing ultimately a megalomaniac's dream in which "man everywhere and always encounters only himself."[29] Man becomes blind to Being's coming to presence in *things,* and sees only reality as his constructs. Man becomes deaf too, as he fails to hearken to Being which addresses him in Being's concealment in the coming to presence of technology. "But we do not yet hear," Heidegger laments, "we whose hearing and seeing are perishing through radio and film under the rule of technology."[30] Made blind and deaf to his essence as the questioner of Being, man becomes estranged to himself and to every *thing*.

Thus, Enframing endangers in engendering estrangement in man.

Enframing's estrangement of man is worsened by the danger it brings in banishing man into an ordering-revealing that not only prevails over other revealing, but also conceals other possibilities of revealing. Worst still, says Heidegger, Enframing not only conceals "that revealing which, in the sense of *poiēsis*, lets what presences come forth into appearance,"[31] it conceals revealing itself. Enframing's supreme danger lies in its concealment of unconcealment itself: it banishes man into the oblivion of Being. The essence of technology which is Enframing disposes man towards *Seinsvergessenheit*, towards forgetting Being and the relation man has with Being by "entrap[ing] the truth of its coming to presence with oblivion."[32]

Therefore, beyond the menace of total annihilation mounted by technology's propensity in lending itself towards the manufacture of weapons; beyond the threat in which *Dasein* becomes another resource; Heidegger sees the real danger of technology residing in its essence, in its particular manner of coming to presence; namely, in Enframing's disposition of man towards the forgetfulness of Being.

> The threat to man does not come in the first instance from the potentially lethal machines and apparatuses of technology. The actual threat has already affected man in his essence. The rule of Enframing threatens man with the possibility that it could be denied to him to enter into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth.[33]

Technologies of Power and the Production of the Modern *Self*

While Heidegger's critique of technology is directed towards "awakening a readiness in man for a possibility whose contour remains obscure, whose coming remains

[29] QT 27.
[30] T 48.
[31] QT 27
[32] T 36.
[33] QT 28.

uncertain,"[34] Foucault's is genealogical in intent, that is, "to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects."[35] Foucault's critique of technology is aimed at abetting the writing of a history of how the modern "self" had been constituted.

In the book *Discipline and Punish*,[36] one sees Foucault undertaking such a history. There he traces how a particular form of power/knowledge emerged, namely, *disciplinary power*, which assumed a "political technology of the body." He depicts this technology as entailing "a 'knowledge' of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them."[37] This political technology or technology of power involves a knowledge (*savoir*) of the body that makes it calculable and readily available to manipulation, to management. Ultimately, this technology produced not only new kinds of actions, behavior, skills, and knowledge, but more significantly, a new kind of individual or identity: the prisoner.

Specifically, *Discipline and Punish* revolved around the question of how was it that, amidst the different forms of punishment available during the period between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, the prison system came to be privileged. *Discipline and Punish* concerned itself with tracing the history of "the birth of the prison" and by so doing, reveal a "carceral archipelago" where the power to punish had been transformed into and integrated as "normalizing" procedures. Beneath the surface of doing a history on the prison is a historical analysis on the production of subjects through their "subjection" by disciplinary technology. Foucault wrote that his aim was to

> try to study the metamorphosis of punitive methods on the basis of a political technology of the body in which might be read a common history of power relations and object relations. Thus, by an analysis of penal leniency as a technique of power, one might understand both how man, the soul, the normal or abnormal individual have come to duplicate crime as objects of penal

[34] Martin Heidegger, "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking" in *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 60.

[35] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power" in *Power*: *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984,* vol. 3, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley and others (New York: The New Press, 2000), 326.

[36] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). This is a translation of *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* originally published in Paris by Éditions Gallimard in 1975. Henceforth it will be cited as DP.

[37] DP 26.

> intervention; and in what way a specific mode of subjection was able to give birth to man as an object of knowledge for a discourse with a "scientific" status.[38]

A crucial component of the process of the production of subjects was the disciplinary technology which "discovered the body as object and target of power."[39] This technology rendered the body more knowable and analyzable, *and at the same time*, more useful for political and economic ends. In a word, they made the body *docile* for both knowing and manipulation. In turn, the docile body constituted the *disciplined* individual, the modern subject. Foucault wrote:

> The human body was entering a *machinery of power* that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A 'political anatomy', which was also a 'mechanics of power', was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies.[40]

Foucault explained further that to be "subjected" is to be the object of knowledge and simultaneously, to be the ground or foundation of that knowledge. It is to be a self whose identity is tied to being objectively comprehensible, not as object, but as subject. In other words, to be a subject is to have a relation to the self wherein knowledge and truth mediate that self-relation. It is to be a self whose identity is linked to truths about oneself.

Furthermore, he explains that "subjectivity" is one type of relationship to oneself that can be established; it is not the only kind of relationship one can have with oneself. As Foucault pointed out, "subjectivity . . . is of course only one of the given possibilities of organization of a self-consciousness."[41] Hence, subjectivity or to be a "subject" is only one form of identity the self can assume; this means there are other options in constituting the self's identity.

Yet despite being only one of several possibilities, the self *as* subject had been the paradigm of the human sciences as they have endeavored to provide us knowledge about ourselves. Hence according to Foucault, the self as subject has functioned as a "regime of truth" in which we have come to be constituted as human beings who *are* subjects.

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[38] DP 24.

[39] DP 136.

[40] DP 138. Italics mine.

[41] Foucault, "The Return of Morality," 253.

This constitution of subjectivities is demonstrated in Foucault's study of the practice of imprisonment wherein he traces the genealogical history of the prison system as it emerges from previous practices of torturing and executing "law transgressors." He writes of how the technology of power disciplined the *bodies* of prisoners through their distribution in space (confinement, cell assignments); the regimentation and scheduling of their activities; the constant supervision and surveillance of tasks as well as behavior; and the composition of their individual energies into an artificial whole which serves particular purposes, e.g., labor force. In typical Foucaultian prose, these techniques of power employed in the disciplining of prisoners were described as

> [s]mall acts of cunning endowed with a great power of diffusion, subtle arrangements, apparently innocent, but profoundly suspicious, mechanisms that obeyed economies too shameful to be acknowledged, or pursued petty forms of coercion – it was nevertheless they that brought about the mutation of the punitive system, at the threshold of the contemporary period.[42]

Diffused, subtle, and cunning, these elements of disciplinary technology were also too often unnoticeable. They were practically invisible, since they were perceived to be neutral or too obvious to be distrusted of any sinister purposes: the daily schedule, the constant repetition of activities, the assignment of individual cells, etc. In contrast to hanging, the guillotine, quartering, the tearing of flesh, the burning of the body—earlier punishments meted out on poor wretches condemned for their crimes—the prison and its discipline seemed humane, benevolent, kinder even.

And yet, as James Faubion stresses, "[o]ne of the messages of Foucault's book is . . . that the apparent neutrality and political invisibility of techniques of power is what makes them dangerous."[43] Technologies of power are dangerous because their operations, i.e., their production of particular identities or selves, their *subjection* of individuals, are unseen even as they are placed in plain view of their subjects. What technologies of power do to us, to paraphrase Foucault, "is dangerous, which is not the same as bad."[44] Their danger lies primarily in their *invisibility* in the production of the identities, rendering them resistant to critiques often mounted on the platform of human rights or variants of humanist values.

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[42] DP 139.

[43] James D. Faubion, "Introduction" to *Power*: *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984,* vol. 3, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley and others (New York: The New Press, 2000), xv.

[44] Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *Ethics – Subjectivity and Truth: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984,* vol. 1, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley and others (New York: The New Press, 1997), 256.

In the case of the prison's disciplinary power, Foucault argues and insinuates that inmates precisely acquire the identities or subjectivities of *prisoners*. In other words, prisons *produce* prisoners. They produce—almost imperceptibly—the very individuals they were supposed to rehabilitate and prepare for re-integration into public life.

Controversially enough, Foucault has suggested that disciplinary technology found in the prison system had crept into other areas of social life. For him, the technology of power had not been confined in prisons. Instead, they had been "de-institutionalized" and had proliferated and covered not only the individual body but the social body as well. Without anyone or any group intending it—no Cartesian *Malin Génie* who schemed it—technologies of power have operated in Western societies "that permit the fabrication of the disciplinary individual."[45]

> What is to be understood by the disciplining of societies in Europe since the eighteenth century is not, of course, that the individuals who are part of them become more and more obedient, nor that all societies become like barracks, schools, or prisons; rather, it is that an increasingly controlled, more rational, and economic process of adjustment has been sought between productive activities, communications networks, and the play of power relations.[46]

This "increasingly controlled, more rational, and economic process of adjustment" is later termed by Foucault as *governmentality* or *biopolitics*. In a subsequent book to *Disicpline and Punish*, he wrote that whereas disciplinary technology entailed "an *anatomo-politics of the human body*," that is, the scientific analysis, disciplining, regimentation, and extortion of the individual body's forces; biopolitics "focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary."[47] He added that it is these two, the discipline of the body and the regulation of the population, which constituted the "poles" around which the organization of power over life had been deployed starting in the seventeenth century.[48]

These two technologies of power that developed in which power subjected life to its machinations allowed for the production of specific kinds of subjectivities or identities, ones which are more efficiently managed or controlled in achieving economic and political ends. The *discipline* of individuals and the *government* of peoples have produced

[45] DP 308.

[46] Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 339.

[47] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 139.

[48] Ibid.

the identity that supposedly prevails even today, the "modern self." This is the "self" whose identity is governed by the *normative* binaries of the insane and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the delinquent and the law-abider, the heterosexual and the homosexual, the normal and the abnormal. And ultimately, by the norm of the true and the false.

Very often, these binaries have been conflated with each other; hence, the criminal is a "sick" individual, who is frequently "insane." Like the homosexual who similarly is considered "sick." the delinquent is also an "abnormal," a deviant. Consequently, identities which accrue from the "modern self," e.g., the "healthy," "sane," "normal," which are sanctioned by techno-scientific discourses become precisely the *norm*. Other identities or modes of selfhood which do not fit this *norm*, despite being produced by the same invisible technologies of power, are marginalized.

Foucault's critique of technology attempts to confront the danger it brings through a genealogical account of these supposedly natural and obvious identities which it produced. By showing that these identities are the result of a myriad of forces, Foucault is able to denaturalize them, challenge their impregnability, and alter them.

> [T]he things which seem most evident to us are always formed in the confluence of encounters and chances, during the course of a precarious and fragile history. . . . It means that they reside on a base of human practice and human history; and that since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were made.[49]

For Foucault, the genealogical writing of history confronts the insidious danger wrought by technologies of power.

Confrontation: Convergences and Fissures

There is much merit in undertaking a confrontation between Heidegger's critique of technology and that of Foucault. This confrontation allows for a sharpened comprehension of technology and alertness to the dangers it brings. This is because, notwithstanding the fact that philosophical discussions on technology have not been muted in this respect, there is nonetheless that tendency to undertake such discussions following the model of "applied ethics." In their "General Introduction" to an anthology on philosophy of technology, for example, Scharff and Dusek stated that very often anthologies on this matter have "major portion of the text focused on specific technological problems and case studies" and are structured as an "applied ethics"

[49] Michel Foucault, "Structuralism and Post-structuralism" in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, Vol. 2, ed. James D Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley and others (New York: The New Press, 1998), 450.

anthology.[50] This, they said, has had the effect of shielding technology itself from being problematized. A confrontation between the critiques of Heidegger and Foucault precisely addresses such a concern through the appraisal of their convergences and fissures.

In addition, such a confrontation also brings Foucault's critique to the fore as contributing towards the philosophy of technology. For as Jim Gerrie observed, Foucault is often ignored or given a minor importance in the philosophical discussions of technology. This is unfortunate, Gerrie pointed out, because

> Foucault's reflections on power uniquely parallel a position accepted by a significant segment of philosophers of technology, that is that technology is not simply an ethically neutral set of artifacts by which we exercise power over nature, but also always a set of structured forms of action by which we also inevitably exercise power over ourselves.[51]

By having Foucault confront Heidegger in this area of inquiry, his insights become available for a keener assessment of the technological condition.

One of the very apparent convergences between the critiques of technology by both Heidegger and Foucault is technology's two-fold autonomy. In her article dwelling on these two thinkers, Sawicki explains this two-fold autonomy as consisting of, first, "a denial of the standard definition of technology as a neutral instrument, that is a neutral means to some humanly defined end."[52] As we have seen, technology has harbored for itself the guise that is a value-free tool whose purposes and ends are decided by its users. Both Heidegger and Foucault reject this.

For Heidegger, he warns of the occlusion that such a "correct" understanding of technology entails, namely, the concealment of technology's way of revealing, its essence as Being's current destining. The view that technology is a neutral instrument conceals Enframing's unconcealment of the real which is deemed by Heidegger as a *danger*. For as he puts it: "[W]e are delivered over to [technology] in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral; for this conception of it, to which today we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology."[53]

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[50] Robert C. Scharff and Val Dusek, "General Introduction: Philosophy and the Technological Condition," in *Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition – An Anthology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), ix.

[51] Jim Gerrie, "Was Foucault a Philosopher of Technology?" in *Techné* 7, no. 2 (Winter 2003): 14.

[52] Jana Sawicki, "Heidegger and Foucault: Escaping Technological Nihilism," in *Foucault and Heidegger: Critical Encounters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 57.

[53] QT 4.

Meanwhile, Foucault has labored incessantly to show that so-called value-free, neutral or even "benign" practices and discourses such as those comprising imprisonment hide within themselves the logic of coercions. Technologies of power are often cloaked by perceptions of being "natural" and "normal" that they are rendered invisible. The fact that they contain in themselves strategies of control that are undetectable makes them *dangerous* according to Foucault.

Technology's autonomy also "involves the quite plausible suggestion that the process and direction of technological development is in some respects independent of human control."[54] This means that, insidious though they may be, Enframing and technologies of power—as both Heidegger and Foucault had revealed—function anonymously and non-subjectively. Their operations are not the result of human scheming in the sense that someone or some group of individuals have conspired to bring about the disciplinary and biopolitical subjection of individuals and populations (Foucault) or the setting-upon and transformation of the real into *Bestand* (Heidegger).

In Heidegger's case, Enframing as a destining of Being is never the result of man's willing or volition. That man is impotent in effecting how Being conceals and unconceals the real is constantly asserted by Heidegger: "Man does not have control over unconcealment itself, in which at any given time the real shows itself or withdraws."[55] In "The Turning," Heidegger is unequivocal about this:

> If the essence, the coming to presence, of technology, Enframing as the danger within Being, is Being itself, then technology will never allow itself to be mastered, either positively or negatively, by human doing founded merely on itself. Technology, whose essence is Being itself, will never allow itself to be overcome by men. That would mean, after all, that man was the master of Being.[56]

With Foucault, there is a similar disavowal of human control over how technologies of power operate. While he admits that these resulted from the conflation of diverse human practices with their own goals; as a systemic whole, technologies of power function independently of those goals and aims.

> [Technologies of power] are both intentional and nonsubjective. . . [that is] there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject; let us not look for headquarters that presides over its rationality; neither the caste that governs, nor the groups which control the state apparatus, nor those who make the most important economic decisions direct the entire network of power that

[54] Sawicki, "Heidegger and Foucault," 57.
[55] QT 18.
[56] T 38.

> functions in a society (and makes *it* function); the rationality of power is characterized by tactics that are often quite explicit at the restricted level where they are inscribed . . . tactics which, becoming connected to one another, attracting and propagating one another, but finding their base of support and their condition elsewhere, *end by forming comprehensive systems*. . . .[57]

Another convergence between the two critiques is the recognition that technology grasps reality as resource to be utilized. In Heidegger, for instance, Enframing discloses everything—even man—as standing-reserve that can be used and manipulated. As we saw above, technology's coming to presence or its essence is "the danger" for it prohibits *things* from being disclosed other than as objects and resource. More perniciously, *Dasein* too is being disposed into becoming another resource in a world that essences as an enormous storehouse of resources.

Foucault also evinces in his critique that technologies of power target the human body and state population as resources for exploitation. Disciplinary technologies render the body docile, ready for the extortion of its forces which are then used for economic purposes, e.g., labor force. Biopower, on the other hand, seizes upon the specie body and regulates its births, development and growth, and deaths. Through this regulation, it effects the bio-social management of the population which make it useful for the aims of the state, for instance, government policies on population control directed at addressing poverty.

In the meantime, the two critiques' revelation of the invisibility of both Enframing's and technologies of power's operations presents itself as another point of convergence. Enframing, similar to other kinds of world-disclosure or ways of unconcealing, is very often concealed. Its unconcealment of the real as objects-cum-resources conceals itself. Technologies of power, on the other hand, operate invisibly by "naturalizing" and "scientifically sanctioning" their objects, leaving them immune from *humanistic* critique, i.e., subscription to transcendental values of justice and human rights. The two critiques enable suspicion regarding any depiction of technology and its use as being free from prejudices or complicity in coercions.

Finally, we can include what Timothy Rayner suggested as a "strategical continuity" obtaining between "Heidegger's critique of technological enframing and Foucault's critique of biopolitical government." Rayner had inquired into the extent to which Foucault's critique of biopower recapitulated Heidegger's critique of modern technology, and had identified this continuity which had entailed taking cognizance of the fact that both biopower (or technologies of power) and technology "pursued the overall

[57] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 94-95. Italics mine.

management of life." Specifically, Rayner argued that both Heidegger's and Foucault's critiques demonstrated how technology reduced

> the forces of nature to raw material, [and sought] to set this material in order—implementing mechanisms to establish regular patterns of cause and effect, checks and balances to ensure the flow of energies into productive, self-enhancing systems, thus to achieve a heightened measure of mastery and control over this object-domain.[58]

Thus, what Rayner underscores here is both Heidegger's and Foucault's critiques bare the thrusts within technology towards domination, control, and manipulation of life. Hence Rayner suggests, in our apparent use of technology, the reverse is actually occurring: we are the ones being used.

Fissures between the two critiques exist as well. In this regard, Robert Sinnerbrink's analysis of these fissures, albeit one predicated on Heidegger's earlier notion of *Machenschaft* instead of *Ge-stell*, is arguably an instructive guide for our consideration.[59] Sinnerbrink intends to show how the notions of biopower and biopolitics found in Foucault and Agamben were anticipated in Heidegger's critique of the metaphysics of modernity. Of pertinence, is his underscoring of the differences between Heidegger's and

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[58] Timothy Rayner, "Biopower and Technology: Foucault and Heidegger's Way of Thinking," *Contretemps* 2 (May 2001): 150.

[59] "We should note briefly the difference between Heidegger's earlier conception of *Machenschaft* and his later, post-metaphysical conception of *Ge-stell*. *Machenschaft* includes humans as productive beings or representing subjects, while *Ge-stell* conceives of human beings as resources caught up in the totalising technological disclosure of reality." See Robert Sinnerbrink, "From *Machenschaft* to Biopolitics: A Genealogical Critique of Biopower," *Critical Horizons* 6, no.1 (2005): note 12.

Sinnerbrink's analysis of how Foucault's notion of biopower differs from Heidegger's *Machenschaft* elides the distinctions obtaining between the latter and *Ge-stell*. Sinnerbrink treats *Machenschaft* as the lynchpin for Heidegger's critique of modernity, in which the said notion is characterized as "the convergence of technological ordering, biological existence, and enhancement of power." Now, such a characterization holds true as well for *Ge-stell* which, not coincidentally, became Heidegger's later lynchpin for his critique.

It must be noted, nonetheless, that *Ge-stell* figured in Heidegger's later works found in the collection *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, while the earlier notion of *Machenschaft*, is mentioned by Sinnerbrink to have been present in Heidegger's lectures on Nietzsche, specifically the 1939 lecture course on "The Will to Power as Knowledge," and in Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie* which were written between 1936 to 1938.

Foucault's critiques as being "more significant, since they point to important ways in which Foucault challenges the Heideggerian diagnosis of modernity."[60]

Sinnerbrink lists three differences between the two critiques. First, Foucault's critique of technologies of power, in this instance that of biopower, conceives of its object as "the exercise of regulatory power over biological existence of the population."[61] In contrast, Heidegger's view of *Machenschaft* (or *Ge-stell*) pertains to a more generalized reduction of all that IS or is real to quantifiable and manipulable resource. Hence, according to Sinnerbrink, "[f]or Heidegger, biopower would be just one specific *ontic* manifestation of the deeper *ontological condition* of generalized machination of modernity."[62]

Second, contrary to Heidegger's critique that reveals *Machenschaft* or *Ge-stell* to be referring to an ontological condition that unfolds teleologically in history, Foucault's critique of technologies of power "explicitly rejects any teleological narrative of historical development (including the inverted Hegelianism of Heidegger's *Verfallsgeschichte* of the forgetting of Being)."[63] What Foucault's critique undertakes is a Nietzschean genealogy of specific social practices (e.g., imprisonment, discourse and taboo of sexuality) wherein the notion of ameliorative or even regressive development in particular domains is problematized and undermined. In this respect, Foucault is neither a romantic who laments that a previous epoch's idyllic conditions have been lost and require recuperation; nor is he an idealist who looks to the future as the site in which present struggles would be finally resolved. For as he frequently claimed, he is a "historian of the present."

On his part, Heidegger is no adherent of romanticism either, despite seeming to valorize the epoch of the Pre-Socratics. However, his invitation towards "meditative thinking," to preparation for *Gelassenheit* or "releasement" and for the coming of another epoch of Being is decidedly futural. As stated earlier, Heidegger's critique of technology is directed towards "thinking" Being's current destining which endangers concealing the other possibilities of unconcealment.

Thirdly, Foucault's critique of technologies of power is extricated from any totalizing and nihilistic account of modernity; Heidegger's, on the other hand, is clearly aimed at such a verdict. Foucault was notorious for not providing any "humanistic grounds" to his genealogical critiques, a charge from his critics that seems to miss the point about his endeavor. Foucault eschewed these grounds which to him are often linked to meta-narratives that are possessed with hidden coercive forces. Instead, Foucault engages in strategic and specific analyses which take the form of genealogical histories of

[60] Sinnerbrink, "From *Machenschaft*," 247.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.

particular social practices. By restricting himself to specific sites (i.e., particular historical periods and locations) of technologies of power, Foucault is prevented from lapsing into nihilistic accounts of the whole of reality.

While he has been said to decry "the carceral archipelago" or "the disciplinary society," such statements on his part must not be understood as universalizing his claims to encompass all of reality, a feature found in Heidegger's critique. Foucault clarifies this in an interview:

> I wouldn't want what I may have said or written to be seen as laying any claims to totality. I don't try to universalize what I say . . . What I say ought to be taken as "propositions," "game openings" where those who may be interested are invited to join in—they are not meant as dogmatic assertions that have to be taken or left en bloc.[64]

In other words, there is no totalization in Foucault, either in the form of a diagnosis of reality, or in the form of a solution to the technologies of power obtaining in a particular domain or social practice.

Obviously, this cannot be said on the part of Heidegger whose work, beginning with *Being and Time*, warned about *Seinsvergessenheit* and the importance of the *Seinsfrage* as elements of his critique of the present epoch of Being, of modernity's nihilism. In this, Heidegger's critique is total since it comprehends all that *is* those which are unconcealed and that which conceals even as that-which-conceals unconceals.

In fine, both Heidegger and Foucault are no Luddites; they are not anti-technology despite appearing as such. Heidegger's distinction between technology and its essence, complemented by such assertions that "the essence of technology is by no means anything technological"[65] safeguards him from the said charge. Similarly, Foucault's assertion that technologies of power are not bad in themselves but are only dangerous implies that technology is not to be shunned. Instead, a critical stance must be constantly assumed against them. Vigilance and not wholesale rejection is what he espouses.

Heidegger and Foucault have warned us about the dangers of being uncritical in our orientation towards technology. Whether because technology disposes us to become oblivious of *Sein* and be caught up in the total disclosure of the world as *Bestand*; or because it turns us into particular subjects and imprisons us in these identities, the two thinkers' warnings about these dangers are worth heeding as technology becomes more and more pervasive and entwined with the human condition.

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[64] Michel Foucault, "Questions of Method," in *Power*: *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984,* vol. 3, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley and others (New York: The New Press, 2000), 223.

[65] QT 4.

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