

## Traces of Enframing (*Ge-Stell*) in Digimodernism: The Possible Loss of Identity

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### Abstract

In this paper, I present my reading of Heidegger's "The Question Concerning Technology." I then argue that while we appreciate and relish the utility and efficiency that modern technology offers, and in this study, the use of digital devices and platforms, there is an equally alarming threat to our attitudes and thus, could possibly, in Heideggerian parlance, hinder man to reveal its *originary* being and thus, could lead to *enframing*. This paper further claims that there are traces latent in our modern culture that could lead to this danger. By examining our modern society, I contend that there are three phenomena that could lead to what Heidegger calls *enframing*: First is the systematic sexualization or objectification in our culture that propels humanity to order the other merely as a standing-reserve (*bestand*) for sexual pleasure and consequently become *ordered* ourselves through our thinking. Second is through a form of intimacy or relationship that considers the other merely as a *social capital* in the realm of *social comparison*. And the third trace is the lack of rationality and questioning in the midst of what Aaron Lynch calls as *thought contagion*.

**Keywords:** Martin Heidegger, *Machenschaft* [Machination], *Ge-stell* [Enframing], Technology, Digimodernism

### Introduction

It is not an overstatement to say that modern technology's advancements have undoubtedly surmounted man's ordinary expectations. Superficially, technology has taken man into a pedestal where he, absorbed by these technological artifacts, is gloriously praised for his unimaginable achievements. Massively influenced by modern thinking, technology happens to coexist with man's progress in thinking and full human realization. We try to deceive ourselves when we surmise that we become more successful as we perfectly master our grip on technology. Thus, Heidegger elaborates: "The will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatens to slip from human control" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 5). Such deception is exacerbated when we inadvertently accept that man's impeccable mastery over technology affirms man's being (*sein*). Metaphysically, Heidegger brings us to a realization that the more we control technology the more we are controlled (ordered) by it. Furthermore, the more that we take grips on technology (in this sense, *enframed*), is in the worst possible way, the oblivion of being (*Seimvergessenheit*) happens to us. Heidegger remarks that humans are not in control of technology, rather technology is the destiny of humans in our age (Dusek, 2006, p. 76). In this case, humans are controlled and ordered by technology.

Martin Heidegger's "The Question Concerning Technology" as his other monumental works' – viz. *Being and Time* and *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)* – the discernible intention and as the position of this research holds, tries to question the meaning of being, which as he stated, has been forgotten since the days of ancient Greece (Harman, 2007). In this work, however, he attempted to unearth the meaning of being by focusing on man's free relationship with technology. This paper in the same way will revisit the meaning of being in relation to man's identity. Specifically,

this research attempts to unearth the tremendous effect of today's technology viz. digimodernism to the gradual loss of human identity.

This paper argues that while we appreciate and relish the utility and efficiency that modern technology offers, in this study, the use of digital devices and platforms, there is an equally alarming threat to our attitudes and value system and resulting to what could possibly, in Heideggerian parlance, hinder man to reveal its *originary* being, and therefore, could lead to the danger of enframing, i.e. *the oblivion of being*. With the *irrational* use of these digital devices, instead of 'revealing' man's *being*, *being* then tends to hide and worst thrown into oblivion. This paper claims that there are traces latent in our digital culture that could lead to what Heidegger calls as *seinsvergessenheit* or the oblivion/forgetfulness of being. By trying to examine the available literatures on the digital culture, there are three dominant features in the use of the digital devices and platforms that could lead to what Heidegger calls enframing. First is the systematic sexualization or objectification in our culture that propels humanity to order the other as a standing-reserve (*bestand*) for sexual pleasure. We no longer see them as such, in their original revealing with worth and value but in our enframed ordering for self-interest and pleasure. Here, we see others as objects (machination) only and as a consequence, become ordered (enframed) ourselves through our corrupted thinking. Second is through a form of intimacy or relationship that considers the other merely a *social capital* in the realm of *social comparison*. Third trace of enframing is the lack or (worst) absence of rationality and questioning in the realm of the so-called *thought contagion* (Lynch 1996).

In this paper, I will offer my reading of Heidegger's "The Question Concerning Technology." I will do this by discussing Heidegger's way of treating the meaning of technology, that is, knowing the essence of technology by way of going through the merely correct meaning of technology. Secondly, I will discuss the vital point of Heidegger's treatment of the essence of technology, and that is the impending dangers of *enframing* which could haunt man in his essence. I will also lay down the subtle difference between machination (*Machenschaft*) and enframing (*Ge-stell*) employing Lagdameo's (2014) elucidation on such Heideggerean concepts in his article published in *Filocracia* "From *Machenschaft* to *Ge-stell*: Heidegger's Critique of Modernity." I will then evaluate the present digital realm and identify the traces of enframing latent in our digitally conditioned modern society. I will do this by examining some literatures which tackle the digital culture namely: Alan Kirby's (2009) discussion on digimodernism through his opus *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure our Culture*; Coyne, et al.'s (2022) discussion on *social comparison* as well as of Stefanone & Covert's (2022) elucidation on *social capital* in *The Social Media Debate, Unpacking the Social, Psychological, and Cultural Effects of Social Media*; and Richard Pinner's (2019) discussion on *thought contagion* and on how digital devices affect critical thinking skills in his book *Augmented Communication: The Effect of Digital Devices on Face-to-Face Interactions*.

Heidegger himself is not a stranger to the insidious effects of technology, thus he would remark: "Technology is all around us" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 4) and technology has already affected man in his essence. He as well maintains that technology is not neutral, in so far as we might be absorbed to the *correct* definition of technology but of its *not yet true* or its essence. The correct meaning of technology refers to its instrumental aspect of technology while the true meaning of technology refers to its manner of revealing. The conditioned way of knowing what is technology is by way of knowing its correct definition. The anthropological, which in this sense is the correct meaning of technology is a contrivance, that is to say, instrumental or *instrumentum* (Harman, 2002). Here, technology is taken as a means to an end and a mere human activity. From this, he embarked on discussing Aristotle's the classical

four causes of being namely: material cause, formal cause, final cause and efficient cause. The four ways of being are responsible to bring something into appearance. They let it come forth into presencing [*An-wesen*]. (Heidegger 1977, p. 9). The verb *An-wesen* comprises *wesen*, which literally means *to continue or endure* and the prefix *an*, which means *at, to, forward*. Accordingly, presencing means to endure. Thus, it is man who must receive presencing, man *to* whom it comes as enduring. The four ways or causes bring something into presencing. At this, Heidegger defines the true definition of technology, that is to say, technology as a manner of revealing [*das Entbergen*]. Revealing connotes an opening out from protective concealing (Heidegger, 1977, p. 11). Heidegger also calls it as *aletheia*. At this, he sharply states that technology is no mere means. It is rather a way of revealing (Heidegger, 1977, p. 2). Technology in this sense is taken as the realm of revealing, that is to say, of truth [*Wahrheit*]. By way of delving into the correct meaning of technology, Heidegger then proceeds on knowing the *essence* of technology. He would then continue that the merely correct is not yet true (Heidegger, 1977, p. 6). He offered thus a catastrophic statement: “In the midst of all that is correct, the *true* will withdraw” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 26). However, it should not be construed that he totally thwarted the correct meaning of technology. He will later be assessed to have used the correct meaning of technology to arrive at the true meaning of technology’s essence. At this, he offered a demarcation line between the definition or the *what is* [*quidditas*] of technology and the essence or the enduring as presence [*das Wahren als Gegenwart*] of technology. The former refers to the correct definition of technology while the latter refers to the true.

#### Enframing as the Essence of Technology

In the manner of revealing, Heidegger distinguishes *poiesis* or *Hervorbringen* from enframing or *das Ge-stell*. *Poiesis* translated as bringing-forth is the originary stance of revealing. Bringing forth comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment. Whoever builds a house or ship reveals what is to be brought forth, not in the making but in revealing (Heidegger, 1977, p. 13). In this sense, technology is a mode of revealing inasmuch as it reveals what does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie before us. In contrast, he declared that modern-machine powered technology is not a *poiesis* but a challenging (*Herausfordern*) (Heidegger, 1977, p. 14). It is a setting upon which challenges the energies of nature. Modern technology is deemed by Heidegger as a setting upon which challenges the energies of nature (Heidegger, 1977, p. 15). *The essence of technology or modern technology, as Heidegger puts it, is enframing*. Enframing means as 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 or (*bestand*) (Heidegger, 1977, p. 20). The challenging which happens in technology tends to unlock, transform, store up, distribute and switch about anew the energies inherent in nature. And this characterizes the very nature of enframing. He made the hydroelectric plant in the Rhine River as an example of enframing inasmuch as the energy inherent in the nature of the river is unlocked, transformed, stored up, distributed and switched about anew into another form of energy. Heidegger would then observe that it is not so much that the hydroelectric plant is in the river but rather the river is dammed in the hydroelectric plant (Heidegger, 1977, p. 16). In this sense, the original Rhine river as in Holderlin’s poem is already technologically enframed. Conversely, he sets the watermill as an example of *poiesis* or bringing-forth inasmuch as the river appears into

unconcealment or come to presence as it is (in its original) despite the intervention of the watermill.

It should be made clear however that enframing is not man's doing. It is rather a manner of the destining of being. Nonetheless, enframing happens in man and through man inasmuch as he is the agent of observation and judgment. This in other words, is still consistent with Heidegger's notion of *Dasein* but in this sense, man's free relationship with technology is set at the fore.

#### The Antecedent: Machination (*Machenschaft*)

At the inception of Heidegger's critique of technology he employed the concept *Machenschaft* (machination). Miguel de Beistegui observes: "The term *Machenschaft* can be found in texts during the period of 1936-1940 wherein Heidegger undertook the philosophical questioning of technology; by 1949, however, his writings on technology had employed *Ge-stell* (enframing) (Lagdameo 2014). In *Contributions to Philosophy from Enowning*, Heidegger raised the question of being (*sein*) not from the anthropocentric agency, which is through the *Dasein*, but a questioning along the pathway from the other beginning, that is to say from enowning (*ereignis*).

As Heidegger put it "In the context of being-question, this word [machination] does not name a human comportment but a manner of the essential swaying of being" (Heidegger, 1999). It is then through technological machination that the being reveals the real. It is through machination that the being is revealed as an object. *Machenschaft* as Heidegger reveals is the understanding of being's swaying in which disclosure is characterized by the makeability of objects. Machination reveals beings not as they are but as objects that are malleable, manipulable, produced, represented, and disposed for human willing (Lagdameo, 2014). It is in this way of revealing that everything presences as an object (*Gegenstand*) to man. I is a domination of making and whatever is made. Accordingly, power (*Macht*) becomes *Dasein's* medium for relating with beings (Lagdameo, 2014). It inevitably stems from Nietzsche's will to power that has become one of Heidegger's discussions in his book *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Here, *being* (*sein*) comes into presencing as an object through human subjectivity. It is what Heidegger aptly calls as "lived experience." Heidegger maintains that "only what is lived through live-experience and is so liveable, only what presses forth into the sphere of live-experience, only what man is able to bring to and before himself, [only that] can count as "a being" (Heidegger, 1999). In machination, everything is subject to lived-experience and thus everything is conceived as an object, that is to say, as makeable. Nothing is left mysterious. Nothing is left for awe and enchantment. There is a dismal lack of questioning. At this, the famous Heideggerian maxim of the inevitable consequence which is the "abandonment of being" happens. The being which is revealed as a mere object is thus thrown into the oblivion of being, which is the forgetfulness of being. Heidegger observes: "The abandonment of be-ing happens to beings, indeed to beings in the whole, and thus also and precisely to that being which as man stands in the midst of beings and thereby forgets their be-ing" (Heidegger, 1999). This is the necessary offshoot of technological machination, when be-ing is reduced to non-being. This is what Nietzsche called as nihilism or nothingness. When everything is taken as an object, there is no more room for questioning and regard for sacredness. As Heidegger consequently remarks: "The utmost distress [is] the lack of distress" (Heidegger, 1999). However, it should be acknowledged that this is Heidegger's initial philosophy of technology. From machination he extended his pursuit in questioning the essence of technology. From machination, he arrived at enframing. What makes enframing as more fitting in our relationship with technology is its impending danger. Accordingly, Heidegger's

elucidation of machination developed into *Ge-stell*. If in machination, man views everything around him as objects, that is to say, as makeable, wherein man is an agent of *macht* (of power), in enframing man is deemed as another object or standing reserve (*bestand*). The development of the technological dehumanizing transition will be underscored in the consequent section which deals with the danger of technology through enframing.

#### The Danger of Enframing (*Ge-stell*)

Heidegger's most striking assessment about technology lies in its insidious danger, that is to say, the danger of enframing. Heidegger observes: "When destining reigns in the mode of enframing, it is the *supreme* danger" (Heidegger, 1977). Heidegger's stern warning on the pervasiveness of technology and thus of enframing is twofold. First, enframing endangers man in his relationship to himself and to everything that is. He points out thus technology's imminent danger:

As soon as what is concealed no longer concerns man even as object, but does so, rather, exclusively as *standing-reserve* and man in the midst of objectlessness is nothing but the orderer of the standing reserve, then he comes to the very brink of precipitous fall; that is, he comes to the point where he himself have to be taken as standing reserve. (Heidegger, 1977, p. 26)

The danger of enframing treats man as no longer a subject. In the midst of enframing's objectlessness, the tension between the subject-object relationship here disappears. Man as the agent of ordering and re-ordering is just taken as another standing reserve. It is partially a reminiscent of Heidegger's concept of machination (*macheschaft*) which reveals beings as objects, that is to say treating beings in its makeability to the fore, so much that beingness is determined precisely as constancy and presence. "That something *makes itself by itself* and is thus also makeable for a corresponding procedure..." (Heidegger, 1999). Heidegger's elucidation of machination still acknowledges the presencing of a being as an object, but in enframing, there is the absence of the object or the objectlessness. Man as the orderer of revealing is taken as another standing reserve. As standing reserve, objects lose their character as objects. Man as the agent of ordering, is now as *bestand* is orderable and substitutable. In my assessment, if in *Maschenschaft* beings are revealed as objects and in turn, man is the one making and manipulating the object is made another object himself, in enframing, objects lose their identity as objects. Man in turn is not even seen as object but seen as *the possibility of the ordering*. In the example given by Heidegger, as *bestand*, an airliner is ordered to the possibility of transportation. In the realm of human resource, an employee is no longer treated as an individual with unique traits and needs (subject), not even as an ordinary employee (object) but as an ordered resource (*bestand*) who can possibly help the company or institution to subsist and make money. Some might critique that a *bestand* is also tantamount to another object. However, being an object still bears a sense of identity. A *bestand* loses its identity even of a subject. It is rather taken an orderable entity for a particular purpose. Consequently, the worst danger points to the oblivion of being.

The second danger of enframing banishes man into that kind of revealing which is an ordering that drives out every other possibility of ordering (Heidegger, 1977). This challenging enframing conceals not only the original way of revealing, which is *poiesis* or bringing forth, but conceals revealing itself and that wherein unconcealment comes to pass. Heidegger continues: "[e]nframing blocks the shining forth and the holding-sway of truth" (Heidegger, 1977). It is indeed the destining

that sends into ordering, which is the extreme danger. It is even underscored that “[t]he transformed meaning of the word “Enframing” will perhaps become somewhat more familiar to us now if we think Enframing in the sense of destining and danger” (Heidegger, 1977). In sum, Heidegger ultimately identifies destining with danger. Following its basic definition “danger” comes from the Latin *dominium/dominarium* which literally means ownership. Consistent with the definition, thus to be in danger is to be owned by something. Consequently, to be in danger is to be owned by technology. In the aforementioned danger, the first danger is not so much to own technology, which is machination. In this sense, we see things as objects or makeable. It is being owned by technology which makes even the orderer of revealing as *bestand* becomes *bestand* himself. In the second danger, it is to be totally owned by technology. Through enframing, man is banished or removed into that kind of revealing which is an ordering. Thus it drives out every other possibility of revealing. Therefore, “the challenging Enframing not only conceals a former way of revealing, bringing-forth, but it conceals revealing itself and with it *That* wherein unconcealment, i.e., truth, comes to pass” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 27). Concealing a former way of revealing is already an assault to a metaphysical quest to a primal truth. If the very revealing itself is trapped and thrown into forgetfulness, which Heidegger aptly calls as the oblivion of being, how will everything appear? Or perhaps there is an utter disappearance of being. Everything is banalized and there is no more sense of awe and enchantment. Everything is mute and bleak.

In retrospect, Heidegger clears that ordering is not man’s doing, it is the destining of being. However, it is through the agency of man, or through the *Dasein* that this ordering happens. At this, Heidegger’s sharp observation goes as the essence of enframing is that setting upon gathered into itself which entraps the truth of its own coming to presence with oblivion.(Heidegger, 1977, p. 36). The danger of enframing ultimately leads to the *oblivion of being (Seinvergessenheit)* which disguises in the setting in order that presences as standing reserve.

In the *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger proffers the consequent insidious effect of machination, and that is the abandonment of be-ing or the forgetfulness of be-ing. In the context of the *same*, Heidegger has a similar assessment about enframing’s danger. It is necessarily and consequently the forgetfulness of being.

Heidegger however is implicitly hopeful about the idea of saving humanity from the dangers of enframing. He even reveals that where danger is, grows the saving power also (Heidegger, 1977, p. 28). To “save” for Heidegger means to fetch something home for the first time into its genuine appearing. It is going back to its first appearing, to its first bringing-forth. The possibility of “salvation” lies in going back to the original definition of *techné*. Heidegger’s insight on the possibility of emancipation goes as: “Once there was a time when the bringing-forth of the true into beautiful was called *techné*” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 34). Turning to the more originary identity of *techné* which is the bringing-forth of the true into beautiful i.e., fine arts can be a way of being saved from the dangers of enframing. It is a way of going back to the original revealing which is bringing-forth or *poiesis*. Holderlin thus says: “...poetically *dwells* man upon this earth” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 34).

## The Imminent Danger of Digimodernism: The Loss of Identity

After treating the meaning of technology in “The Question Concerning Technology”, Heidegger dreadfully asked: “What is modern technology? It too is revealing” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 14). If I were to philosophically assess the present social fabric, what is modern technology? I would evaluate it too as revealing and has the possibility of enframing through its imminent or possible danger. This paper does not undermine the positive functions and effects that modern technology offers, there are actually plenty of them and I will actually cite some and juxtapose it with the effects of modern technology especially of digimodernism that can lead to what Heidegger calls as “enframing.” Further, this paper also does not claim that Heidegger is anti-technology in the definitive sense. Proof of it is his distinction between *poiesis* or bringing-forth, which is the originary stance of revealing, and *ge-stell* or enframing, where lies the danger in modern technology. Enframing can only serve as the essence of technology if we allow technology to control us, hence, let the two-fold dangers of technology stealthily creep into our system. But observing and analyzing the present society, there seem to be some traces of enframing in the digital realm that could possibly lead to what Heidegger calls as the dangers of technology. Parallel to Heidegger’s philosophical track, I assess the development of the history of technology as a smooth proceeding from *Machenschaft* to *Ge-stell*. Alan Kirby, a cultural critic, updates in his book *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure our Culture* about the status quo of today’s modern culture.

Digimodernism is a “contraction of digital modernism where digital technology meets textuality (which is a unique character of this “period”) and text is reformulated by the fingers and thumbs (digits) clicking and keying and pressing in the positive act of partial or obscurely collective textual collaboration” (Kirby, 2009). efficiency by just a single click in such digital artifacts. It is however not a total escape from the culture of post-modernity inasmuch as it continues the construal of hyper-reality and objectification initiated in post-modernity. In this period though there is the intervention of digital technology. Thus, Kirby comments: “Digimodernism can be globally expressed...and historically situated in eight [words] (the cultural-dominant succeeding postmodernism prompted by new technologies.)” (Kirby, 2009, p. 54). One palpable digimodernist landmark is the release of Pixar’s *Toy Story* in 1995. Alan Kirby has this analysis through the film’s textual meaning which is consistent with Heidegger’s proposition that enframing is the essence of technology:

Buzz has to learn the depressing news that, instead of the free, authentic, individual he believes himself to be (has been programmed to think he is), he is a commodity, advertised on television, sold in industrial quantities in shops, identical to thousands of others (Kirby, 2009, p. 9).

This forthright insight prophesies the impending danger of digimodernity. In this age, everything is taken as a standing resource, which is to say as *bestand*. At the advent of the new textuality (Web 2.0), comes the determination of the key features of digimodernism. Through its new textuality, the reign of the web programs, stems hither the features of the digimodernist culture namely: Onwardness – the time of the digimodernist text seems to have a start but no end; Haphazardness – locates in it the permanent possibility that it might go off in multiple directions; Evanescence – it does not endure, it is technically very hard to capture and archive; Reformulation and intermediation of textual roles – radical redefinition of textual functional titles; Anonymous, multiple and social authorship – if not actually anonymous it tends to a form of pseudonymity which amounts to renunciation of the practice of naming;

The fluid text – the physical limits of the traditional text are easily establishable; and Electronic-digitality – in its pure form, the digimodernist text relies on its technological status, i.e. it is produced by fingers and thumbs and computerization (Kirby, 2009, p. 53). With these features surrounding man, the threat of technology to man is just made easier and efficient.

In terms of cultural shackles and social effects which are now embedded in our modern culture with the advent of what digimodernism is: First, the sexualization of our social milieu with the use of digital technology. Kirby's realization mirrors the digimodernist society that we are in now. When we see objects, we no longer see them as such or as *poiesis*. We see them as standing-reserve (*bestand*). In the prehistory of Digimodernism, one factor which instigated digimodernism is industrial pornography. Thus, we have exemplification of such: sex dens, chat rooms, pornographic sites, cyber-sex and so on. Kirby observes: "From a digimodernist point of view, what characterizes industrial pornography is this: it insists loudly, ceaselessly, crucially on its "reality," on its being "real," genuinely happening, unsimulated, while nevertheless delivered a content that bears little resemblance to the "real thing," and what distorts it is its integration of its usage, of the behavior of its user" (Kirby, 2009, p. 77). The systematic sexualization in our culture propels humanity to order humanity as standing-reserve (*bestand*) for sexual pleasure. We no longer see them as such, in their original revealing, but in our enframed ordering. Ultimately, enframing in our technological age prevents us from entering into a more original revealing and intimacy. The central issue here is, while we see these technological artefacts in an instrumentalist way, hence can benefit us in so many ways especially in terms of work and cost efficiency, they can also lead us (has the possibility) into treating humans as mere standing reserve, resource thus without much value.

Second, is the "digitalized intimacy" brought about by social media platforms. One commonly used social media site is Facebook. Apparently, the use of Facebook as a social media platform for connection among friends, relatives, families has been widespread and all pervasive. It is mainly used for efficiency in communication among all forms of relationships. However, it is also the downside of this platform to prevent a more intimate relationship. In this social media site, you can almost do everything. You can make friends to anyone who is basically enrolled in the site. Conversely, you can unfriend someone whom you decided to cut off your friendship with. For many, Facebook has become a vital substitute for real friendship. Hence, if you are not friends in Facebook, you are also not friends in reality. Friendship in conclusion has become digitalized and ordered. Friendship in social media has become substitutable. Friendship is measured in view of this social media platform. Thus, if I see a real friend, I would always see him or her in relation to his or her profile in Facebook, or by whatever he or she has recently posted. The revealing has been ordered by the digitalized information I got from the social media site we are enrolled in. I no longer see you as you are, but as the ordering made possible by technology. Furthermore, authentic human relationship in this case is oftentimes replaced by mere 'social comparison' (Coyne, et al., 2022) or the need for 'social capital' (see Stefanone & Covert, 2022, 20). Social comparison as the word suggests is a sense of perceiving someone as better or worse than you (Festinger, 1954). When we look at social media, the tendency to compare oneself with others is almost pressing. Thus, the phenomenon of being influenced and 'enframed' by the trends nowadays is already set as the norm. It is where everybody looks and thinks the same. The uniformity in thinking is discernible here or perhaps the lack of it. Here is where *thought contagion* (Lynch, 1996) comes in, that I will discuss later. Another word here is online social capital (Stefanone & Covert 2022) which means,



the need to create networks of friends with the aim to make them as capital or resource for present or future needs. To make their point clear Stefanone et al. (2022) cite this example: “For example, if your friends are lawyers, doctors, and politicians, you likely have access to more social capital, compared to someone like an immigrant or a refugee who is new to a country or city and has few friends.” Friendship here is measured in terms of social capital or resource (*bestand*) rather than the need for authentic human relationship marked by genuine concern and warmth.

The third possible trace of enframing that is observable in our modern society is the systematization of our educational institutions that accommodated empowerment technology as a mandatory core subject in Senior High School and removed Logic and Critical Thinking as a mandatory (General Education) core subject in the Higher Education Institutions. This trace of enframing can be deciphered in the person’s lack of critical thinking skills in the midst of one’s use of modern technology, in this case, the use of digital devices. The recent implementation of K to 12 in the Philippines always underscores equipping students with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, which in this sense is training them to manage technology almost impeccably. Its central mandate is to create a functional basic educational system that will produce productive and responsible citizens equipped with the essential competencies and skills mainly for future employment. Accordingly, the present senior high school integrates to its curriculum the efficient mastery over technology, which is “empowerment technology.” Again, what is in the mind of the educational institution is the urgency to master technology the moment it threatens to slip from man’s control. In all fairness, the relevance and benefits of this course is felt especially during the pandemic, when schools shifted from face-to-face to online or distance learning. On the other hand, the Higher Education’s removal of Logic and Critical thinking from its curriculum seems to challenge the critical thinking skills of the students (see Cortez, 2016) and reinforces an ‘enframed’ mentality where there is a dismal lack of awe, criticality and questioning. In Richard Pinner’s (2019) book titled *Augmented Communication: The Effect of Digital Devices on Face-to-Face Interactions*, he discusses the holistic effects of augmented communication and digital devices on face-to-face interactions. Originally, augmented communication is the use of technology of those speakers with disability to augment communication (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association 2017), but now, augmented communication is used by normal people to further enhance conversations (Pinner 2019, 2). Moreover, augmented communication is made possible by the use of digital devices like computers and smartphones. One striking observation that Pinner raised in his book is the effect of the use of these digital devices on our memory process as well as (and more importantly) on our critical thinking skills. With regard to the effects of the use of digital devices on one’s working/short-term memory, it seems that there is such an impairment. Pinner (2019) points out that there are articles and research studies which declare that smartphones could be damaging users’ working memory because they are ‘quickly becoming an extension of the human brain’ (Krauss Whitbourne 2011). A concrete example can be stated as to why a student should still make an effort to memorize all the concepts learned in class if all these concepts are readily available just by a single click on the internet. On the other hand, the skill significantly enhanced by the use of these digital devices is the ability to do multitasking (Baron 2008, 40-42). Another way of analyzing the effects of digital technology is by examining its implications on critical thinking. The surge of fake news and disinformation can easily be disseminated in the phenomenon called *thought contagion* (Lynch 1996). To define thought contagion: “Thought contagion basically

posits that ideas and thoughts can spread quickly through groups in much the same way as epidemics. *As a result, people can rapidly take on new ideas because of the power of a group, rather than taking the time to critically appraise and truly internalize the new values.*” (Pinner 2019, 102). By adhering more at the rationality of power or influence, the power of rationality is ignored. Moreover, “[a]ccording to research compiled by inbound marketing and sales company, HubSpot, 71% of people are more likely to make a purchase if referred by social media” (Ewing 2012). In this paper and in the concrete sense, the lack or absence of critical thinking, to borrow Kirby’s term, in a ‘digimodernist’ society, is deemed to be one of the hallmarks of an enframed society. Here is where the “distress of no distress” happens as well as the lack of enchantment and awe happens. Ultimately, the lack of critical thinking and questioning in the midst of corruption, social malaise and the proliferation of fake news, is where the oblivion of being happens.

The technological age in its new form, viz. digimodernism, audibly speaks for itself. It is not that we control technology. Rather, technology has already controlled us. As Heidegger aptly put it: The actual threat of technology has already affected man in his essence (Heidegger, 1977, p. 28). This is the impending doom that Heidegger is speaking about. It is not just that objects appear to us a standing reserve – only as another resource – but we ourselves, as the orderer, have merely become standing reserves. And worst, we are not even aware anymore of being’s revealing, thus the oblivion of being.

### Conclusion

The role of values in technology has been much discussed in recent times, particularly with respect to designing values into technologies (see van den Hoven, et al, 2015). As important as this work is, it is not our prime concern here. Our interest here is the role that cultural values play in our attitudes towards technology. Culture, with its embedded values, and technology, are closely intertwined. Karl Marx discussed this (Marx 1935, 92) but now we do not think in these terms so much, although Alan Drengson (1984) and Arnold Pacey (1983) at least, have emphasized it. Heidegger’s philosophy of technology, while offered a critical appraisal on technology, also alluded to a grand dystopia, where its people, absorbed by the danger of technology, i.e. enframing, lead dehumanized lives. The trajectory of Heidegger’s critique of technology extends from *machination* (*Machenschaft*) to *enframing* (*Ge-stell*). *Machination* treats everything around man as makeable objects through lived-experience. In this event, the danger is not yet downright but already discernible. In *enframing*, man as the sole orderer of revealing is himself deeply influenced and altered. The way man thinks, feels and acts is already ordered by technology, in this sense, by the digimodernist platforms. The traces of *enframing* in our modern society and culture are seen in three manners: first is through the rampant sexualization and objectification in our society as observed by Kirby (2009) which does not just perceive others as objects for one’s pleasure but makes as even the subject as ordered or *bestand*; second is by way of *digitalized/ordered* intimacy which treats others merely as a *social capital* in the midst of *social comparison*; third is the seeming lack or the absence of rationality or critical thinking in the midst of what Lynch calls as *thought contagion*. At this, there is no longer room for awe and enchantment. Instead of a meaningful interaction, young people today seem to be absorbed in the labyrinth of digital platforms and social media where he is treated as a mere standing reserve. In the same way, the manner he sees reality is the same as others. The twofold danger of technology expressed in *enframing* is here fulfilled. Man is reduced as a mere standing reserve through digimodernist means manifested in the conformity of human inherent characteristics such as human thinking, feeling and action. Secondly,

the ordering which drives out any other possibility of revealing is expressed in the banalizing effect of digimodernism. The way the person sees the digital realm is the way he sees reality. Thus, the fundamental trait of what makes man as he really is, is here put into question. Again, this paper does not undermine the benefits that our modern technology, in this case the digital technology, offers us. This humble work only tries to warn us about its possible danger. In our digital age, the supreme danger is when what essentially makes us as a human person, is thrown into oblivion.

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