

## **The Disappearance of *Language and the Relevance of Poetry and Art* as Forms of Truth-Revealing in the Technological Unconcealment**

**Dr. Anthony Ichuloi**

Lecturer Mt. Kenya University, Kenya

### **\*Corresponding Author:**

Dr. Anthony Ichuloi

Email: [anthonichuloi@gmail.com](mailto:anthonichuloi@gmail.com)

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**Abstract:** This article is a philosophical reflection on the impact of modern technology on human language and the relevance of poetry and art as basic forms of truth-revealing of the ontological significance of entities. The reflection does not advocate for a Luddite's regard to technology; however, it describes modern technology as a fundamental aspect of modern subjects, which entails both positive and negative implications on language as a basic human fact. The article argues on the basis that information and communication technologies (ICTs) relentlessly transform human language and human creativity into measurable units of information and production for consumption, while obscuring its ontological and disclosive nature. As a response to technological enframing, it is imperative for art and poetry (as non-manipulative forms of disclosure of entities) to break with technological calculative thinking, and enucleate the meaning of modern technology to its ultimate end, which is basically to correctly serve human purpose and nature in general. Appropriation of Heidegger's thought in this article places my reflections on ICTs, language (poetry) and art on a metaphysical level meriting a philosophical reflection.

**Keywords:** human language, poetry, art, Heidegger's thought, modern technology

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### **Introduction**

As a characteristic of our being, technology as a human phenomenon has today gained an internal relationship with us. Technology is "inside" us, is "inside our world" and it is our lived-experience [1]; we live *through, with* and *in* it [2]. We can no longer conceive of technology in its traditional sense as something that is external to us. This internal relation of technology is affirmed by the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset when he said: "man without technology is not man [3]." Technology has become an indispensable dimension of our being, and it is impossible today to think of being human, independent of our *being-with-technology*. However, the fundamental and critical issue, which is the concern of this article, is that, technology, especially information and communication technologies (ICTs) relentlessly transform human language and human creativity expressed in art into measurable units of information and production for consumption, while obscuring the nature of entities it claims to unconceal. Technology is paradoxical in its operational structure; it hides its true essence. As we live in this complex and technologically-defined world, we rarely stop to think critically about the extent to which ICTs determine the fundamental role of language and art in their attempt to manifest reality in its pristine manner. While more ICTs are invented, we need to reflect on our relationship with

them in terms of whether they truly enhance our linguistic (*poetic*) abilities and artistic presentation of the world or not. It is fundamental to ask ourselves: To what extent do the technologies we employ affect our linguistic articulation of the reality? I will try to answer this basic question in this article. However, before discussing the relationship between technology and language, poetry and art, as its basis, I want to examine the original meaning of technology.

### **The Greeks' Notion of Technology (*Techné, Poésis and Episteme*)**

In the above introduction, I claimed that to consider technology as an instrument and activity that humans perform does not tell us much about the true essence of technology and I further indicated that the very enabling technological tools we use for communication have reconstituting downsides. Since the instrumental view of technology is inadequate, Heidegger conceives of technology as a way of *revealing* or bringing out of concealment. How does he reach the conclusion that technology is a way of *revealing*? Heidegger had to refer to the Greeks to look for the original and literal meaning of the word technology. The word *technology* stems from the Greek word *techné*, which designates skill, art, and craft, as well as a mode of doing or making in terms of production. Heidegger goes so far as saying:

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“... *techné* is the name not only for the activities and skills of the craftsman, but also for the arts of the mind and the fine arts. *Techné* belongs to bringing-forth, to *poiesis*; it is something *poietic* [4].”

It is *poetic* in the sense that through *techné* something is *produced*. It is a way of bringing out something from the concealment to un-concealment. The best example to explain this is the *techné* of making a human statue. It is a way of bringing forth or showing the beautiful nature of the human body. Heidegger goes on to argue that, “what is decisive in *techné* does not lie at all in making and manipulating or in the using of means, but rather, in the aforementioned revealing. It is as revealing, and not as manufacturing, that *techné* is a bringing-forth, [5]” a manner of disclosing reality in its ontological significance. This is why *techné* as craft-making is also *techné* as art [6]. *Techné* in this sense of craftsmanship is very much related to *poiesis*, the Greek word from which the English word poetry is derived. Poetry is identified with production or revealing in the sense that any activity which undertakes to *cause* certain effects and so on, with the avowed goal of a certain type of object in mind (production in general), is a kind of poetry/*poies is*, even if we do not usually think of such endeavours as *poetic*.

Moreover, poetry is the *process* whereby something that was not there, not *present*, is created, brought-forth, *produced* and, as such, becomes something that is made *present* for us. It has been made present for us through the modes of its occasioning. *Poies is*, according to Heidegger, is essentially understood to be a kind of production, what he terms bringing-forth [7]. In the above cited fragment, *poiesis* is taken to mean poetry, *precisely* in the sense of a bringing-forth, that is, in the sense of producing or creating. So, it is an art of bringing-forth into imagery the reality of something. Like the basic meaning of its etymology, poetry is production and a way of *revealing* something that is concealed, which does not lie at all in the modern and conventional conception of technology that is moored to a means-ends schema of human instrumentality against nature or manipulating nature [8]. Poetry lies in the *revealing*, where what is to be revealed is unconcealed in its pristine and original way without any form of manipulation.

In addition, both *poies is* and *techné* are related to the idea of *episteme* [9] or knowledge. *Episteme* was first used by Aristotle to mean wisdom or knowledge [10]. In other words, *episteme* has to do with knowledge in the broadest sense of the word, where today we get the word epistemology, to denote knowledge, which for Heidegger is also a *revealing* [11].

Fusing together *techné*, *poiesis* and *episteme*, that is, linking the power of making (*techné*) as

primarily a mode of bringing-forth (*poiesis*), in which what is revealed is truth (*episteme*) although different, we see that they have the same essence, they are all processes of revealing, bringing-forth, producing and opening up.

As argued previously, what Heidegger does in his dramatic expression is to take us away from the conventional colloquial and instrumentalist understanding of technology, as “a means to a predetermined end”, toward an idea of technology as an originary form of truth-revealing, a disclosing of worlds and humans, and consequently, a form of *being-in-the-world*. Heidegger claims that “technology is a mode of *revealing*. Technology comes to presence in the realm where revealing and un-concealment take place, where *aletheia*, truth, happens [12].” For if we understand Heidegger correctly, the essence of technology is the poetic process of bringing something into presence and, as a mode of revealing, which *frames* a world that is unfolded or unconcealed in the process. In this sense, therefore, *techné*, *poies is* and *episteme* all relate to one another [13] in Heidegger’s usage.

The distinctive feature of modern ICTs from the above Greek meaning is that even though they are a mode of truth-revealing which enables a renewed experience of the world by enhancing our appreciation and understanding of the phenomena, they also constrain the reality of what is communicated to us in a very particular and unique way. Heidegger, in a general way describes modern technology in the mindset of the modern subject as something that engages its sustaining environment in a very constraining, parasitic and resource-oriented way [14]. We are now in what Albert Borgmann calls the regime of the *device paradigm* [15], where the ICTs we use in our daily engagements, such as automobiles, ipads, smart-phones, and computers now signify the kind of people we are obscuring other forms of life assessment. Feenberg argues that today, we ‘wear’ our technologies just as we wear clothes and jewellery, as forms of self-presentation [16]. In our technologised world, not only are we what we do, but, more emphatically, we are what we *have*, *use* and *consume*.

Because of the elusive nature of the mentioned technologies, man is no longer capable of giving direction and orientation to them; he seems to have totally lost control of his technology, which, as a result, has come to control him in a manner of reconstituting his being [17]. Keeping the same line of thought, taking technology in a general sense, Langdon Winner argues that, technology is not just a discrete aspect of modern experience; it has also gained autonomy over the modern subject’s self-determining character [18]. In other words, technology renders the human subject powerless at the face of her own life, so that she begins to identify herself with her technology. An example that

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illustrates this claim is that of the automobile. Automobile ownership today involves far more than transportation: it symbolizes the owner's status in society. In poor contexts, it has even greater symbolic meaning than in rich ones, signifying the achievement of modernity and its vision of a rich and fulfilling life. In such cases the automobile that is meant to be a means has turned out to shape human identity, making us incapable of encountering ourselves – our own selfhood. Pope Paul VI observes the challenge of technology to human subjectivity when he argues:

“Today, the human race is involved in a new stage of history. Profound and rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the whole world. Triggered by the intelligence and creative energies of man, these changes recoil upon him, upon his decisions and desires, both individual and collective, and upon his manner of thinking and acting with respect to things and to people. Hence we can already speak of a true cultural and social transformation, one which has repercussions on man's religious life as well.” [19]

In its general form, technology challenges our individual subjective experiences and the manner in which we communicate and interpret those experiences (seen as the basis of our subjectivity) and ourselves. It does so by reducing direct human experiences to its mediating framework, obscuring all other forms of human subjectivity, particularly our individual and communal self-determination in regard to what is to be revealed. This displacement of the centrality of human experience means technology inaugurates substantial shifts in our habitual modes of living and unconcealment of reality. In the next subsection, I shall contrast the concept of technological revealing or bringing-forth, which is a particular modern way of approaching reality, a dominating and controlling one in which reality can appear only as raw material to be manipulated with the significance of language as an original way of unconcealment of entities.

### **The Wavering Un-concealing nature of Language**

Language is a basic and constitutive human fact, considered by Heidegger as the linguistic form of *being-in-the-world*. [20] As a basic human fact, language is distinctive characteristic humans possess, unlike their animal counterparts. To be human is to have language. This claim is reiterated by Heidegger when he asserts:

“The capacity to speak distinguishes the human being as a human being. Such a distinguishing mark bears in itself the very design of human essence. Man would not be man if it were denied him to speak ... the essence of man consists in language.” [21]

What Heidegger states is nothing new in the common field of knowledge and human understanding. Language is something that is inbuilt in us, and to be human is to have language; it defines us. However, the intriguing issue according to Heidegger is that language expresses itself as *discourse*, [22] a medium through which human subjects disclose themselves and comport themselves towards entities and so define themselves in the world; discourse is always about something. Heidegger elaborates this when he affirms:

“To *Dasein's* disclosedness, however, discourse belongs essentially. *Dasein* expresses itself: it expresses itself as a Being-towards entities, a Being-towards which uncovers.” [23]

Heidegger's assertion does not consider language to consist merely of spoken words or as a collection of logically structured propositions. More importantly, when we speak to others (and even to ourselves) what matters for Heidegger is what we actually speak or talk about. Our talk should disclose something about our world, [24] and it should explain 'significantly' the intelligibility of our *being-in-the-world*. This is basically because language is ontological; it relates us to reality, calling on us to think, as it gives expression to or articulates what is concealed.

This account of the character of language for human subjectivity raises a fundamental question: Why should Heidegger endeavour to present language in such a technical way? Heidegger has an answer for that. He thinks that it is basically because of the nature of our modern ICTs: predictive text messages email, etc. With such ubiquitous means of communication, many other options of revealing and articulating the world, such as *poetry* and *art* are undermined, to the point where we no longer think very deeply about the words we use. Why? The prosaic nature of modern ICTs ascribe to themselves a language that does not call for deep thinking or any form of un-concealment of whatever is in the world. Things are so because the *other*, or the television, radio, internet, newspaper, etc., say so. [25] In his *Basic Writings*, Heidegger emphatically explains this, when he asserts:

“En-framing, the essence of modern technology that holds sway everywhere, ordains for itself a formalized language – that kind of informing by virtue of which man is moulded and adjusted into the technical-calculative creature, a process by which step-by-step he surrenders his “natural language.” [26]

ICTs, which include radio and television, and the Internet – are regarded as potentially and powerful enabling tools for educating the public. When used appropriately, different ICTs are said to help create, educate and expand awareness among the public in

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terms of disclosing what goes around them. However, the integration of ICTs into our regard to reality is a complex, multifaceted process that entails serious implications on humans. As Heidegger puts it in the above text, the modern scientific and technological way of communication have led us to lose touch with reality and our communication has become what today we would call public opinion. Heidegger thinks that we no longer communicate the essential truths of our human existence and that of the world. Our misuse or unreflective use of the daily mass media, television programs, emails, etc., block out our sense of what might actually be important to be communicated. Despite the flooding of new ICTs and having more information in our advancing technological world, we actually know less and less, since they only present the *ontical* facts of our world, undermining the ontological significance of what is being communicated. These technologies have the tendency to provide surplus information to the extent that whatever is communicated no longer engages us and does not have to engage us because as soon as we tire of one news story two others clamour for our attention. They create curiosity and desire to experience new ideas and sensations without our attempt to understand and integrate them into our own actual condition. Sometimes the logic of the mass media is to create curiosity in the public of what is in the market. Heidegger explains curiosity as that which “concerns itself with seeing, not in order to understand what is seen... but just in order to see. It seeks novelty only in order to leap from it anew to another novelty.” [27] This curiosity is manifested more in the public sphere where people rush to acquire or use new communication technologies that come into the market.” [28] The example of the social networks, Facebook and Twitter would serve to illustrate the problem. Our engagement with these technologies is what Heidegger would call ‘idle chatter’: when we sit, meet in the streets, and when we speak of things of the day, we text messages to each other, we make fun, etc. Heidegger would think that in all this we actually do not make genuine conversations and disclosure of what seems to be of great concern. He would think that this is mere gossip or ‘idle chatter’, which has its own negative repercussions for ontological comportment. Heidegger explains:

“... when *Dasein* maintains itself in idle talk, it is ... cut off from its primary and primordially genuine relationships-of-being towards the world, towards *Dasein*, with, and towards its very being-in.” [29]

What Heidegger means is that, just like curiosity, idle talk leads what is spoken about or communicated to have no substantial meaning at all; idle chatter does not explain our relationship to the world, nor enable us to transform and transcend it, which for him is essential in the use of language as a

basic fact of being human. In other words, idle talk does not respond to the real ontological purpose of language, which is to un-conceal or bring to light what is essential for human existence. [30] Behind social and information networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and the rest, what seems to be a ruling principle is not so much about communication of the facts of reality anymore, but rather, commercial purposes and domination of personal data for mass analysis. All personal and communal issues are commoditized and commercialized and thus do not serve their real purpose, which is to explain reality. Under the commercial rule, the profound effect is that, today, in communication and information websites, the human subject has been made into a set of online metadata; she has been reduced and everything of who she is shrinks to statistical traits: her individual character, her friendships, her feelings and sensibility, her desires and fears. All these characteristics have been substituted by the exchange of those sensations which are deemed by social networks to matter for their own purposes. With such networks, our denuded, networked selves are not free anymore; they are owned, monitored and manipulated by extrinsic instrumental concerns with a market label. Whatever is unusual about us gets flattened out. Thus, the tendency of modern information technologies is to use speech, discourse or language to cater these to manipulate sensations, feelings, etc., of the public for the purpose of profit-making.

Language, whether written or spoken today in the modern world has lost its un-concealing power, given that it has been made into mere *information* that only ‘informs’ us of what is going on around us. Computers, language-machines, satellites, various techniques of advertising, these are a standing proof of the growing phenomenon of language as ‘information’ devoid of genuine speaking. As I already explained, Heidegger affirms that speaking is characteristic of man; man speaks always even when he does not utter a word. Speech belongs to man’s very nature, distinguishing him from other entities. However, with modern means of communication and electronic gadgets, even genuine speech is lost. Modern man seems to work under the principle, *write and report first, then, think later*. This principle is caused by the pressure of time-space and commercial purposes; every local media outlet wants to create curiosity, say something in order to sell more information, there is competition to see who reports the most and covers the widest range of information as forms of self-marketing. In all this competition, human reason is put to rest and language does not call for thinking. This denotes the loss of authentic human subjectivity in the way we are in the world, resulting in our inability to take responsibility for our views insofar as we constitute public opinion. [31]

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It is important to take into account that Heidegger does not say that the mood of curiosity that drives this is absolutely bad. In fact, the mood of curiosity when applied to modern means of communication helps us to be involved with entities, with what is going on around the world and with others. Moods engage us with reality, which is a pretty good thing. Our knowledge is based first and foremost on this mood of curiosity. [32] However, Heidegger also thinks that curiosity is an inauthentic way of relating with the world expressed through the sense of wonder. We cannot just remain at this level of superficiality; we have to go deep into its ontology for it to become meaningful in revealing the significance behind modern communication technologies. *Ontically*, our everyday use of language remains important in our modern technological existence, but *ontologically*, which is a fundamental level of relating with reality, our everyday use of language is not taken seriously. We ought not to remain only on the *ontic* level of the use of language; it should be considered to be the beginning level, but it should lead us to the deeper ontological level, which modern technological existence tends to undermine.

The Heideggerian analysis of language exposes his critique of modern mass culture, of science and technology. Modern science and technological means of communication alienate us from the disclosure of things from the standpoint of inner human experience; things are described from an external and *ontical* standpoint. Modern means of communication have done away with singular experience, and what is to be communicated is always mediated: the printed text, radio, television, electronic signal, expansion of modern institutions, the internet, cell phones, Facebook, etc., all mediate our basic experiences, which are fundamental for our personhood as world-forming subjects. The preferred visual images which television, films and videos present, and which capture our attention, no doubt create textures of mediated experiences. However, in all this avalanche of information, language and what is communicated has been reduced to *logistics*, or to ideas that do not conform to the “ontological structure” of language itself, leading to its devaluation and invisibility. However, Heidegger reminds us that the purpose of language is to articulate the world, to ‘let the things be,’ so that we may un-conceal what is essential to our existence.

### **Poetry, Art and Human Revelatory Truth**

Even though modern ICTs seem to undermine the revelatory role of language, not all appears to be lost; we moderns can embark on the unmediated treasure of *poetry* as language and *art* as non-technological and human mediums through which the ontological significance of entities can directly be disclosed. In regard to that, I claim that, a return to *poetry* and *art* emphasises the fact that overcoming

technological monopoly and manipulation cannot be realised only by philosophy in its reflective manner, even though it is important. We have to get to a deeper metaphysical level of *poetry* and *art* to help us to disclose human subjectivity and the world in their mysterious nature. We have to reflect on the character and nature of these human abilities of *poetry* and *art*, since consideration of both will give us insight into the ontological significance of the sort of reality they tend to disclose, as opposed to the inductive, aggressive and exploitative approach of science and technology on nature. *Poetry* as language and *art* are two fundamental ways of truth-revealing that have been overlooked or pushed to the periphery by the monopoly of modern technological *revealing* [33], reduced to the service of technology, losing their significance for human existence and the meaning of reality [34]. Recognising the importance of *poetry* and *art*, Heidegger thinks that, in *poetry* and *art* there occurs a “decisive confrontation” [35] with the reconstituting power of modern technology. *Poetry* and *art* demand direct human participation or subjectivity, disclosing the meaning of reality that is continuously obscured by the technological frame of significance.

To attain the relevance of *poetry* and *art* in relation to the already discussed problems of modern technology, as a starting point, it is insightful for us to get back to the issue of *questioning* our resort to technology. Underlining the importance of *poetry* and *art*, Heidegger, thinks that in *questioning* our resort to technology we come to the point where another kind of thinking akin to its essence would be necessary. That kind of thinking, according to him is *poetry* and *art*. Heidegger turns to *poetry* and *art*, basically because unlike the manipulative revealing of modern technology, both *poetry* and *art* reveal reality in a way that respects its ontological structure and significance. A painting, for example, lends significance to the representation of what it depicts; it brings out the form of what it represents, but also it points back to itself as a good work of *art*, for human admiration. Thus, *poetry* and *art* disclose what either the poet or the artist wants to reveal without exploiting the reality in question the way modern science and technology do [36]. Feenberg in his commentary on Heidegger explains the importance of *art* and *poetry* as follows, saying:

“Heidegger believes that *art* and *craft* are ontological ‘openings’ or ‘clearings’ through which ordered worlds are constituted. The jug gathers together nature, man and gods in the pouring of libation. A Greek temple lays out a space within which the city lives and grows. The poet establishes meanings that endure and bring a world to light. All these forms of *technē* let things appear as what they most profoundly are, in some sense, prior to human willing and making.” [37]

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With the same line of thought regarding the ontological significance of reality, Feenberg's affirmation of Heidegger's reflection is that *art* and *poetry* disclose things in their original sense. Unlike *art* and *poetry*, technological revealing is precisely that which has no entity centred presence. In its gathering towards orderly information flows, it circumscribes reality as with an invisible mathematical line such that "what is present is present in a representation that has the character of calculation. Such representation knows nothing immediately perceptual. What can be immediately seen when we look at things, the image they offer to immediate sensible intuition, falls away. The calculating production of technology is an 'act without an image'" [38]. The conscious immediacy of being concerned with a thing escapes technology for technology is representational mediation. As we noted earlier, technological form of revealing, what Heidegger calls *enframing* [39] is involved in being as means to predetermined ends. In this way we can see the discrepancy between *techné* and *poiesis* as ways of revealing: *poiesis* as that which brings forth to presence, while modern *techné* simply provides a way of ordering such as informational standing-reserve. In other words, modern technology does not *allow* things to appear as they are, but *causes* them to appear by forcing them to respond to its structural operations of efficiency and production, interfering with their ontological meanings. Entities are perceived from a resource oriented perspective, as existing for maximization that will bring further production for consumption and capital benefits.

### Poetry

Earlier I explained that language is a central issue for humans, highlighting that for Heidegger, language is not just an instrument for communication, but that it also has a central role in the disclosure of the world for us: language is the basis and medium through which humans as world-disclosers make entities understood and articulated. In his later philosophy, Heidegger once more turns to language, but this time he addresses poetry. He asserts:

"*Poetry*, however, is not an aimless imagining of whimsicalities and not a flight of mere notions and fancies into the realm of the unreal. What poetry, as clearing projection, unfolds of unconcealment and projects ahead into the rift-design of the figure, is the open region which poetry lets happen, and indeed in such a way that only now, in the midst of beings, the open region brings beings to shine and ring out." [40]

What Heidegger does in this claim is to elevate the ontological status of *poetry* as language to a more primal level than modern science and technology, with regard to the function of reality's disclosure. [41] His fundamental argument is that poetic language is not speculation about reality, but rather, it is a disclosure

through which the meaning of reality and basic facts about human existence are explained. Elaborating what Heidegger says, Krell remarks:

"Calculative kind of thinking...does not fulfil all the requirements of man's thinking nature. Poets demand of us another kind of thinking - less exact but no less strict." [42]

Krell means that *poetry* does not use scientific and mathematical formulae to arrive at exact conclusions, but that *poetry* has its own importance in *revealing* truth different from that of science and technology. Krell does not intend to replace *calculative thinking* with *poetry*, but to underline the inadequacy of such thinking and the importance of *poetry* in accessing the human truths undermined by science and technology. Emphasising the point, Richard Rorty argues for the need to turn back to simple words, and "hear them in the way in which a poet hears them when deciding whether to put one of them at a certain place in a certain poem [43]." That is, unlike technology that looks to manipulate and exploit the resources for maximum production and economic benefits, for a poet *poetry* is not just a means to an end in the same way technology is to production; rather, *poetry* constructs and communicates certain values (respect and contemplation to the things revealed) and thoughts (our positive attitudes) about human existence. Heidegger affirms this claim saying:

"... more venturesome are the poets, but poets whose song turns our unprotected being into the Open [...] The converting inner recalling is the daring that dares to venture forth from the nature of man, because man has language" [44]

The argument is that it is the poets, embracing a non-orderly confusion of revealing reality who might venture forth beyond technological *en-framing*. Reiterating the value of *poetry*, De Beistegui asserts:

"In and through the poem, we open ourselves to language made simply impossible. And in doing so, we open ourselves to ourselves, and this means to our relation to the world, to things and to others, in a way that is not instrumental." [45]

The argument is that *poetry* opens other ways of reflecting and *revealing* the truth about reality beyond the scientific and technological manipulation of the nature of reality, to which *calculative thinking* is aesthetically constrained. By this I mean the poet names things, by making them present, real and lasting in their distinctive pristine and original form, in a kind of ontological revealing. Heidegger directly says: "The poetical brings the true into splendour, ... that which shines forth most purely." [46] In other words, authentic *poetry* lights up and illumines insights into the revelation of reality, which Heidegger laments to be

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devalued by technology in its focus on *means-ends* reasoning:

“Above all, *enframing* conceals that revealing which, in the sense of *poiésis*, lets what presents itself come forth into appearance.” [47]

Apart from disclosing reality, Heidegger introduces another important aspect of *poetry*. He thinks *poetry* builds *dwelling thinking*, [48] and that modern technology disposes *poetry* from this basic function of rooting man in his *dwelling* in the world. To understand what Heidegger means by *dwelling*, it is important to go back to the conventional meaning. Conventionally, a *dwelling* is thought to be a physical place where someone lives. Unlike this conventional conception, in Heidegger’s terms, *dwelling* refers to humans having around them a world that is familiar, within which they can feel more at home with things, [49] taking care of them as part of their world without adopting the detached, externalising and manipulative stance of modern technology. In the context of *dwelling*, it is only humans that  *dwell*. *Dwelling* is an appropriate word only for humans. Other entities cannot  *dwell*, since they are not consciously aware of their existence as entities, and cannot improve their environment for a proper  *dwelling*. Conceiving of it this way,  *dwelling*, therefore, becomes the alternative to alienation that leads to rootlessness and homelessness, which Heidegger has attributed to the situation of modern subjects in the technological world, where they are estranged from the entities that form an integral part of their world of relationships.

But how does  *dwelling* relate to  *poetry* and technology? For Heidegger, true  *dwelling* requires  *poetry*, because poetic thinking is concerned with the disclosure of entities in a more friendly and respectful manner, conveying sense and significance to those entities beyond the remit of ICTs calculative thinking. Heidegger thinks man dwells poetically, since poetry is founded on bestowing meaning and grounding entities. It grounds the human subject in her  *dwelling*. [50] Reiterating this point, Tonner explains that “ *poetry*, of all the  *arts*, is privileged precisely because it draws on the very essence of what it means to be a human being” [51] in his world, so that through its manner of revealing  *poetry* grounds man’s comportment to his world.

Unlike technological thinking,  *poetry* is not narrowed down to means-end results. Rather,  *poetry* ensures we can think or imagine as natural human beings and not rely on science and technology with their  *calculative* vision of life. It manifests our nature as openness, which makes possible infinite possibilities and allows for the  *letting-be* of things, relating us with them in a non-objectifiable realm of existence (like the famous  *fourfold*: Earth, Sky, Divinities [gods] and other Mortals) [52] beyond the claims of science. These are

realities, according to Heidegger, that only poets represent:

“To ‘ *dwell poetically*’ means: to stand in the presence of the gods and to be involved in the proximity of the essence of things. Existence is ‘ *poetical*’ in its fundamental aspect ...” [53]

Heidegger’s four-fold transcendental levels, particularly of the gods, ground the ultimate  *saving power* he addresses, which is basically the recognition of meaningful forces that make us truly be  *at home* in the world besides technology. Heidegger further claims:

“Only a god can save us. The sole possibility that is left for us is to prepare a sort of readiness, through thinking and poetizing, for the appearance of the god...” [54]

Heidegger’s poetic remark in the text should not to be construed as a kind of desperate resignation toward technology, as Feenberg claims that Heidegger’s philosophy of technology sanctions a defeatist spirit. [55] Nor should it be taken to mean surrender to God as understood in the Christian world, but that it involves the recognition of a transcendental thinking that will impart a new technologically unmediated meaning to the world, [56] restoring us to a genuine sense of what it is to be  *at home* as world-forming subjects in the technological world. Botha explains this point remarkably:

“No all-powerful entity will redeem us. The moral, redemptive god is as dead for Heidegger as for Nietzsche. He advocates a god-less thinking which abandons a metaphysically constructed God, a God that can be known as an object that subjects evaluate.” [57]

Botha’s point is that, for Heidegger, the four-fold is not to be interpreted in some strict religious sense, but that it illustrate a need to appreciate transcendental forms of poetic thinking that are not merely instrumental, forms beyond the comprehension of our scientific and technological minds, which should be left to work if we are to attain our true  *dwelling* in the modern world. In other words, Heidegger’s acclamation, explained by Botha, implies a kind of ontological  *homelessness* experienced in the absence of the mysterious significance of reality, which is caused by the adoption of a scientific and technological lifestyle [58]. This is an issue of deep ontological concern, calling for a metaphysical thinking to lead us into a new understanding of what really matters or of what really makes meaningful our lived-experience in the world. For Botha, turning to the gods or divinities is a human activity and a thinking that gives room for us to contemplate the mystery of nature, and to ground our sense of  *dwelling* in the world.

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Heidegger considers this involvement of the four-fold as an alternative way of being to the technological manipulative way of life to which we moderns are accustomed, [59]establishing a different foundation from that of technology, through which our unmediated meaningful experiences of the world can be interpreted. It is therefore, a confrontation with the fundamental choice we are facing, at a time when we are so attached to technology that we sometimes fail to recognize other important forces at work that help us to  *dwell*  authentically in the world as humans.

Therefore, unlike technology that alienates humans from their free  *dwelling*  by rendering them incapable of having a world around them within which they are familiar or at  *home with, poetry*  grounds human existence by giving it greater participative relatedness to its environment, subjectively disclosing the ontological significance of entities, which constitute man's lived-experience [60]. Poetic thinking as a fundamental property of humanity keeps the real meaning of  *dwelling*  in harmony with  *being-in-the-world*  as world-forming agents, enabling us to relate with reality beyond the scientific and technological manipulative frame of reference.

#### Art

I have indicated above that, unlike the aggressive and exploitative approach of science and technology toward nature, Heidegger thinks a true return to  *art*  can help to solve some of the problems created by technological manipulative  *destiny* , by positively informing  *essential thinking*  through proper regard for the ontological nature and significance of reality [61]. On that basis, Heidegger writes:

“... essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on one hand akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it. Such realm is  *art* .” [62]

*Art*  is akin to the essence of technology as disclosure, though it is different from technological disclosure, in a manner I shall explain. For Heidegger,  *art*  is not just an object designed for aesthetic appreciation, nor the process or product of an artist's intentional activity, but is a moving force (a dynamic phenomenon) that discloses the truth about reality. As a moving force, Heidegger claims  *art*  to be the accomplishment or  *the happening of truth* . [63]This abstract assertion leads to the question: What kind of  *truth*  is revealed by  *art* ? To grasp what he means, the most basic thing is to understand that the truth of  *art*  claimed by Heidegger is not to be conceived of as correspondence or adequacy to the  *ontical*  facts of our existence, understood as epistemological truth. Of course, Heidegger does not deny assertive, propositional or epistemological truths, but his claim

goes deeper than this, to the consideration of truth as “ *aletheia* : a particular way of disclosure” [64] of whatever exists, especially the revelation of the nature of entities, [65]in their ontological significance.

In a poetic way, Heidegger says: “ *Art* , founding preserving, is the spring that  *leaps*  to the truth of what is, in the work.” [66]But how does  *art*  leap to the truth of what subsists in it? It does that by bringing with it the unmediated disclosure of the entity in question, as experienced and reflected upon by the artist himself. De Beistegui summarizes this point remarkably well when he affirms that  *art* , for Heidegger, represents the possibility of a relation to the world, and of  *dwelling*  on earth, free from technological manipulation; [67]Tonner holds that “ *art* , for Heidegger, was historically humanity's best hope of counteracting the holding sway of technology.” [68]Therefore, as the happening of truth, Heidegger means to say that  *art*  allows the truth of beings to be made manifest. [69]The work of  *art*  lays the groundwork and provides the necessary conditions under which  *art*  as an internal relationship can work its mystery of disclosing the truth of human responsibility and of our relationship with the natural world [70].  *Art*  holds the power to reveal the unmediated and un-manipulated truth about the reality it addresses, by disclosing its beauty, its delimitations, and its ontological meaning. Unlike technology, it promotes the direct individual human experience of the mystery of things through/by expressing humanity's connectedness with the beings of its concerns. Verbeek elaborates this point when he explains that  *art*  is a human production that does not set-upon reality into a  *standing-reserve*  for other exploitative purposes; it is a human product that shelters its appearance into being, explicitly within itself [71]. Ihde says that “ *art*  is essentially anti-reductive in its imaginative fecundity. Its  *worlds*  are effectively endless.” [72]  *Art* , therefore, is not an impositional construction; rather, it is an act of inspiration and intuition. The inspiration of the poet's and artist's work comes when it wants and not when it is willed, as with science and technological revealing.  *Art* 's relationship with nature is, therefore, different from that of technology, because  *art*  is not founded on the principle of violent manipulation that calculates, classifies and exploits entities, but is characterized by its respect for the beauty of the entity it discloses. It is important to understand that our recourse to  *art*  is not just another way to present and to manifest the world, but also it is a powerful way to work against technological sapping. It opens new possibilities of other knowledge or life-forms that may ground our  *being-in-the-world*  and comportment toward objects within the world beyond technological manipulation and monopoly. As an internal relationship,  *art*  assists human beings to question and to confront the dominant manipulating power of technology in such a way that the more we think essentially about reality in terms of



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its ontological significance, the deeper our relationship with it will be [73].

Another important aspect of *art* regards to the fact the understanding of our primordial relationship with the world is one of direct unmediated involvement with reality. Like poetry, as involvement, *art* brings up or intensifies this engagement with the world, defining our existence as world-forming agents. *Art* brings about the constituting of a meaningful disclosure of a way of life. This does not mean that technology does not help to shape *art*. In fact, advances in technology have obviously been essential enabling factors for many modern *art* forms, such as cinema and electronic music and the whole spectrum of human issues they present and represent. However, there is a problem with technology's contribution to *art*, since the modern artist, to take just one example, seems no longer to receive his or her insights and material from the natural world. Everything is designed scientifically, incapacitating and manipulating his individual creativity and his immediate experience of working with the available materials from the natural world for his activity. Other examples could be given, some of which seem to involve rather complex interconnections between *art* and science. But, despite the influence of technology, *art* as an internal relationship still reveals entities in their ontological structure and significance [74], respecting the nature of things that are revealed, while enjoying or expressing the beauty of human creativity and experience that is mediated by it. Furthermore, *art* does not exclude other modes of revealing besides itself as technology does.

Therefore, we have to conceive of *art* not merely as a presentation of the way things are, but more deeply, as the means of actively creating and providing a springboard from which "that which is" can be revealed and known in its ontological significance. *Art* enhances our relational consciousness in adhering to our call of *being-with* entities in a manner that promotes their being as entities with their specific function in the world. This is what Heidegger meant in regarding *art* as worth more than truth, where he conceives of *art* as an event of ontological *disclosiveness*, [75] distinguishing the truth revealed by *art* from mere epistemological truths, [76] not known to or beyond the sphere of science and technology.

### Conclusion

Technology is an indispensable aspect of our existence in the modern world and that it is a revealing of the world, humans, and things in the world – a mode of truth. However, it is not a revealing of 'bringing-forth' from concealment into presence, the process of *aletheia* as truth, the *poiesis* that is characteristic of art, *techné*, and anything that allows entities to reveal themselves on their own terms as one possibility of their being. No, technology is a revealing that orders,

challenges, and gathers entities into a specific, exclusive mode of being that Heidegger calls the *standing-reserve*. As such, technology takes hold of things and nature in a specific way: As ordered to be ready for use at any time, as energy to be unlocked, stored, and utilized for further extraction and manipulation. This is accomplished through man, by setting-upon him this task of ordering. Thus man is compelled by the essence of technology to view nature and things in it as what technology reveals them to be, namely as resources to be extracted and things as equally substitutable.

My discussion on *poetry* and *art* among the many solutions to technological monopoly of *truth revealing* does not intend to suggest we should all become linguists, artists and poets, but that we should incorporate into our view of existence the linguist's, artist's and the poet's vision of relating with the world. In so doing, we are enabled to reflect the mysteries and ontological meaning of reality, which in turn evokes a critical and questioning attitude toward our naïve and instrumental stances on the monopoly of modern technology in determining the meaning of our existence and that of the entities that constitute our life-world.

Participation in *poetry* and *art* inaugurates authentic human subjectivity from that which is reconstituted by science and technology to a mode by which we take an active part in giving meaning to our existence as disclosure of the ontological significance of entities (disclosure of Being). When ICTs become the sole method for interpreting the world, the world becomes the instrumental resource for technological purposes, losing its primary ontological meaning, but *poetry* as language and *art* can help us to maintain our subjective role and responsibility toward the disclosure of those entities that form the world of our *dwelling*, beyond the technological mode of revealing that has now claimed a higher manipulative position in our relationship with the world.

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  14. Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, *Op. Cit.*, 27.
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  18. Langdon Winner, *Autonomous Technology: Techniques-out-of-Control as a Theme in Political Thought*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977, 57.
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  21. Martin Heidegger, "The Way to Language", in *Basic Writings: From "Being and Time" (1927) to "The Task of Thinking" (1964)*, *Op. Cit.*, 285-6.
  22. Discourse, is an interpretive power of language, considered by Heidegger as the proper use of language, which is revealing of the ontological significance of entities it explains, a form of self-disclosure and the un-concealment of other entities. Discourse is different from speech, which is ontical, which we use to communicate the ordinary events of life and basic truths about our human existence and ourselves. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *Op. Cit.*, 203-4; George Vensus, *Authentic Human Destiny: The Paths of Shankara and Heidegger*, Washington: Library of Congress Cataloguing Publication, 1998, 112-3.
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  35. Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, *Op. Cit.*, 34-5.
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  37. Andrew Feenberg, *Questioning Technology*, New York: Routledge, 1999, 184.
  38. Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translation by Albert Hofstadter, New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1983, 126-127.
  39. En-framing literally means to put into a frame a certain set of things. Heidegger uses it to mean putting into the frame of modern technology everything in nature, including the human subject. This "frame" of modern technology is the network of positioning or setting-upon everything into a standing-reserve for maximum future use. Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, *Op. Cit.*, 16-19.
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