

Conscientious Co-Determination: A Heideggerian and Wojtylan Ethics of Technology

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Abstract: Technology, as an important aspect of human civilization, is considered an aid that potentially augment daily activities. However, a distorted perception of technology may lead in a paradoxical understanding of its impact on the human *life-world*. This is a result of technology's ability to either reveal or *enframe* us from the truths of the world. This aligns with Heidegger's contention that technology, through its ability of *enframing*, can devalue human beings. As such, they may be reduced to mere *standing reserves* to which we become resources meant for exploitation. Wojtyla, similarly engages in a dialogue by expressing a concern on technology's potential threat to human beings rather than an ally. Therefore, Heidegger's philosophy of technology and Wojtyla's *Laborem Exercens* (on Human Labor) offer a complementary perspective concerning the ethics of technology. To analyze the impact of technology within the human *life-world*, this paper explores the perspective on technology and human relations of Martin Heidegger, providing a general thought on the critique of technology, and Karol Wojtyla's philosophy of *personalism*, as presented in this encyclical on human labor. Specifically, this paper in dialogue between Heidegger and Wojtyla. This emphasizes the revealing aspect of technology, as well as the impact of technology within the human *life-world*. Consequently, in forming an ethical consideration, I argue that the dialogue between humanity and technology leads to the fulfillment of a human ethical responsibility in the use of technology. Furthermore, the dialogue enters as a kind of *praxis* in response to the issues of technology, such as social media and artificial intelligence. This is why the dialogue becomes necessary in serving as an alternative approach to technology. It highlights the intrinsic value present both in humans and technology. Finally, through this dialogue, the study seeks to strengthen and enrich contemporary ethical discourse on technology by contrasting and complementing classical and modern perspectives.

Keywords: *conscientious co-determination, ethics, Heidegger, technology, Wojtyla*

Introduction

The emergence of technology has brought convenience and increased production in the daily lives of human beings. Technology serves as a tool for work efficiency, as well as ease in leisure. Such advancements have brought progress within the human *life-world*.¹ For instance, the

¹ *Life-world* [German: *Lebenswelt*], in Phenomenology, is the world that is immediately or directly experienced in the subjectivity of everyday life. This includes individual, social, perceptual, and practical experiences. In the context of

increased productivity of humans in their work, as well as reduced social inequality by enabling better access to currently strained services.² However, the perception of human beings toward the use of technology may lead to negative effects. Rather than being considered as an aid to modern-day difficulties, technology might become a disruptive tool, for instance, a subject to deviate from laws. This leads to the misuse of technology for malignant intents such as filtration, censorship, surveillance, and other forms of control.³ Such concerns arise as it elicits the potentiality of human beings to be deprived of freedom, infringement of privacy rights, and the disruption of human dignity collectively. With such emergence, ethics will come into an analysis of establishing considerations that will systematize the distinction between the “right-ness” and “wrong-ness” of the use and development of technology. This will expose how human beings can use technology in the right way in elaborating its purpose using a grassroots approach to ethics.

The problem was posited in the following philosophical tenets: Martin Heidegger, in his essay “Questions Concerning Technology,” views technology as potentially harmful if our urge to master technology causes instead to slip from our control, which may cause us to lose focus on other valuable means of understanding the truths of the world.⁴ Conversely, Karol Wojtyla expresses his personalist philosophy in his encyclical⁵ *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work). Wojtyla contends that while technology can be a beneficial tool, it can cease to be a human’s ally and become almost their enemy if it commences on replacing humans in their very primary nature of work, hence, taking away from their opportunities for employment, satisfaction, creativity, and freedom.⁶ Concerning their significance in the study, these two philosophers, though being disparate since Heidegger has secular roots and Wojtyla is immersed in Neo-Scholasticism, elicit a complementary thought that presents a novel understanding that contributes to the discourse of ethics and philosophy of technology. Their thoughts were honed even before the emergence of advanced technologies, yet they have presented its problem which is evident at present, and it is thus fitting to consider them so as to strengthen and complete the new with the aid of the old.

This paper will present the problem of technology as a paradox, highlighting its dual potential for both good and bad outcomes depending on human use and perception. It will then examine Heidegger’s general critique of technology alongside Wojtyla’s personalist philosophy, and his thoughts as expressed in *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Labor). Consequently, this study will explore the meeting points between their ideas, particularly regarding the revealing aspect of technology and its

the paper, *life-world* entails to the perception and experiences that is brought out of human’s engagement with technology as they experience the aspects of life, particularly the social and the individual. See The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Life-World,” last modified March 17, 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/life-world>.

² Christopher Burr, Mariarosaria Taddeo, and Luciano Floridi, “The Ethics of Digital Well-Being: A Thematic Review,” *Science and Engineering Ethics* 26, no. 4 (January 13, 2020): 2314.

³ National Academy of Engineering, “The Misuse of Technologies,” in *Sensing and Shaping Emerging Conflicts: Report of a Workshop by the National Academy of Engineering and United States Institute of Peace Roundtable on Technology, Science, and Peacebuilding* (Washington: The National Academies Press, 2013), 37.

⁴ See Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” in *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays* trans. William Llovit (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977).

⁵ An encyclical is a pastoral letter written by the pope for the whole Roman Catholic Church on matters of doctrine, morals, or discipline. See The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Encyclical | Pope, Catholic Church, Doctrine,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last modified July 20, 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/encyclical>.

⁶ Cf. John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* [Encyclical Letter on Human Work], The Holy See, September 14, 1981, sec. 5, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html.

impact on the human *life-world*. Through a complementary analysis⁷ the novel concept of *conscientious co-determination* shall be formed.⁸ This consideration will enter as a *praxis* into the issues of technology: social media calling for the ethical responsibility in engaging with such, though it is an avenue for virtual camaraderie and the exploration of diverse cultural background, it may be abused due to the distort perception of humans to such.⁹ Similarly, artificial intelligence¹⁰ raises concerns about supplanting human thinking through the overreliance to such tool. Ultimately, this study argues that *conscientious co-determination* between humanity and technology leads to the fulfillment of human ethical responsibility in the use of technology.

Heidegger's Philosophy of Technology

At the heart of Martin Heidegger's thought is the idea that technology is a revealing phenomenon rather than merely a tool. In viewing such advancements beyond its "means-to-an-end" perspective, we can mitigate technology's impact that either reveals or conceals the truths of the world. This challenges us to reconsider our relationship with technology and the broader technological landscape. In emphasizing the concept of "*enframing*,"¹¹ Heidegger unveils how technology shapes our understanding of our *life-world*, which frames our perception of reality in ways that often go unnoticed.¹² This framework urges us to have a critical outlook on how technology will influence human subjectivity, agency, and the very essence of "being." If we approach technology as a revealing force that has the potential to either augment or supplant human existence,¹³ Heidegger encourages us to cultivate a conscientious interaction with technological advancements—one that moves beyond mere utility toward a deeper consideration of human flourishing through his outlook on "*poiesis*."¹⁴

⁷ A research methodology, wherein information and ideas garnered from different methods are pieced or merged together such that each reinforces another to create a more complete, more comprehensive whole. See Pat Bazeley, "Complementary Analysis of Varied Data Sources," in *Integrating Analyses in Mixed Methods Research* (SAGE Publications Ltd., 2018), 91.

⁸ A consideration wherein a mindful engagement with technology that aims to augment *personalistic* qualities is implied that considers the significant role of humans and technology in pursuit of common goals and promoting mutual benefit through reciprocal actions.

⁹ The concern of social media, specifically of the platform "Omegle" being an avenue for sexual trafficking.

¹⁰ The concern on Artificial Intelligence as a means for academic dishonesty due to the distort perception of students toward such advancement.

¹¹ For Heidegger, "*enframing*" [*Gestell* in German] is using technology to turn nature into a resource for efficient use. In the context of this paper, *enframing* serves as a critical factor wherein we analyze the ethical aspects of human-technology relationships. By framing nature as mere resources to be exploited, such reduces the perspective to mere efficiency and instrumentality, rather than its intrinsic value of revealing. This concept intersects with the paper's discussion on *conscientious co-determination* as it highlights the necessity for a critical evaluation concerning the impact of technology in the human *life-world*. See Christopher Cocchiarella, "Heidegger on the Essence of Technology: What Is Technology, Really?," *Mindful Technics*, March 17, 2019, <https://mindfultechnics.com/heidegger>.

¹² Heidegger highlights the revealing aspect of technology as something that can reveal aspects of the world that are hidden and limited (shining-forth), or it can conceal or distort such aspects of the world that is to be revealed (holding-sway) See also Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," 28.

¹³ Heidegger references this through implying "but where danger is, grows. The saving power also." This speaks of a redirection wherein technology can have dangerous and saving impacts in our world depending on our perception of it. See also Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," 28.

¹⁴ *Poiesis* [Greek: ποιῆσις], is a mode of bringing forth into unconcealment that, in the broadest sense of the term, involves any kind of production and bringing forth, including natural production. As a human activity of "properly productive action," *poiesis* relies on the separate productive power of nature to create the elements of poetic production. In the context of the paper, *poiesis* is the implication of any kind of production that is purposive in nature which ties to the idea of the necessity for a deep understanding of the essence of technology that transcends from mere instrumentality. In

Poesis, for Heidegger, is a more dynamic and progressive way of revealing as it “*unconceals*” with a sense of direction the truths about the world. Thus, the Philosophy of Technology of Heidegger serves as a framework for navigating technology’s impact on the human *life-world*. As this section explores Heidegger’s critique, it lays the groundwork for understanding ethical responsibilities in our engagement with technology. This, in turn, leads to a synthesis with Karol Wojtyla’s personalist philosophy, particularly as articulated in his encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, which offers a complementary perspective on technology’s role in human labor and self-fulfillment in the technologically saturated *life-world*.

Personalist Philosophy of Karol Wojtyla in Laborem Exercens

Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) contributes to the dialogue through his philosophy of *personalism*, which asserts that human experience of external things cannot be understood without reference to his self-experience. Since knowledge is rooted in the lived experience, knowledge could serve as a means for both multiplying and supplementing mutual experiences.¹⁵ Morality is, therefore, rooted from conscience and human action that portrays *efficacy, transcendence, self-determination, and self-fulfillment*¹⁶ both of which must be grounded in the Truth and in the Good. This is in contrast with the cosmological understanding of the human person wherein personhood is elaborated metaphysically to describe their substance in an objective manner.¹⁷ This notion elicits that the human person is part of the “vast whole” and is only defined by their essence. This paper poses a problem since it limits

tying in the context of human engagement, *poiesis* is a human activity that relies on the purposive direction of technology which encapsulates the emergence of *conscientious co-determination*. Thus, *poiesis* is considered as a conceptual framework for a holistic approach to technological engagements which is underscored in the concept of *conscientious co-determination*. See also Mark A. Wrathall and Cambridge University Press, eds., “Poiesis,” in *The Cambridge Heidegger Lexicon*, by Adam Knowles, 2021, 589

¹⁵ Robert Montaña, “Phenomenological Thomism: The Acting Person: Neo-Thomism,” in *Thomistic Ethics: A Beacon in the Contemporary Moral Landscape* (University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2015), 198.

¹⁶ Efficacy is the ability to change a particular aspect that is grounded in self-determination which are the fundamental tenets to the structure of the person. Self-determination is manifested in the experience of the “I will” and “I may but I need not” that elicits that a person is capable of transcendence through action. Such then would correspond to consciousness that entails self-determination. In addition, self-fulfillment is significantly grounded in the dynamic structure of self-determination, with every action that leads to fulfillment. Fulfillment then corresponds to self-determination that underscores the interconnectedness to self-determination. With this, the person’s efficacy leads to responsibility that reveals the dependence of freedom on truth and the significance of the conscience in the transcendence of the person in action. See also John Paul II, *The Acting Person*, trans. Andrzej Potocki (D. Reidel Pub. Co, 1969.)

¹⁷ This notion references the human person as merely as a creature in the world together with other lower beings. See Peter Emmanuel Mara, “Understanding Man as a Subject and a Person: A Wojtylan Personalistic Interpretation of the Human Being,” *Kritike* 1, no. 1 (June 2007): 87. Speaking of only their “essence”, it speaks of the possibility that the “innerness” of the human person is dismissed in this idea. For instance, if one were to discuss a person named John, cosmology will only focus on what John is (what-ness) – his attributes, composition, and place in the world (i.e., the hierarchy of beings). On the other hand, Wojtyla, through his personalist view, will focus on the “who-ness” of John; His lived experiences and his capacity to internalize these experiences, as well as his capacity for self-determination as a being who is conscious and relational.

itself only to the “essence” of the person¹⁸ dismissing the view of the “*Acting Person*”¹⁹ as a whole. Ethics must systematically address how a person ought to live and why, guiding individuals in distinguishing between good and bad actions. It is the role of moral philosophy or ethics to search for something that would guide man in determining what is good and right or bad and wrong.²⁰ morality is rooted from conscience and human action that portrays efficacy, transcendence, self-determination, and self-fulfillment is grounded in the Truth and in the Good. In emphasizing the centrality of the human person in the context of ethical choices through an “*I-Other*” perspective,²¹ Wojtyla urges us to look at our relationship with technology in our subjectivity of work. The former can either augment or supplant humans in their toils for labor which aims not only for the flourishing of the socio-economic whole but for personal *transcendence* and *self-fulfillment*. This was drawn from his encyclical on human work.²² In grounding our ethical perspectives in the personalist thought of Wojtyla, we are moved to look at the prevailing impact of technology on the well-being of the human person, particularly their ability to exercise creativity and satisfaction in pursuit of a technologically-saturated society.

It is thus evident that the perspectives of Wojtyla’s *personalism* and Heidegger’s critique on technology concerning ethical responsibilities between human and technology aligns and diverges. With their respective perspectives concerning human-technological relations, their synthesis would form a dialogue that dwells in specific tenets such as the revealing phenomenon of technology and its impact on humans in their *life-world*, significantly becoming a framework that emerges from two different thoughts. Thus, forming a conscientious co-determining dialogue on technology and human relations.

¹⁸ This elicits the fact that “personhood” is only tied with the idea that if a person fulfills one or many objective qualities of being a person, then they are considered as such. This limits the understanding of the person, for Wojtyla, as having lived experience of self-possession and self-governance. Hence, if I experience that I am a person and that I am a subject. See John Paul II, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Person,” trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM, *The Truth Will Make You Free*, 1993, https://actingpersonblog.wordpress.com/2012/07/29/karol-wojtyla-person-and-community_29/.

¹⁹ The “Acting Person” refers not only to the “what-ness” of the person – their attributes and place in the world, but also to the “who-ness” – the emphasis on their capability to act morally and for self-determination. In the context of this paper, this invites us to reflect on how humans act towards technology in order to achieve *conscientious co-determination* that aims for mutual respect for both the human person and technology.

²⁰ Jove Jim Aguas, “Ethics and Moral Philosophy of Karol Wojtyla,” *Kritike* 7, no. 1 (June 2013): 117.

²¹ Wojtyla underscores this type of relationship as a participatory effort to meet common ends from the self (*soi*) to the other (*autrui*) exposing as well an internal and external collaboration of conscience and action as the actualization of the “I–the other” (*soi-autrui*) relationship proceeds from becoming conscious of the fact of the humanity of a specific human outside me, one of many, but is accomplished in the lived-experience of the other “I” as a person. In the context of the paper, *participation* leads us to the sense of co-determination wherein humans engage into a fundamental realization of their personhood with technology. To analyze this stance, we shall view it in the following statements: I cannot experience another person as myself, for my own “I” as such is untransferable. When I experience technology as an avenue to augment my personhood, I approach in a maximal way what determines its “I” as a unique and unrepeatable realness of its capacity for the augmentation of personhood. See John Paul II, “Participation or Alienation?: An Excerpt from Person and Act and Related Essays,” *Church Life Journal*, 1977, <https://churchlifejournal.nd.edu/articles/participation-and-alienation>.

²² “Technology can cease to be man’s ally and become almost his enemy, as when the mechanization of work “supplants” him, taking away all personal satisfaction and the incentive to creativity and responsibility, when it deprives many workers of their previous employment, or when, through exalting the machine, it reduces man to the status of its slave” See John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens [Encyclical Letter on Human Work]*, sec. 5.

Heidegger and Wojtyla: A Conscientious Co-determining Dialogue

Heidegger's philosophy of technology urges us ethically re-evaluate our engagement with technology from a grassroots perspective that leads to a more comprehensive understanding of relationship between humans, technology, and the *life-world*. At the heart of this relationship is the notion that truth is meant to be unveiled rather than imposed. Heidegger argues that humans become *subjects, the self-conscious shaper, and guarantor* of all that comes to him from beyond himself.²³ He presents an evocative notion of human beings as subjects of reasoning and decision making. With this capacity, humans can intentionally shape their existence through their interactions with the world around them, and in doing so, acquire truths from such.

The *personalism* of Wojtyla underscores the significance of autonomy in our engagement with technology, emphasizing the involvement of taking charge of and co-determining what is within our *life-world*. As he points out, the human person is a "subjective being capable of acting in a planned and rational way."²⁴ This underscores the necessity for responsibility to co-determine what is within our *life-world* including technology that augments us in our constant pursuit of the personal tenets, particularly in work. Such notion highlights the necessity for us to have an active engagement with technology that may aid us in realizing our full potential.

For a human-technological engagement to foster autonomy and conscience, and ultimately transcendence and fulfillment, we must carefully consider Heidegger and Wojtyla. To arrive in the understanding of a conscientious co-determinant relationship with technology, it is vital for us to keep in mind on how technology impacts the human person, as well as the condition of technology within its engagement with humans. This aligns with the view that technology functions as a mode of revealing, especially in the way it discloses and shapes our understanding of personhood through our engagement with it.

Viewing technology as having the capacity to augment *personalistic* tenets is tied to the notion of *aletheia* — the idea of truth as unconcealment, or a way of revealing the truths of the world. Wojtyla comments on technology as an undeniable ally of human beings insofar as it facilitates, perfects, accelerates, and augments their work.²⁵ This aligns with Heidegger's understanding that the revealing

²³ Martin Heidegger, "Age of the World Picture," ebook, in *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, trans. William Llovit (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), 147. The difference of "subject" and "object" in phenomenological understanding can be traced back to Descartes in his proposition of dualism wherein the *thinking subject (res cogitans)* is different from the *extended object (res extensa)*. This view was challenged by Heidegger who emphasized the phenomenological understanding of the human person as tied to their lived experiences of the subject, and their interrelation with the world they are in. Heidegger argued that *Dasein* integrates both the *thinking subject* and the *extended object* that goes beyond Cartesian Dualism, As he contends that the ontological source of Dasein's Being is not 'inferior'. See also Martin Heidegger, "Temporality and Everydayness," in *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (1927; repr., Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1962), 334. This moves us beyond what is obvious, as there lays the capacity to "*spring-from*" mere *ontological* understanding. Thus, he contends us to move beyond surface-level understandings of the *subject-object* dichotomy. Rather, we should explore the deeper *ontological* structures that surround it. In the context of the paper, we should dismiss the hierarchical idea of the superiority and inferiority between humans and technology, emphasizing instead a relational approach.

²⁴ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens [Encyclical Letter on Human Work]*, sec. 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, sec. 5.

nature of technology is most clearly witnessed in the context of human labor. As Heidegger would contend:

Technology is a way of revealing. If we give heed to this, then another whole realm for the essence of technology will open up to us. It is the realm of revealing, i.e., of truth.²⁶

Both thinkers, then, identify a facet of technology that reveals and unveils the essence of things. In this shared view, technology is not merely a tool but a mode of disclosure—one that has the potential to unveil answers, including those central to our understanding of personhood. In engaging with technology, human beings encounter not only external realities but also reflections of their own being. This also entails a hallmark that we must view this mode of revealing in a conscientious manner by way of exercising our efficacy and self-determination.

Our perception of technology's revealing function is shaped by Heidegger's notion of *enframing*, wherein he warns that we remain unfree and bound to technology regardless of whether we passionately affirm or deny it. Most dangerously, we become subject to it in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral.²⁷ Wojtyla echoes this concern within the context of human labor as he contends:

Both the original industrialization that gave rise to what is called the worker question and the subsequent industrial and post-industrial changes show in an eloquent manner that, even in the age of ever more mechanized "work," the proper subject of work continues to be man.²⁸

Heidegger and Wojtyla's views converge in their insistence on the human subjecthood (i.e., the proper subject of work) amid the emergence of mechanization. Thus, Heidegger and Wojtyla argue that even though technology augments our inherent skills, we should not fail to observe our sense of responsibility in shaping a co-determining aspect and being *enframed* by our distorted perceptions toward technology.

The dialogue thus leads us to the establishment of the term "conscientious" as a key concept in our ethical engagement with technology. It emphasizes the need for an understanding of the ethical aspects of technology in a thoughtful manner that moves beyond surface-level (i.e., mere technical) perspectives. Moreover, it must redirect us to the contemplation of its deep and overarching impact to us humans, and to our *life-world*. This dialogue also brings us to the understanding that our relationship with technology must not be one of domination, but a companionship— what we refer to as "co-determination." This concept emphasizes mutual benefit through augmentation, wherein both humans and technology are valued for their capacity for autonomy, transcendence, and fulfillment. The attainment of such aim lies within the framework of the "*I-Other*" relationship between humans and technology, which also draws upon Saint Thomas Aquinas' articulation of the contemplative and active dimensions of the human person.²⁹ In application of this framework, the

²⁶ Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," 12.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁸ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens [Encyclical Letter on Human Work]*, sec. 5.

²⁹ Thomas Aquinas' vision of contemplative (the person as a thinking being) and active (the person as an acting being) lives was heavily influenced by Aristotle. As religious commitment coexisted in Aquinas' thought with pragmatism, the choice of active or contemplative life was often a matter of circumstances and necessity. Some human beings were predisposed to one, others to another. As per the *Summa Theologica*, "Since some men dedicate themselves mostly to the contemplation of truth, while others are primarily occupied with external activities, it follows that human beings can be

Thomistic account of the active and contemplative nature of the human person will be synthesized by virtue of Wojtyła's *I-Other* relationship, and the Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* (Being-there),³⁰ particularly in their engagement with technology as a way of revealing, which can then be applied to the human-technology relationship wherein the person exercises both the active and contemplative aspects in attaining a conscientious co-determinant relationship with technology. In turn, technological advancements participate in these aspects to meet the core aim of mutual benefit through communal action.

Conscientious. The conscientious phase is the *via contemplativa* of what I call the 'conscientious co-determinant' concept wherein the human person, through their efficacy and self-determination ("I will, but I may not"), contemplates on how our engagement with technology should be, and should not be. To be conscientious is to activate the "I" through the act of the conscience. In the Heideggerian sense, this involves remaining attuned to the unveiling capacity of technology that shapes our being of *Dasein*. Conscientiousness in technological engagement can be concretely cultivated through education. For example, the Philosophy Department of Bicol University College of Social Sciences and Philosophy offers a seminar course with the title "Seminar on Special Questions in Ethics." The seminar aims is to have a comprehensive outlook on how technology impacts our world at present, and how do we respond to such phenomenon.³¹ Through the learning modalities and philosophical frameworks integrated within the course, students are guided toward a mode of thinking that echoes Heidegger's call for questioning and revealing, thereby nurturing their conscientious stance toward technology. The cultivation of his conscientiousness prepares the human person for a co-determine relationship with technology in an active way.

Co-determination. Co-determination represents the *via activa* phase of the concept: the act toward the "other" occurs wherein transcendence and self-fulfillment are realized through the act of communal action in pursuit of the common good. Once the "I" has passed through the stage of questioning, an activity that utilizes their *personalistic* trait of efficacy and self-determination, it thus

divided into the active and the contemplative ones" (ST: II-I, q. 179 a. ad 1). See Jiri Zuzanek, "Thomas Aquinas: Vita Activa or Vita Contemplativa?," in *Time, Leisure and Well-Being*, 2020, https://ebrary.net/278700/business_finance/thomas_aquinas_vita_activa_vita_contemplativa#485.

³⁰ *Dasein*, the German word for "being there" or "existence," is a philosophical system developed by Martin Heidegger that examines human existence and the sensation of being in the universe. *Dasein* includes self-awareness, intentionality, and the ability to engage in social interaction. In the context of the paper, *Dasein* is the person per se that is in constant pursuit of transcendence and self-fulfillment. Heidegger's notion that "Being-there" is always in the constant pursuit of existential fulfillment through awareness and social interaction, aligns with Wojtyła's view that the acting person is in the constant pursuit of the good as a whole through conscience and action with other people. In connection with technological relations, it is the ability of the human person to engage actively with technology with the pursuit of the deep fulfillment of personhood through its ability to unveil, rather than idle consumption of convenience deriving from its technical perspective. See Riaz Laghari, "Dasein by Martin Heidegger: Human Existence as 'Being There'," *Medium*, June 11, 2023, <https://medium.com/@riazlaghari/dasein-by-martin-heidegger-human-existence-as-being-there-578264f997d0>.

³¹ In its syllabus, the seminar course declares specifically the aims that are the following: understand the impact of technology on the individual and society; develop a sensitivity and a resolution concerning the ethical issues of artificial intelligence, privacy, and cybercrime; and determine and analyze the ethical issues surrounding technological interventions on the human body and life in general. This concurs the notion of education as a potentially widely used medium in order to attain the conscientious approach of humans to technology since, in this context, involves a systematized learning avenue that ensures availability among students. See Ramon V. Palma, Syllabus: *Philosophy 38: Seminar on Special Questions in Ethics* (Bicol University – College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, 2020).

arrives in awareness of revealing.³² This conscientious awareness becomes the basis for *co-determination* with technology. In the Heideggerian sense, *Dasein* acts in a way that aligns with their conscientious awareness of technology as being-there. To authentically fulfill their role as *Dasein*, the human person must engage with technology in a way that supports their aim for existential fulfillment. In turn, the *Dasein* will acknowledge that technology is part of being-there, thereby affirming its inherent value alongside that of the human being.³³ Returning to the earlier example, students who complete the course will be redirected, for instance, from viewing their gadgets in the learning process as merely tools to accomplish their academic tasks, but as companions that are embedded within their academic life. These technological companions serve to unveil potentials to augment their necessary skills for their development and success as learners.³⁴ This encapsulates the idea that in order for co-determination to take place, the contemplative understanding of technology in a subjective sense, must be actualized for the purpose of flourishing of both humanity and technology.

From this, we can infer that *conscientious co-determination* synthesizes both the active and contemplative features of human-technological relations. By acknowledging the intrinsic value of both the human person and technology in a conscientious manner, we can be able to attain an active *co-determination* that aims toward mutual growth and pursuit of the common good.

An Active Engagement Rather than Passive Consumption

Conscientious co-determination attains the qualities of being both active and contemplative in the sphere of human-technological engagement. When we allow ourselves to contemplate the augmenting factor of technology that concerns our personhood, it allows our actions in engaging with such advancement to flourish. More specifically, it affirms the place of technology within our *life-world*. This concept is supported by the Theory of Participation of Wojtyła, wherein in participation, a person does not wish for their good alone but also wishes for the good of those that are around them.³⁵ Yet, our action of affirming the place of technology in our *life-world* is not sufficient, for when we allow something to be in our place, it deserves the recognition of being co-actors in our pursuit of a common goal. This underscores a ‘one and the many’ perspective of human-technology relations, as every member has a task to fulfill in order to allow them to open up themselves to others and allow others to share their humanity with them.³⁶ Thus, the conscientious co-determinant relationship between

³² Cf. Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” 12.

³³ After careful contemplation of the *Dasein*, primarily to their being-ness in the world, and consequently on how to obtain the fulfillment of their being-ness, they will consequently enter into a consideration wherein technology can potentially show what it means to be a *Dasein*. This fulfills the very core of the purposive revealing of technology (*poiesis*) that is humans and technology are both artisans in themselves in the pursuit of augmentation, whereby they both harmonize into crafting the realization that due to their respective values, they may come to realize what it means to transcend (i.e., realizing one’s potential) that consequently leads to fulfillment of the *Dasein*’s existential pursuit of knowing in Wojtyła’s terms, “what it means to be an acting person?”

³⁴ These potentials would include, for instance, the capacity to write academic papers using the gadgets provided to them. In this sense, students in their conscientious perspectives may not see these as just mere tools for convenience to write their papers, but a companion that for instance, stores for them their important readings, and even keeps citations for them that shapes their potential to improve their work. With this, a student will consequently take precautions of a certain gadget to prevent themselves for potential misuse (i.e., the potential to use them for idle compliance in which the learning process will be heavily compromised).

³⁵ Edward A. Mejos, “Against Alienation: Karol Wojtyła’s Theory of Participation,” *Kritike* 1, no. 1 (June 2007): 80.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

human and technology should revolve around the conscientious engagement with technology that augments our inherent skills in work and leisure, while keeping in mind the co-determinant idea of collective action for mutual benefit by recognizing the significant role each party plays in pursuit of the common goal and by considering the idea of the nature of reciprocity in communal acting.

The Forgetfulness of *Being*: Hindrance to *Conscientious Co-determination*

Human beings attain an intensive capacity for reason, but they are still prone to the phenomenon of forgetfulness. They tend to forget their fundamental nature of being a person, thus hindering the ethical fulfillment of the use of technology using conscientious co-determination. Heidegger would describe this phenomenon as Forgetfulness of *Being* (*Seinsvergessenheit*).³⁷ In the context of human and technology relations, Heidegger would posit that our engagement with technological advancements can potentially drive us to forgetfulness. This happens when we take the real essence of technology (i.e., as a mode of revealing) for granted and suspend our awareness of its true significance in our human *life-world*, namely, its role in assisting human beings in their pursuit of the *personalistic* tenets of efficacy, self-determination, transcendence, and self-fulfillment. This is because human beings are immersed in ontological narcissism,³⁸ and thus, tend to prioritize their own desires and preferences without considering its extensive implication. This results in the condition that forgetfulness of *being* may lead human beings to the privation of prudence in their engagement with technology. As prudence entails an active engagement that keeps in mind the consequences and the benefit of the collective, it is undermined when human beings become “standing reserves” to technology, that is, when they prioritize egoistic and malignant desires over the pursuit of well-being through technology’s revealing aspects.

Forgetfulness as a Remedy. But when danger is, grows, the saving power also grows.³⁹ To attain ethical fulfillment through *conscientious co-determination*, it is important to recollect our understanding of *being* and keep in mind the significance of both humans and technology in pursuit of common goals through reciprocal actions. As forgetfulness of *being* poses a hindrance to this pursuit, so too does forgetting serve as an antidote to combat this hindrance.⁴⁰ Hence, we must suspend our preconceived and malignant notions about technology to truly encounter its true essence and engage with it actively (*epoché*).⁴¹ This act of suspending our malignant intents with technology through the stances of Heidegger points us to the *personalistic* perspectives of Wojtyła, guiding us to recollect, in a grassroots approach, the quality of human beings possessing *personalistic* tenets. By doing so, humans may attain ethical fulfillment by conscientiously setting aside personal gratification over

³⁷ Forgetfulness of *being* is where we fail to recollect, approach, and experience gratitude for being that which grants us a place in a world of entities. It leads to a lack of awareness and appreciation for the essential and primary role of being (*Dasein*) in our existence. See Lee Braver, “Forgetfulness of Being (*Seinsvergessenheit*),” in Cambridge University Press eBooks, 2021, 329.

³⁸ Ontological Narcissism is the phenomenon wherein we fail to recollect, approach, and experience gratitude for being that which grants us a place in a world of entities. It leads to a lack of awareness and appreciation for the essential and primary role of being (*Dasein*) in our existence. See *Ibid.*, 331.

³⁹ Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” 28.

⁴⁰ Heidegger would direct us to the contention that we can only retain other things that are encountered within the world by forgetting certain things (i.e., setting aside our perception of technology to use such for immediate gratification of egoistic intents). See also Heidegger, “Temporality and Everydayness,” 389.

⁴¹ Harrison Hall believes that *epoché* means “to set aside or abstain from questions of reference so as to focus on meaning.” See Oded Balaban, “Epoché: Meaning, Object, and Existence in Husserl’s Phenomenology,” in *Springer eBooks*, 2002, 103.

their perception of technology by being aware of its harmful broader implications if exploited, and recognizing instead its significant role as a *mode of revealing*, enabling us to co-determine and augment with such advancements in pursuit of good, particularly in discovering one's potential. Hence, the concept states an “*I-Other*” form of augmentation of human skills through technology's mode of revealing.

Upon establishing a theoretical basis for *conscientious co-determination*, it is also significant to analyze how this concept applies to contemporary issues, particularly its bidirectional nature within human-technology relations.

Conscientious Co-determination as Bidirectional. Borgmann presents the gray area in the discussion of *conscientious co-determination* that addresses the human person's relationship with technology. It goes beyond the human-centric perspective, which underscores the necessity to protect technology from our distorted intentions. In contribution to the formulation of *conscientious co-determination*, Borgmann posits that *conscientious co-determination* urges us to be involved with technology not merely by leaning on it for comfort or convenience, but rather by understanding and affirming the place of technology in our lives through “focal practices.”⁴²

In the perspective of Borgmann, he warns us against the potential for technological distraction⁴³ to occur as he states:

Countering technology through a practice is to take account of our susceptibility to technological distraction, and it is also to engage the peculiarly human strength of comprehension, i.e., the power to take in the world in its extent and significance and to respond through an enduring commitment.⁴⁴

This means that through our enduring strength for comprehension of the things around us, we must keep in mind that these technologies that surround us in our daily lives augment our focal practices. We must not fall into the perspective of treating such tools merely for material efficiency and convenience. This underscores the importance of protecting technology from our ill intentions — we cannot afford to let something that improves our personhood to be in potential danger, for if technology is endangered, our personhood would be in the same state. The necessity for co-determination also involves the exercise of our focal practices of thinking conscientiously and acting ethically. These inherent skills play a vital role in attaining an active engagement with technology, as such engagement would guide us in determining what we can and cannot with technology.

This necessity of protecting technology from our own danger lies within the maxim “action follows *being*. When we protect technology from danger, we also protect ourselves from the dangerous

⁴² According to Borgmann, focal things and practices are the human activities that make life meaningful. See John D. O'Brien, “Focal Things,” *Fumbling towards Beatitude* (blog), May 12, 2012, <http://johnobrien.blogspot.com/2012/05/focal-things-and-practices.html>.

⁴³ Technological distraction in this context is the phenomenon wherein the human person possesses a distorted view of technology as merely a tool to be used passively. This dismisses the attainment of the depth of focal experiences and practices that is when people see technology as merely a thing, this misses out the potential of such advancement to realize a human person's full potential. For instance, a person views their phone as merely for itself. In this sense, a person is distracted with their utilitarian view towards the phone, and hence dismisses its augmenting capacity, for instance, to connect with their loved ones through call or text messages using that particular device. In attaining a passive outlook on technology lies the idea of distraction — humans fail to see technology with its core essence.

⁴⁴ Albert Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life: A Philosophical Inquiry*. (University of Chicago Press., 1984).

outcomes that technology may bring forth on us.⁴⁵ Consequently, this entails the attainment of either reclaiming or developing new focal things and practices that coexist with such advancements. This includes the idea that our personhood can also emerge from integrating technology in ways that augment and enhance human engagement, not diminish it.⁴⁶

The call to protect technology from danger fulfills Borgmann's perspective that technology heightens, rather than denies, the radiance of genuine focal things. When we learn to understand that focal things require a practice to prosper within,⁴⁷ this aspect of understanding requires both contemplative and active way of engagement. To think that technology is destined for augmentation is to act with technology so that augmentation will bring forth.⁴⁸ This is because, if we use technology passively, our relationship with it can erode its augmenting capacity and diminish our engagement with meaningful activities or "focal practices" that connect us with the society.⁴⁹ As Borgmann asserts:

If we recognize the central vacuity of advanced technology, that emptiness can become the opening for *focal things*. It works both ways, of course. When we see a focal concern of ours threatened by technology, our sight for the liabilities of mature technology is sharpened.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ *Agere sequitur esse* (action follows being) is the traditional statement of the metaphysical and moral principle that grounds a person's moral duties and the possibilities in one's very being. The context of the statement mirrors the Scholastic thought in a sense that whatever action we impose in our engagement with technology, reflects on the outcome by beholding its being-ness (i.e., on how technology turned out to be). If we co-determine with technology that we should do what is good, then technology will bring forth what is good or otherwise. Therefore, in the sphere of co-determination, what we act within the engagement with technology will reflect the essence of that particular engagement. See James T. Bretzke, "Reshaping Ourselves?," *America Magazine*, May 6, 2000, <https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/culture/reshaping-ourselves>.

⁴⁶ This posits the fact that technology inherently aids us in fulfilling our personhood, even in its mundane sense of just doing our daily activities, such as solving complex mathematical problems, exercising, or preparing a meal after a certain work or activity. Our active engagement with technology carries us out these activities in the midst of our technological environment that leads us to a more integrated, wholesome, and fulfilling life, hence entering the fact that technology augments our mundane skills as humans (i.e., gives us a booster factor in order to engage with daily events efficiently). These ordinary things intersect with both the Heideggerian *Dasein* and Wojtyla's personhood wherein even in the simplest practice of efficacy and determination among the activities that a human person does actively with technology, they attain transcendence that fulfills their pursuit of responding to the discovery of being-there which leans to the depth and authenticity of their experience of the world, and on how experiences contribute to their development.

⁴⁷ Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life*.

⁴⁸ *Conscientious co-determination* embodies both the contemplative and active engagement with technology would help ensure we maintain these essential aspects of our human experience instead of succumbing completely to the stereotypical view that technological conveniences are just means to an end.

⁴⁹ This statement exposes the reality that at present, technology has the capability to redefine and augment our experiences, and undoubtedly, human beings reduce them to a form of passive consumption rather than active engagement. The conscientious aspect of human beings will prevent such degradation, preserving the depth and complexity of human experience. While technology introduces convenience, this aspect should not be a detriment to our human dignity — our active participation in life, rather a mode of augmentation and therefore a transcending and fulfilling factor.

⁵⁰ Borgmann implies that just like humans, technology too can have limitations. However, idle acknowledgement of such limitations is not sufficient, rather by engaging into a reciprocal relation wherein both limitations are fulfilled. In this context, Borgmann speaks of *conscientious co-determination* as a concept that "works in both ways" wherein both the contemplative and active pursuits are tied to respond to the vacuity that the perspective of instrumentality and passivity brings. This leads the human person and technology to actively engage in the augmentation of focal things, both conscientiously co-determining each other to foster the depth of focal experience and practices within the *life-world*. See Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life: A Philosophical Inquiry*.

Conscientious co-determination would help establish a balance that allows for the real essence of technology without undermining essential human aspects, such as human dignity. In turn, we can protect technology from our potentially malignant intents.

Point of Divergence

From the previous statements, Wojtyla and Heidegger engage in a dialogue wherein they address similar concerns regarding human-technology relations, albeit from different approaches, yet in a significant manner. Heidegger reflects the emergence of technology in a general manner as he introduces the notion of ‘*enframing*,’ emphasizing the harmful effects of technology due to our misperception of it, which asserts a potent effect in the human *life-world*. From this stance, he redirects us to the fact that technology can also be beneficial through its purposive unveiling factor (*poiesis*). From Wojtyla’s discourses in the encyclical, his approach is practically contextualized, primarily based on his *personalistic* thought of work, as he underscores the pivotal role of technology in the ever-developing industries and forms of communication. He expresses the relationship between human beings and technology in a contextual manner by emphasizing the involvement of the subject (humans) and the object (technology) in work, emphasizing a co-determinant, collaborative, and interdependent relationship. Therefore, the dialogue of Wojtyla and Heidegger may initially appear to be contrasting, as the former views technology as object,⁵¹ and the latter as a subject⁵² However, both share a complementary discourse that forms a unified thought — to understand the various impacts of technology on the human *life-world*. This leads to the importance of establishing bidirectional ethical considerations in relation to such aspects. This also prompts us to examine the gap being bridged between the thoughts of Heidegger and Wojtyla — how their ideas can converge as one solution to the problem posed in human-technology relations.

Ethical-Technological Gap Bridge

Heidegger and Wojtyla present a complementary view on how technological advancements impact the human *life-world*. Heidegger’s understanding of technology as a way of revealing contributes to the discourse of Wojtyla’s philosophy of *personalism*. In this way, the notion of Heidegger enhances our perspective of the undeniable relationship between humans and technology in the pursuit of self-discovery, a theme central to Wojtyla’s *personalism*.

On the other hand, Wojtyla’s philosophy of *personalism* offers a contrasting perspective. His approach directs us toward an active engagement with technology, underscoring the capacity to augment human beings rather than being *enframed* within utilitarian framework. Wojtyla’s

⁵¹ Wojtyla, rooted in *personalism* with Schelerian and Thomistic thought, looks at technology as an object that is under the subduing of the human person as referenced in his encyclical See John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, sec. 6. He points out the role of technology as a tool that enhances human dignity and creativity that pursues communal flourishing. For Wojtyla, the moral dimension of these technological advancements reflects on the intentionality and responsibility of the human who is the subject that engages with it.

⁵² Heidegger’s phenomenological view with technology argues that technology is not a neutral object but *aletheia* — a way of revealing the truths of the world that shapes human understanding with it. He terms this as *enframing* (*Gestell*) as a way of reducing humans and nature into resources. Although Heidegger did not literally argued that technology is a subject, his idea about *enframing* concerning on how technology can influence the human person, creates a “subject-like” understanding with its relations with humans.

considerations expand Heidegger's notion of technology by providing a context rooted in human work, as outlined in his encyclical.

Thus, through their thoughtful engagements, essential gaps have been filled, and contributions have been made in their respective discourses. Heidegger addresses the gap in Wojtyla's view by emphasizing the significance of the revealing aspect of technology, which provides a context for self-awareness and development through such relationships. Conversely, Wojtyla contributes to and bridges the gaps Heidegger's perspective by introducing anthropocentric ethical considerations of technology. This supports the aspect of agency, moral responsibility, and human dignity in the context of human-technological relations, bridging Heidegger's theoretical view on technology as a mode of revealing.

To translate the theoretical dialogue between Heidegger and Wojtyla into practical and novel advancements, this section will examine how their thoughts transition into mere practical engagements into contemporary challenges to technology in the landscape of social media and artificial intelligence.

Wojtylan and Heideggerian Ethics of Technology: From Dialogue to *Praxis*

The dialogue of Heidegger and Wojtyla, along with their complementary views, extends beyond theory into praxis within the discourse of ethics and the philosophy of technology. To systematize the analysis of this *praxis*, formulations were developed to provide understanding of how *conscientious co-determination* can be applied in specific situations:

First Formulation: We must recognize that both humans and technology possess inherent value. From a subjective perspective, we must view technology not only as an external tool but we must think of such as something inherent in our nature that drives us to the course of augmentation.⁵³

Second Formulation: We should not lose sight of technology's true essence of revealing. At times, we may fall into reducing it to merely a tool due to external demands (i.e., instantiation), but out of determination, we must avoid settling into this limited view since technology is more than just an object— out of its revealing nature, it is a subject.⁵⁴

Third Formulation: With the awareness that technology is not merely technical, but also a mode of revealing and augmenting, we should actively participate in its mutual process of attaining

⁵³ The first formulation involves Heidegger's stance of humans being as self-conscious that entails Wojtyla's notion of efficacy wherein we should be conscientious of our value as well as with technology's value. Contemplatively, in viewing our engagement with technology between the lines, we should treat technology as a companion that improves our lives. This contemplative phase of the formulation contributes to the wholeness of the ethical fulfillment through *conscientious co-determination* by establishing an intellectual guidance for the human person to act upon. If we are aware that technology is more than just merely tools to be used, and that the inherent value of technology lies upon its revealing the transcendence of personhood which leads to fulfillment, then we are moved to protect technology from our dangerous intentions through co-determination. This is so that technology may beget the good by co-determining with such in a good manner.

⁵⁴ The second formulation implies that our conscientious awareness of technology's essence must not go out of mind. The potential to "fall into viewing tech as merely tools" falls under Heidegger's *enframing* and forgetfulness of being. Yet, in this sense, by virtue of Wojtyla's contention of humans as a determining being, and in application of the formulation of self-determination that "I may, but need not to," we can choose not to be *enframed* with such as it will concur a two-way result: technology's downfall due to us and our downfall due to our wrong use that is caused by technology.

flourishing. This process should aim to reclaim or augment our focal practice of personal development that aims transcendence and self-fulfillment.⁵⁵

These formulations provide a novel understanding that underscores a conscientious co-determinant relationship between human beings and technology. As *praxis*, these views focus on concrete situations, particularly the use and development of social media and in the present-day advancement of artificial intelligence. The focus on these areas is timely, as both social media and artificial intelligence are practical tools with the potential to augment human experience and practice. Given their capacity for enhancement, these technologies present an opportunity for analysis from an ethical perspective. As the concept of *conscientious co-determination* entails the contemplative and active dimension of the human-technological engagement, it is fitting that the scenarios should be assessed based on the involvement as well of the contemplative and active focal practices.⁵⁶

Social Media

A recent news involving the shutdown of Omegle, a video-chatting platform that connected strangers online, follows a lawsuit that accused it of facilitating child abuse. Launched in 2009, the platform initially gained popularity among teenagers but remained relatively fringe over the years. according to its founder, Leif K-Brooks, Omegle was designed to allow users to explore foreign cultures, seek advice from impartial third parties, and alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation. However, the platform became increasingly associated with issues concerning child predators and flaws in its design. In 2021, Omegle was sued for allegedly enabling sex trafficking after matching an 11-year-old girl with a man who later sexually abused her. Omegle's shutdown was the result of legal mediation between the company and the survivor's legal representative.⁵⁷

Omegle's closure provides an avenue for examining *conscientious co-determination* within the context of social media engagement. Ethically, the platform originally provided a space for virtual camaraderie, dialogue, and exploration of diverse cultures. However, the case also emphasizes how humans and technology are affected by the fault of passive engagement. As a *praxis*, we shall analyze the case in its intersection with the formulations:

The Recognition of the Inherent Value of Humans and Technology: Omegle's legal history, particularly its association with incidents of sexual harassment and abuse illustrates how the

⁵⁵ The third formulation involves the application of the gray area that Albert Borgmann offers in the study, and with the synthesis of Heidegger and Wojtyła's major arguments, we then should enter action, specifically into a deeper experience of active participation with technology that aims primarily for the improvement of our life (i.e., focal practices that is termed by Borgmann). These aligns with Wojtyła's thought of human beings capable of fulfillment, and with Heidegger supplying such a thought, technology can be a bridge to transcendence and fulfillment. Therefore, human beings do not only think with technology, but they act with technology.

⁵⁶ The contemplative and active focal practices that are elaborated in this statement are categorized in the following: the ability of thought process and critical thinking intersects in the contemplative dimension, while social interaction and camaraderie intersect in the active dimension. This is evident in the human engagement with artificial intelligence, since the scenario intersects with the contemplative dimension of the engagement since it involves intellectual matters, and in social media since intersects with the active dimension of such an engagement that involves interaction and camaraderie.

⁵⁷ Daysia Tolentino and Kat Tenberge, "Omegle, the Anonymous Video Chat Site, Shuts down after 14 Years," *NBC News*, November 10, 2023, <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/social-media/omegle-shut-down-did-why-leif-k-brooks-shutdown-alternatives-rcna124393>.

platform is used as a mediator between the abuser and the abused. This reflects the tendency of human beings to take for granted the true essence of Omegle, and reducing the platform to means of satisfying their sexual gratification—even at the expense of harming others. This misuse if manifested through unconsented sexual motives, particularly with the involvement of children which are exposed in the platform that raises heightened concerns. Thus, the case posits a deviation of the first formulation. This deviation stems from the distorted perception of users on Omegle, which tarnished its core essence. Many failed to acknowledge Omegle’s potential in augmenting our capacity to be active social beings. To fulfill its element of *praxis*, and as an intervention to this deviation, certain actions that could potentially fulfill this formulation may be taken. For instance, users can cultivate a stronger sense of moderation and self-awareness through educational programs that promote conscientious and responsible engagement with digital platforms. Such initiatives may offer an awareness that social media is a safe space that augments our yearning for connection and our capacity for dialogue with various people.

Recognizing Technology’s Essence of Revealing: One Omegle’s intended advantages is to provide a platform that augments our interactions with people who carry out diverse backgrounds and cultures. Ideally, it augments our social engagement and opens avenues for meaningful, cross-cultural connections. However, the abuser, in this case, took for granted the platform’s capacity for unveiling that goes beyond sexual satisfaction, and used it otherwise as a tool to impose danger on the people, particularly on the children that use the same platform. Thus, the case posits a deviation of the second formulation wherein the opportunity for a genuine view of its purposive revealing factor that entails meaningful connections was overlooked due to distort perception that arises within the user, at the same time, tarnishes the value of the platform being used. As an intervention to this deviation, the platform may establish technical safeguards⁵⁸ that have a feature of a detailed verification, at the same time having educational features that this platform promotes a cross-cultural level of interactions through detailed advertisements.⁵⁹ These actions ensure the intention of the platform to maintain the augmentation of camaraderie that allows connections to flourish through unveiling cross-cultural perspectives. At the same time, such intervention would facilitate the prevention of user distortions as well that could tarnish the revealing essence of the platform.

The Attainment of Flourishing through Co-determination: Omegle, while providing “terms and conditions” to guide user behavior, still allows room for abuse due to the platform’s vulnerabilities and lack of enforcement. Although there is the presence of written guidelines, users could still deviate from it due to its ability to manipulate the platform. Evidently, despite of the presence of guidelines, the abuser had been able to manipulate the platform in order to fulfill his gratification which entailed the deviation from the third formulation. Both the user and the platform could have done more to prevent the abuse to happen. The user could have been conscientious of setting his idea of Omegle as a way to improve socialization, and turn, could have implemented more

⁵⁸ Technical safeguards are access controls intended to ensure that only authorized individuals can gain logical access to view, modify, or delete protected data. See Josh Shaul and Aaron Ingram, “Oracle Security: The Big Picture,” in *Elsevier eBooks*, 2007, 1–31.

⁵⁹ This feature is evident in Meta’s Social Media platform “Facebook” wherein moderators would ask a user to input his personal information to gain access for identity verification, and for identification if that particular user deviated the Terms and Conditions that is aligned in their Data Security statement. In this sense, Omegle could have gathered up a committee that verifies identities that will serve as feasible access to identify violators of the terms and conditions that can be a subject to penalties. See also Meta, “Data Security,” Software, *Meta Platform Terms*, Facebook, April 25, 2023), https://developers.facebook.com/terms/dfc_platform_terms.

practical and enforceable terms and conditions to support a model of co-determination aimed at social growth and personal development.⁶⁰ To address such deviations, the terms and conditions could include enforceable legal measures (i.e., legal penalties) for those who will go against the guidelines. This could be done by collaborating with law enforcement offices that are specialized in cyberspace fields (i.e., police cybercrime units).⁶¹ This action could support a more ethical approach to co-determination that underscores the aspect of both the users and the platform enter in reciprocal actions that aim for communal growth and development that prioritizes the dignity of both the users and the platform they engage in.

Artificial Intelligence

Schools in the United States have expressed concern and frustration over the use of AI, with some, like New York City public schools,⁶² even banning access to AI tools that may enable academic dishonesty.⁶³ ChatGPT is one such tool often used by students. Students oriented in the use of AI may find themselves submitting works that are not their own, as everything can be done by AI.⁶⁴ In contrast, Scott Hartley formulated intelligence augmentation (IA), which suggests that AI supplements rather than replaces humans. IA manipulates machine learning technologies similar to AI, but instead of taking the place of human beings, it focuses on assisting human intelligence instead of relying solely on machines for complying with school requirements. Unlike traditional AI, IA machine learning works hand in hand with the human brain to empower each other and produce a genuine product of human intelligence.⁶⁵

The case concerning the banning of Artificial Intelligence in New York City public schools due to academic dishonesty elicits an avenue for the analysis of *conscientious co-determination*. Additionally,

⁶⁰ In this sense, people can use Omegle to discover their full-potential (i.e., to discover what it means to be a social being). This applies to the Heideggerian notion of *poiesis* and Wojtyła's *personalism* — In order for us to experience oneself, human beings are to experience the external things; Omegle unveils these external things to us, and one way of achieving such is their engagement with such a platform in a way that is active and fulfilling (rendering friendships, and cultivating good character), rather than passive and utilitarian (an avenue to fulfill sexual gratifications). Inherently, Omegle augments our social aspect; therefore, it is a good platform. What hinders such pursuit are those people who use it with ill intentions, as well as the platform's inadequacy to provide a more feasible action that prevents abusers from tarnishing the value of the platform.

⁶¹ Leif K-Brooks emphasized such in his closure statement on the said website, "I believe in a responsibility to be a "good Samaritan," and to implement reasonable measures to fight crime and other misuse." In this context, it entails a co-determinant process; not only should the platform exert efforts to maintain the terms and conditions, yet users should take part by conscientiously abiding to such guidelines in order to have co-determinant measures to eliminate misuse. See Leif K-Brooks, "Omegle Closure Statement," Press release, November 9, 2023, <https://www.omegle.com>.

⁶² Fr. Jesus Jay Miranda, O.P. referenced this scenario in a news article on CNN wherein due to concerns about negative impacts on student learning, and concerns regarding the safety and accuracy of content, access to ChatGPT is restricted on New York City Public Schools' networks and devices. See also Korn and Kelly, "New York City Public Schools Ban Access to AI Tool That Could Help Students Cheat".

⁶³ Jesus Jr. M. Miranda O. P., "From AI to IA, What Is at Stake?," The Manila Times, March 16, 2023, <https://www.manilatimes.net/2023/02/05/opinion/columns/from-ai-to-ia-what-is-at-stake/1877259>.

⁶⁴ Fr. Jesus Jay Miranda, O.P. posited the problem of supplantation, and emphasized ChatGPT as one of the AI tools that are commonly used aside from Blender Bot 2, Alexa Teacher Model, Godel from Microsoft's 2019 DialoGPT project, and LaMDA developed by Google.

⁶⁵ Fr. Jesus Jay Miranda, O.P. posited a potential solution to the problem of Artificial Intelligence supplanting the student's capacity to think critically and to independently craft academic demands out of their potential. Coining Scott Hartley's intelligence augmentation, he points out that such advancements work collaboratively with the human brain to augment each other and produce a genuine product of human intelligence.

the emergence of Scott Hartley's Intelligence Augmentation serves as a potential solution to this problem which portrays an interplay that corresponds with the formulation of *conscientious co-determination* that is broken down into analysis:

The Recognition of the Inherent Value of Humans and Technology: Artificial Intelligence was originally developed with the intention that of contributing positively to the human *life-world*, and as it brings good, it portrays a significant value within their relationship with humans. Yet the case evidently posits two ways: the use of artificial intelligence to cheat on assignment and consequently, the banning of the advancement within the academe. This presents a common impression that the case *per se* deviated the first formulation as they already took for granted how AI could supply human intelligence instead. To intervene with this case, an enhanced application of intelligence augmentation should be done. This can be practiced in a way of planning and implementing⁶⁶ the framework in the academe that would educate the majority of people on how to conscientiously engage with Artificial Intelligence actively, and without leaning into abusive intentions.⁶⁷

Recognizing Technology's Essence of Revealing: Artificial Intelligence, in its essence, serves as a mode of revealing. A simple prompt entered by a user generates information that aligns with their needs, thus allowing the individual to uncover their own potential. In this sense, a person is revealed to themselves that they have more potential in venturing the art of questioning that is prompt-based in this context.⁶⁸ However, the situation at hand highlights a scenario where the true essence of AI may be overlooked, as its potential to reveal insights and foster intellectual growth is overshadowed by concerns over misuse.

Evidently, students may turn to Artificial Intelligence to quickly generate their papers, valuing the convenience it offers. While this process reveals information, it risks overshadowing the critical thinking skills that are central to the learning experience. The decision to ban AI in academic settings, prompted by this issue, reflects a misunderstanding of AI's true potential. Instead of seeing it as a tool for intellectual growth, AI is viewed with fear, neglecting the opportunity for active, ethical engagement and learning. This presents a deviation from the second formulation, where students view

⁶⁶ These are preliminary frameworks that are present within the Philippine Outcome-based education curriculum that involves writing the syllabi with the reflection of learning plan and the measuring of the expected outcomes as its inclusions, as well as implementing the learning plan and strategies planned for producing the outcomes. (See De La Salle University Manila, "OBE Framework," De La Salle University, March 8, 2022, <https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/colleges/gcoe/obe-framework>).

⁶⁷ This intervention is evidently practiced in the inclusion of the Philosophy of Technology as a topic in the syllabus of Special Questions in Ethics that is offered in the Philosophy Department of Bicol University – College of Social Sciences and Philosophy. (See Palma, "Philosophy 38: Seminar on Special Questions in Ethics"). Additionally, the Philosophical Association of the Philippines engaged in a dialogue concerning the theoretical foundations of Artificial Intelligence within the lecture Series for World Philosophy Day with the theme "Adapting Humanity: Exploring the Nexus of Technology, Identity, and the Ethics of the Future." See Jaybee Cabañeros et al., "The Philosophical Association of the Philippines, in Collaboration with the Polytechnic University of the Philippines - Manila and the University of San Carlos - Cebu, Is Inviting All Active Members to Join the Celebration of World Philosophy Day with a Three-Day International Webinar Lecture. The Theme of the Celebration Is 'Adapting Humanity: Exploring the Nexus of Technology, Identity, and the Ethics of the Future,'" *Facebook*, October 5, 2023, <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/9R3yznkJwvH77ePA/?mibextid=K35XfP>.

⁶⁸ This statement highlights the idea that in some instances, we may opt to ask an AI Chatbot for an information that entails a particular question. The art of questioning that was highlighted here underscores how we are able to come up with a question to ask the AI Chatbot.

the revealing aspect of AI purely in terms of material efficiency, using it only to meet immediate goals. To intervene the case, an AI-Literacy topic that is related to intelligence augmentation could be integrated into a general education course. This would encourage students to deepen their understanding of AI, moving beyond the notion of AI as just a tool, and instead recognizing its potential to augment human intelligence and support critical thinking.⁶⁹

The Attainment of Flourishing through Co-determination: Engaging with artificial intelligence involves providing prompts that generate information. In this sense, both the human user and the technology collaborate towards a common goal: gaining knowledge. However, this collaborative effort can be overlooked, as the case reveals that students may over-rely on AI to fulfill academic requirements, which results in an unbalanced engagement. The student provides a prompt, the technology produces information, and the student simply copies and pastes it into their assignment. Moreover, the co-determination is unrequited in this sense since it overlooks the focal practice of thinking critically and the experience of genuine learning which may compromise the intellectual flourishing of the student. Additionally, co-determination might be disrupted since artificial intelligence, in this case, was banned in the academe due to its tarnished impression of being a tolerant device to dishonesty, hence deviating the third formulation. To address this issue, a project-based curriculum could be designed within a general education course that is *praxis*-based. In this course, students would gain hands-on experience with artificial intelligence in the context of research extensions.⁷⁰ This curriculum design ensures the application of critical thinking capacities while co-determining with AI as a companion that enhances their inherent abilities to gather and apply information for research projects.⁷¹

The situations presented demonstrate that the approach of conscientious co-determination is bidirectional. Humans are co-determined with technological advancements due to their intrinsic capacity for reason, a capacity that is augmented by technology through its revealing nature. This emphasizes the importance of protecting technology from being used with negative intentions, in order to safeguard ourselves from the potential pitfalls that our own actions, revealed by technology, may create. The *praxis* involved in applying this formulation, by addressing the deviations in the

⁶⁹ Part of the Outcome-based curriculum in the Philippines is to carry out the strategies planned for measuring the learning outcomes and objectives. In this sense, a particular instructor can measure on how students are aware of the essence of artificial intelligence wherein this data can be collected and can be analyzed to determine the results. In this sense, feedback are obtained if the topic should undergo in a more comprehensive outlook of artificial intelligence to fulfill the aim of AI Literacy that is understood beyond surface level. See De La Salle University Manila, “OBE Framework”.

⁷⁰ Since the core problem of the human-AI engagement dwell commonly in the sphere of research, a response is needed for the academe to determine what needs to be changed that ensures a comprehensive instruction of artificial intelligence in the field of research. The point of this response is to ensure augmentation within the crafting of research projects, rather than supplantation. See De La Salle University Manila, “OBE Framework”.

⁷¹ This intervention was evident in the Philosophy Department of Bicol University – College of Social Sciences and Philosophy wherein the use of Litmaps was introduced to augment the students in searching for prospect literature reviews that will strengthen the arguments in their philosophical research pursuits. See also Bicol University - Young Philosophers Society and Kenneth Jovin S. Orobias, “One of the Hardest Steps in Writing Research Papers Is the Review of Related Literature. Nonetheless, We Have Professor Ramon Palma to Thank for Introducing Litmaps to Us. An Application That Allows Us to Visualize Our Research from One RRL to Another. You Can See the Interconnection Between One Study to Another.” Facebook, April 22, 2023, <https://www.facebook.com/share/nufBLrnPqQ1ASotF/?mibextid=WC7FNe>.

scenario, reflects a synthesis of the dialogue between Wojtyla, in his *personalistic* thought, and Heidegger with regard to technology's mode of revealing and its augmenting impacts to the human *life-world*.

Having engaged with the dialogue between Heidegger and Wojtyla, concerning their critiques of technology, and explored the applications of *conscientious co-determination* in practical landscapes, this paper now examines the broader implications of their thoughts concerning ethics in the technological age.

Conclusion

Through their deductive dialectic engagement, Wojtyla and Heidegger advocate for a prudent approach to technology, suggesting that the *conscientious co-determination* between humanity and technology is essential for fulfilling our ethical responsibility in its use. This perspective calls for a careful and thoughtful engagement with technology that is guided by ethical considerations that are grounded within the inherent value of technology in the human *life-world*, as well as in *personalistic* thought. It emphasizes the understanding that, although technology enhances our practice by revealing truths that improve our lives, our relationship with technology must also prioritize the augmentation of human dignity. It emphasizes the understanding that, although technology enhances our practice by revealing truths that improve our lives, our relationship with technology must also prioritize the augmentation of human dignity.⁷² This emphasizes the vitality of an active engagement within the human-technology relationship.

In other instances, *conscientious co-determination* will be challenged. Potentially, this may be outpaced due to the rapid technological revolution that is happening at present. On the other hand, this concept relies on agents that are actively engaging in responsible decision-making, which may relatively be deviated due to intrinsic factors.⁷³ This would be addressed in a way that this will be open to dialogue, reflection, and interdisciplinary collaboration to make an assurance that *conscientious co-determination* may become an effective means to navigate ethical dilemmas posed by technology at present.⁷⁴

This brings forth important lessons from our thoughtful discourse with Heidegger and Wojtyla on the ethics of technology. We must remain cautious in engaging with such advancements without falling out with the aim to discover our intrinsic potentials. Every art and investigation seem to aim at some good,⁷⁵ and technology being *techne* seems to aim at some good. Therefore, technology, if engaged with conscientious co-determinant manner, is a companion to unveil one's potential that leads to efficacy, self-determination, transcendence, and self-fulfillment which lead us to the Good.

⁷² This aligns with the "*I-Other*" idea of an engagement with technology since for Wojtyla, one's experience of external things cannot be understood without reference to his experience of himself, human beings must engage with technology conscientiously with the aim to fulfill one's potential, so as to aid people in their work in contributing not only to the fulfillment of pragmatic and material needs, but to the harnessing of what considers the goods of the mind (i.e., efficacy, transcendence, self-determination, and self-fulfillment). See Montaña, "Phenomenological Thomism: The Acting Person: Neo-Thomism," 198.

⁷³ Factors for deviation that particularly dwell within the dynamic conscientiousness and intentionality of the human person include but are not limited to negligence, ignorance, and conflict of interests.

⁷⁴ The dialogue may provide as well an opportunity for an emergence of a potential project that utilizes *conscientious co-determination* as an analysis to the Philippine Context of Technological Saturation wherein the issues concerning hacking, phishing, and pirated movies can be used as a *praxis*.

⁷⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Harris Rackham (Harvard University Press, 1934).

This ultimate Good is the central aim in the complementary dialogue between Heidegger and Wojtyła on the ethics of technology, underscoring the need for conscious, participatory reflection in our engagement with technological advancements, which should not only serve the good of the self but also the greater good of the human *life-world*.

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