PHILOSOPHY

AND

TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract:

This paper will attempt to determine multifaceted relationship between philosophy and technology. It explores the philosophical questions raised by technology's dominance in modern society, it examining ethical aspects and existential inquiries. The paper begins with historical relation of philosophy and technology and end with examining the ethical implications of technology. It also addresses on technology's impact on moral responsibility. Moreover, the article navigates with questioning how technology alters our perception of reality and the self. In conclusion of this paper underscores importance of philosophical inquiry in technological advancements.

Methodology:

The main method used in this paper is Analytic. One part was also including historical analysis. Logical connection and logical inquiries was the important method for this paper. Comparative method also used in this paper which helped to draw conclusion by comparing one's aspects to another.

Materials: Texts, Journals, Articles, Books, Online Databases & Lectures.

INTRODUCTION:

Philosophy and technology is a fascinating concept to study. Technology is for building up a generation or sharpening the weapon to build society. On the other hand, philosophy helps people to understand the process and impact of technology on society. They influence each other to develop their respective field. The word "philosophy" derives from the Greek word   "*philos*" and "*sophia*". Those two words mean 'love' and 'wisdom'. Wisdom helps us to understand the consequences of every action in life. [1] It's the set of skills that helps us to understand what matters in life and take the proper action about it. It uses logic to enquire the fundamental questions about life. Philosophy consists of almost all other disciplines such as Knowledge, Ethics, Existence, Reality, etc.

1. Cambridge dictionary; Definition of wisdom.

Technology is the man-made things (tools, techniques) to solve problems in our lives. It enhances human capability and it converts difficult things to easy things. Using knowledge to manipulate the physical world to achieve specific goals is called technology.

Historical overview:

There is a historical relation between philosophy and technology. Here I will divide four time periods to make it easy to understand the relation between them.

1. Ancient period,

2. Medieval period,

3. Industrial Revolution period, and

4. Modern period.

Ancient period:

There were a lot of philosophers in ancient times who talked about technology. From there I will present two of them to make a short discussion.

In the ancient period time, the father of Western philosophy, [2] Thales of Miletus (642-546 BCE) had a relationship with technology. [3] From historians and Aristotle, we learn about him. According to those sources, he used technology in his mathematical (measuring device, geometric principles) problems. He also used various kinds of technology in his farming.

2. B. Russell, History of western philosophy.(London, 1961).

3. W S Anglin and J Lambeck, The heritage of TAHALES ((New York, 1995).

 In Plato's great creation [4] The Republic, he gave an example named Allegory of the Cave. In the example, he explores the distinction between appearances and reality. He talked about the danger of illusion. By forming a logical point we can say that, he was concerned about the technological effect. When Plato lived, there was no advanced technology. If we relate the example of the allegory of the cave with the modern-day technological illusion, we can say that, he was concerned about the technological effect which will dehumanize people. Though Plato did not talk about technology or its impacts, his philosophical ideas continued to be applied to the relationship between technology and humanity.

4. Plato, The Republic, (Chapter eleven, Book -7).

Medieval period:

Thomas Aquinas was a great philosopher in medieval times. In his [5] *Summa Theologica*, he talked about morality in technological progress. He did not directly address the topic of technology since it was not a concern during his time. His moral philosophy is based on natural law theory. From his perspective, the morality of technology can be evaluated by considering how it aligns with natural law principles and promotes the common good. Technology should respect and enhance human power rather than destroy it; it should serve human well-being. In his natural law, he teaches us that moral acts are evaluated based on their object, intention, and circumstances. If we apply this natural law to technology, then technology must need to show its purpose, the intention behind its use, and the circumstances in which it is deployed.

5. Prima Secundae, Second part of Summa Thelogica, (Q: 91, Q: 94),   6. Islam of Bensalem, New Atlantis, Fransis Bacon (1627).

In the Renaissance time, Francis Bacon emphasized using technology to advance knowledge. He had a positive outlook on technology and its potential benefits for the society. He published a book named New Atlantis in 1627.[6] In this book New Atlantis, he explores the relationship between scientific knowledge and technological advancements and their impact on society.

Industrial Revolution period:

During the Industrial Revolution time, [7] Rene Descartes talked about technological innovation. While he did not directly address technology his philosophical ideas and knowledge had an indirect influence on the development of technological thought. With his systematic doubt and the search for indubitable truth, he encouraged critical thinking, observation, and experimentation. Those were crucial elements in the technological advancements.

7. First Meditation of Meditation on First Philosophy, Rene Descartes (1641).

Philosopher, like Karl Marx, [8] explores the social, ethical, and political implication of technological advancements. Marx was a critique of capitalism. With the relationship between technology, production, and social relations, he aimed to build a socialistic society with more equality.

8. Das Capital, Volume: 1, Karl Marx, (1867).

Modern period:

Modern philosophers Martin Heidegger and Jacques Ellul [9] examined technology and its importance in human life. From a lecture of [10] (Martin Heidegger) The Question Concerning Technology and, The Technological Society book written by (Jacques Ellul), we can learn their concern about losing the philosophical authenticity of technological dominance.

9. La Technique on l`enjeu du siecle,Jacques Ellul(1954).

10. Lecture, The question concerning technology,(1949).

According to Heidegger, technology has become the dominant mode of revealing truth and shaping our understanding of the world and it will lead to a loss of authenticity and forgetfulness of being.

Some philosophical perspectives on technology:

From an instrumental perspective [11] , technology counts as an instrument that serves human desire. According to them, technology is a neutral thing. It doesn't have any independence. The effect of technology depends on how the master uses it. If the master uses it for the wrong purpose then it will give a wrong outcome. If the master uses it for good purposes, it will give the right outcome.

11. The rationality of Technology: An Instrumental perspective, Fedrick Ferre, (1988).

For example:

We can compare technology to a knife. A knife is commonly used for cutting things. When the knife is in the good hand then it will help to make our everyday life easy. If the knife goes to the wrong hand then it will give you a wrong outcome. Here we can see that, the knife isn't the problem. The result will come according to their master uses.

Phenomenology of technology seeks to understand how technology changes our perception and understanding of the world around us. It examines the living experience and subjective dimensions of technology. German philosopher Martin Heidegger talked about it in his great work The Question Concerning Technology. He doesn't agree about technology as a neutral tool. According to him, technology has a huge influence on the modern world and the people in it. Modern technology shapes our understanding of reality and its relation to nature.

Technology indeed shapes our minds about understanding of reality and our relation with nature. With the help of the internet, we can access to lot of information and perspectives within a short time. By this, it influences our perception of something. There is a chance of getting misinformation through the internet because much of that information comes from algorithms or filter-based information created by technology. It's slowly limiting our perception of the world. Technology gives priority to production, and to achieve this we need the help of technological advancement, like using chemicals in agriculture, e-saw for cutting down forests, etc. Through these kinds of things, we are destroying our relationship with nature.

For example:

Before the invention of pumps or tube wells, people were used to collect water from rivers or pits. Usually, those kinds of sources were far from living places for there was more time wasted. After the invention of the pump people were able to collect water from nearby places of living and they saved lots of time. Here we see a simple example of how technology is shaping our lives.

Post-humanism discusses the impact of technology on the future of humanity. It rejects the idea of fixed human nature. According to them, humans are continuously evolving by the influence of technological advancement. It also explores the concept of artificial intelligence and its impact on human existence. By this, it explores the boundaries between humans and technology. With the help of advanced technology (biotechnology, neurology, etc.) people will able to enhance human capabilities and break the boundaries of limitations of natural human bodies. For those people who aren't able to walk, the prosthetic leg is allowing them to walk. People, who are color blind, nowadays use advanced technological color correction glasses to see proper color.

Example:

Before 1800 going to space seemed almost impossible. In the last century, people made it possible with the help of advanced technology.

According to Technological determinism, technology plays a central role in shaping society and human behavior. Technology has the power to shape various aspects of human life. Because technology ranges from the combination of scientific knowledge, cultural values, and economical aspects. They believe technology is a free agency, not a tool. Technological determinism examines the relation between technology and society.

These are just a few examples of philosophical perspectives on technology.

Ethical implication of technology:

Ethics is a branch of philosophy where a philosopher discusses moral principles and values. It discusses the concepts of right and wrong.

Though, technology is for improving human capability and making things easy for human activity. It also has some ethical discussion. By using technology people are building destructive things (atomic bombs, heavy machine guns, mortar, etc.). Sometimes those things are used against humans. Then the ethical perspective comes over technology. If people use those kinds of destructive things then the technology will be unethical. The responsibility can deploy to both, the creator and technology. When a technology expires or is disabled it becomes an e-waste. Some of them can be recycled but most of them remain e-waste. These kinds of e-waste are sometimes thrown in the open environment and it starts to pollute the environment. A conscious man can't say that polluting the environment is ethical. With the help of smart technology, it is possible to collect another person's data (bank statements, addresses, personal information). Those kinds of things are violations of someone's privacy and violating someone's privacy isn't ethical.With the help of technological advantage advertising about something become easier. People use social media to advertise their products. Some of the products may be harmful to the society. Sometimes people buy those harmful products and become fooled by those evil advertisements. It's the bad effect of technological advantage and isn't ethical either. Social media is a great example of technological advantage. With the help of social media people virtually come closer. In the real world, the connection with each other become less than ever. We come closer to our virtual friends and distance ourselves from real-world people. There is a chance that this will reduce the real-world human connection and also empathy. The technology will reduce meaningful social relationships. In our everyday life, we use technology at maximum level. If people use that much technology in life there may be a massive chance that in the future people will become lazy, unhealthy, and dependent. There is also a chance that general people will lose their creativity. From a logical view, if all our work or problems are done or solved by technology then people will stop thinking creative things. We know that people usually don't like to remain in discomfort; technology will give them the necessary comfortable environment. As a result, people will become inhuman and dependent. If we keep philosophical thinking with using technology then we will think about the outcome of our actions. Because we know from above that thinking about the consequence of actions is one of the main points of philosophical thinking. Therefore we will be able to think about the dark side of using a massive amount of technology and find the answer to the problem of the dark side of using much more technology.

Conclusion:

In this paper, we have easily explored the complex relationship between philosophy and technology. We get a lot of benefits from technology; it helps us in almost all kinds of home-to-office work. It will be hard to spend an hour without using technology. From alarm clocks to toothbrushes, from office bags to PowerPoint presentations almost every point in our daily life we use technology.

If we only use the right side of technology and take proper solutions about the wrong side of using technology, we will able to take our world to a better position. The philosophical aspect will help to achieve these kinds of massive success.

Honorable mentions,

1. Justice: What's the right thing to do? Michael J. Sandel, (2009).

2. The age of Em:Work, Love and Life when Robots rule the Earth,Robin Hanson,(2016).

3. Lecture for the Komaba undergraduates, June, 2003. Andrew Feenberg , What is Philosophy of Technology?

4. Nature of Philosophy,December,2016, Mudasir Ahmed Tantray.