

Article

Revitalizing Human Values in an Age of Technology

Sreetama Misra

School of Humanities, Social Sciences & Management, IIT Bhubaneswar, Bhubaneswar 752050, India; sreetama@iitbbs.ac.in

Abstract: Technology does change human lives, but my query is: does it change human selves too? On a closer look, it is observed that technology and the trail of human beings towards an authentic life (the highest desire) are central and pivotal to human living. However, most of us think of them as separate and unrelated. Technology is technical, the job of technicians, whereas queries of ‘authenticity’ are primarily philosophical, the job of the philosophers. But why do philosophers really bother about technology? This paper aims at a search for human authenticity even in the age of technology since humans are constantly in the process of becoming and they will continue to be so both socially and historically. The first segment of the paper focuses on how technology has depersonalized human persons, with respect to the views of many philosophers; in the second part, the concept of authenticity is understood in connection to our philosophical discourses. Finally, the unseparated relationship between technology and authenticity is explicated. My prime effort here is to understand authenticity from a value-based paradigm and as a therapy from the consumerist-driven materialistic life but not segregated from the prospects of a technocratic world.

Keywords: technology; authentic; value; humanity; autonomy



Citation: Misra, S. Revitalizing Human Values in an Age of Technology. *Philosophies* **2022**, *7*, 136. <https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies7060136>

Academic Editor: Lorenzo Magnani

Received: 7 October 2022

Accepted: 25 November 2022

Published: 1 December 2022

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Science and technology have capacitated human beings to create a world of a new order. But it is not the scientists and technologists alone who determine what kind of world order ought to be created; rather, any modifications/alterations to our world structure depend on our already existing views and principles regarding good and bad and also right and wrong. Therefore, it becomes evident that ethical principles have a direct impact on the use and not-use of science and technology. However, even though technology shapes and is shaped by our moral thoughts and actions, what marks our attention is that this influence of technology is rarely acknowledged and is understood by the moral philosophers only. Philosophers constantly provide scrutiny to the technocrats and scientists by affording rights-based ethical knowledge for new findings and discoveries. This paper sheds light on how human responsibility, ethical accountability and authenticity are extended in order to understand the flow of technology in a new light.

The primordial question is in what way technology has turned out to be a necessary event. All members of human society accept technology either in good or bad ways, and since it directly influences our lives, human intervention, in all aspects, is necessary. Humans are largely a thinking being and not merely automata. The capacity of thinking in humans leads them to philosophize on its several prospects, its necessity, limitations and how it is used for the benefit of human society. According to many philosophers, the dreadful uses of technology are an obstacle to man’s authentic existence. In this paper, my attempt is to make a quest towards authenticity, a deep search for a genuine and meaningful living because even in the age of technocracy, humans are constantly engaged in the process of becoming, and they will continue to be so both socially and historically. The first segment of the paper deeply focuses on how technology has depersonalized human beings, with respect to the views forwarded by Herbert Marcuse, Habermas, Heidegger and Husserl; in the second part, I elaborate on how the concept of authenticity is understood in our

philosophical discourses, especially in Buber, Gabriel Marcel and Heidegger. In the final segment, I speak out in defense of the unseparated relationship between technology and authenticity. It is essential for humans to view authenticity from a value-based paradigm and as a therapy from the consumerist-driven materialistic life, yet not segregated from the prospects of the technocratic world.

2. The Philosophers' View on Impacts of Technology

Tracing back to the Socratic times when knowledge was mostly verbal, the birth of a newer technology for writing down notes and other messages and information was considered a move to a new technological generation. Socrates, however, was antagonistic to writing, and he relied mostly on dialogues and verbal communication. However, defending his position and appreciating oral learning, Socrates quoted from the epics a story where an Egyptian God (*Theuth*) gifts a writing to king Thamus [1,2]. The king, being unhappy with the gift, replied: 'If men learn this (the art of writing), it will implant forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling themselves to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks' [1]. Socrates adored this idea very much: Even though books/writing can provide information, they will fall deficit in implanting wisdom in human souls. However, today we mostly see that technology coexists and intricately relates to what constitutes our existence, and the existence of everything round us. It implies that technology today plays a constitutive role in the way the whole of this universe operates.

In Ian Barbour's [3] views, modern technology is appraised from three major perspectives:

First, technology is understood as a liberating force primarily during the industrial revolution and in the post-world-war period by relieving people from hunger, poverty and incurable diseases, especially with the inventions of improved medical facilities, better modes of sanitation, reduced human labor and improved means of transport and communication. Moreover, with the inventions of computers, gadgets and other technologies, people could now get time to spend more in creative acts and community affairs.

In the second sense, Barbour viewed technology as a threat to individuals because it has led people to alienate themselves from nature, which furthermore caused devastating environmental deterioration, especially due to the mechanization and digitalization of human lives. It resulted in loss of human freedom. Mass production (which is the motto of the technological era) has led to uniformized culture, and conversely to the loss of human individuality; also, local/regional differences are obliterated in the homogeneity of industrialization.

In the third sense, technology is understood as an instrument of power. This sense appropriately holds true from my context of viewing technology, since it depicts a contextual interaction of technology, society and science. Here the impacts of technology vary according to anecdotal social contexts. It emphasizes social constructions along with the use of particular technologies. Therefore, technology cannot be completely neutral. Certain desired purposes are already being built into its design to serve human needs in some way or the other. Here, people believe that technology is built in the hope of some humane ends, or by certain political measures for the effective running of some institutions. Human generations are in the wave of construing a new world phase out of science and technology. However, the kind of world that ought to be created is not dependent on technology alone; rather, it mostly depends on human will, the way of life, truth, goodness and so on. Therefore, in no way are science, technology and society independent. Rather, science and technology are answerable to human society for what they produce and invent.

However, the graph of the last few decades depicts that technology as a dominating tool has made human life mechanized and transformed us into mere machines. Resultantly, humans are deprived from leading an authentic life. In a sense, technology has 'depersonalized human persons', objectified them and reduced them into nothing but disposable objects [4,5]. In a technocratic civilization, humans have turned themselves to mere technicians, where they are devalued, objectified and displaced. Over the past one hundred fifty

years or so, mankind has made great advances in integrating technological productions into our daily lives; undoubtedly, we (humans) are the masters of technology. However, the current dependency rate of human beings on machines and our increased technological necessity for a convenient and easy lifestyle are likely to give birth to the idea that human beings are becoming slaves of modern technology. This negative impact of technology has taken away individual authenticity, self-existence and integrity. A philosophical backdrop also appears prominently in Husserl's *The Crisis* [5], where his major task was to critique the dominant mode of scientific realism of that time. For Husserl, the renaissance in the modern period led to the emergence of scientific culture, the purpose of which was to establish a free and rational understanding of our own self and place in the universe. However, with the growth of science, man began to estrange himself from understanding his own nature or self-consciousness. Because of scientific–technocratic influences, humans forgot to situate themselves within the sociolinguistic world. But Husserl did believe that the task of philosophers was ‘not merely to follow but to understand and even evaluate what scientists do, especially when it comes to attributing reality to their objects’ [6]. Philosophers’ effort was something more, to know beyond what sciences ordinarily claim. But today science has entered into a crisis for being too factual in nature and placing exhaustive importance on technocratization, mechanization and mathematization, ignoring other aspects of human experience.

Technology has lifted humankind from the Old Stone Age to the modern 21st century and has left no efforts untried in ruining human lives and humanity. Aldous Huxley [7,8] held that the ‘most profoundly important sociological factor of modern times (is) the growth of technology and what may be called the technicization of every aspect of human life’ [7]. In ‘Science, Liberty and Peace’, Huxley [7] argued well that science and technology accelerate inequalities and threaten the peace and freedom of human society. However, it does not imply that Huxley was deadly opposed to all the new developments of science and technology that were really beneficial. He warned us that all technological developments ought to be guided by moral inquisitiveness and that they ought to respect the standards of individual dignity, peace, security and social sanity. Science and technology were not the ultimate for Huxley; they were, rather, the means to a good life. At best, they can guide us to better moral and more dignified living, even amidst the corrupt technological elements present in human society. Apart from Huxley, there were thinkers extremely concerned about the disastrous use of technology. For instance, Herbert Marcuse in his 1941 article ‘Some Social Implications of Modern Technology’ points out that ‘technological rationality’ actually undermines ‘individual rationality’ [9]. Whereas technological rationality is used instrumentally to propagate democracy, mechanization and mass production, individual rationality actually leads to critical thinking, self-reflection and a dignified individuality. Marcuse [10] brings out his idea in *One-Dimensional Man* that (a) technology is a tool for maintaining social order, and (b) boosting more and more technological innovations definitely limits human freedom, creativity and constructiveness. Regarding the first, although there are several cases where technology sometimes forces us to conform to certain societal rules, it is considered that technology is more a reflection of society. Habermas [11] agrees with this aspect of Marcuse, saying that we cannot connect technology to certain social projects because technology is a necessary part of human society, and any change in it will occur with the changes in our society or cultural systems. However, Habermas disagrees with the second aspect that technology corrupts our ideas what we intend to do for our success and what makes us resistant to certain social changes. Habermas [11] instead says that human interactions with technology are mainly purpose driven and culturally driven actions and that our problems are not with our relationship to technology but rather with what we give attention to. However, I elaborate on Habermas’s views later. Though Marcuse differs from Heidegger politically, it could be easily drawn that in bringing a revolutionary transformation regarding the instrumentalisation of technology and considering nature as element of nurture, Marcuse was deeply influenced by Heidegger. Marcuse [9] appealed for a new methodology of technology in consonance with peace,

avoiding conflicts of all kinds, and in his same 1941 work, he gave humanity a sign of hope that probably a day will come when humans will be technicians to such a technology that could remove human suffering and unrest and instead promote peace, happiness and contentment.

Something similar is also noticeable in the works of Gabriel Marcel [12], who doubtlessly admired the heights of technology, calling it an impressive and admirable attainment of human rationality. However, his disappointment rose noticing that our present civilization is lost under the strains of new inventions and discoveries, and the meaning of life is gone and is no longer seen. With the loss of human being's real existence, there is also degradation in the creativity and hope of human life. While the makers of technology (humans) were extremely creative in enjoying the benefits of technology and leading a meaningful life necessary to reap the benefits of their creativity, those who ate the fruits of technology have been reduced to mere users, with no genuine creativity to contribute anything for our culture and society. In the flow of making our lives more convenient, technology has forgotten to train us how we could use technological power against destruction/harm so much so that technology has been unable to solve the deepest problems of human life, the search for goodness and authenticity. In this context, Wittgenstein [13] claims that in an age when possibly all scientific questions have been answered, there will be still more remaining, and that the problems of human life will remain completely untouched. In a beautiful way, Marcel [12] pointed out that modern technology has so functionalized man that man defines himself/herself strictly through his/her action and function in society, in counter to being. Marcel's reflection portrays that human lived experiences are truly necessary for the ontological existence of beings. An individual must not only exist as a body but also existentially, as a thinking being, as an emotive being, and as an authentic being. Marcel urged humanity to escape from the 'broken-ness' towards which the world is heading because the modern world is in conflict now, and our aim must be to transcend from disunity and adopt the idea of 'communion', by which individuals can perceive each other's subjectivity, which will help us understand the true nature of our existence [12]. Marcel called the modern world a broken one. Existing as a body refers to allowing oneself to be an object to others as well as oneself. An individual is born in a world of persons, i.e., in a society and in a culture having some codes and conducts. Therefore, it is not possible to depersonalize a person. The task of philosophy is to relieve humanity from this evil, by reflecting more on the spiritual domain and not on the domain of technology.

There are two prominent society modules in respect of technology: One is technology determining humans, and the other is humans determining technology. Technology was invented by the human mind with a view to using it for fulfilling human wants and purposes, but modern civilization is witnessing an age where technology is ruling humans, and humans in the want of luxury have surrendered their autonomy to technology. Humans have become so entangled with technological uses that it becomes extremely difficult to determine whether technology rules human or vice versa. The present structure of society has led to a kind of technological determinism, meaning that technology causes or determines what happens in our society and culture (the contrary of this principle, that technology is a reflection of whatever changes happens in human society and likewise, was upheld by Habermas). With the changes in modules and forms of technology come changes in the societal structure, people's ways and styles of living, etc. However, series of critiques against rampant objectivism, scientism and technocratism emerged especially during the phenomenological periods. Even Heidegger in 'The Question Concerning Technology' [14] criticizes the modern form of technology as it challenges our planet's wealth and resources by means of exploitation and exhaustion. In the present world of technology, everything has become a means to an end. Technology does not exist in itself but exists for the sake of something. What Heidegger suggests is a possibility is to understand and feel the essence of technology, without falling into its trap. Throughout the ages, humanity has been in the 'driver's seat' of all technological inventions, and hence, humanity could not completely become a raw material or a means for the end of something. Heidegger's concern for the

future of humanity leaves an optimistic stance on how technology has 'dehumanized man'. Heidegger [15] writes, '... the world of technology is interpreted in advance in terms of human beings, as a being of human making. Technology conceived in the broadest sense and in its manifold manifestations is taken for the plan which human beings project, the plan which compels human beings to decide whether they will become the servant of the plan or will remain the master. By this conception of the totality of the technological world, we reduce everything down to human beings' [15]. Heidegger's deep concern for human beings is noticeable even at this age of crisis, and it is reflected when Heidegger writes, 'We at best come to the point of calling for an ethics of the technological world. Caught up in this conception we confirm our own opinion that technology is of human making alone. We fail to hear the claim of Being [*Anspruch des Seins*] which speaks in the essence of technology [*Wesen der Technik*]' [15].

Here, Heidegger leaves an optimistic image saying that even though humanity has acquired sufficient power to control the universe, humanity cannot take up its control over nature. Nature has reacted in adverse ways to human's destructive activities. It is because, Heidegger stresses, technology is actually human centric (a fabricated production) and is not in any way pre-given in the sense of socio linguistic background. Technology can be considered an a posteriori condition that humanity achieved to reach its aims/goals. Because of this reason, Heidegger warned not to be de-human but be human by continuously encountering human essence.

The mechanical portrait of technology ultimately reduces (human) beings into not-beings, leading humans to forget their authentic existence. Technology not only projects a negative phenomenon; rather, it is a rediscovery of the mode of salvation, of the mode of unfolding of being. However, Heidegger [16], all throughout his critique, never felt that it was impossible for humankind to live in an era where technological traits are absent. Therefore, one must neither 'push on blindly with technology' nor 'curse it as the work of the devil' [16] (p. 330). He called for an urgent and immediate transformation of the mode of being in which technology appears to us as something in which we are not the means but where technology is out there for us to use and enjoy and also wherein is prepared a better way of encountering entities. It is made possible by constantly engaging oneself to encounter with the truth of Being in beings, in Dasein. I shall explain this context in detail later.

An important representative of critical theory is Jurgen Habermas, whose works have endowed continued relevance to the enlightenment ideals and the possibilities of democracy, and technology is a threat to both of these [11]. However, the problem persists if we separate technology from science. If we assimilate science and technologies by letting them operate in their own internalized principles together, then the problem dissolves: Just as with literature and humanities, as none takes priority over the other, their beauty blossoms when the two assimilate to work together. Habermas also express his worry about instrumental rationality, a brand of today's civilization that leads to the 'technicizing of the life world', which in turn is an obstacle to the life world. This instrumental rationality emerges within, in Habermas' words, 'technocratic consciousness' that makes science fictitious. Technocratic consciousness refers to the technique of problem solving from an instrumental/bureaucratic context; it 'reflects not the sundering of [particular] ethical situations but the repression of ethics as such as a category of life'. This ideology stands in direct contradiction to what Habermas emphasizes as critical, moral and reflective reasoning, taking place in life world. Life world represents the world given to us, which is nourished more by the process of communication and is constantly interrupted by the instruments of money, power and capitalism. In Habermas's words, these obstacles can actually be overthrown by fully exercising what communicative rationality is and establishing a democratic and reasoned platform of discourse [17]. Even today, advanced industrialization and competition technology are seen only as means of production for human consumption that in a way dominates human as well as nature. At the same time, it is also true that there is an urgent need for technological transformation, and to not let it be

completely value neutral in order to address human authenticity in the age of value crisis and also if human beings are to aim for liberation. The crisis of science results in the loss of the meaning and authenticity of life. However, in the following section, my attention to the idea of authenticity, a very central thought of human living, is brought forth.

3. The Concept of 'Authenticity' in Philosophical Discourses

The legacy of the quest for an authentic living is something not new. For ages, sages and scholars have engaged themselves in the pursuit of discovering the route to an authentic living. This is because the essence of humans lies in going beyond the connotation of what mere animality means. Discovering the value of an authentic life implies discovering a meaningful life, a life worth living and not only a meaningless one. To some, an ordinary life may be of no value, but to others, the same may be commendable enough and praiseworthy. We can trace back the heritage of an authentic living to the ideas of the prominent Greek philosopher Aristotle. Aristotelian ideas of an ordinary life are different from that of a life worth valuing. For a layman, an authentic life means being successful, and a layman's definition of success depends on how one values 'power' or 'wealth' and to what extent one makes use of these criteria while living their life. However, an authentic life is necessarily successful, but a successful life is not always authentic.

To the query of what kind of life is worth living, three well-sounded reasons come up for which men prefer to live in a better way: first, to lead a life of pleasure, delight and amusement; second, choosing a public career and earning a reputation both in one's own eyes and in the eyes of others; and the third, a life dedicated to philosophy, and able to appreciate the universe in which one finds oneself in. Out of the multifarious choices that an individual might decide in his course of life, he/she needs resort to either of them. In choosing any of them, we are directed towards some objective. By attaining this objective, our minds strive further to get something more. Each time, we realize that our last endeavor to achieve the objective was lower, due to which I desire to attain the next immediate higher objective. In this process, one finds many higher objectives, and we cannot reach out to a single highest objective. Aristotle appeals to humanity for pursuing one single objective, which is the highest of highest objectives, towards which all our decisions must be targeted. That highest objective contains what is called 'success' [18]. A successful life demands that one's life be composed of series of successful activities, and each activity is carried out for the sake of the other. However, Aristotle cautions us that the objective targeted by human beings must be pursued solely for its own sake and not for the sake of anything else. This is a true route to a genuine authentic existence.

I recall mid-nineteenth century ideas given by John Dewey [19], who said that human life is never a solitary affair, but formed in the crux of interhuman 'interactions' or 'transactions' that are exclusively connected to human communication, dialogue and human transactions. Authentic living blooms in human relations. This turn from individual-centered living (in the Greek ages) to establishing inter-human ties is seen mainly among the contemporary hermeneutic thinkers, whose aim is to rediscover the glory of authentic existence through interpersonal/interhuman relationships. Interhuman relations are necessary because twenty-first century relations have witnessed severe crises in human relationships due of severe socio-politico-economic breakdowns. A fake and false web of capitalist- and consumer-centric relations among men has blanketed human authentic relationships. This is to be regained back by the force of interhuman relations that continuously binds humanity and even makes our relations with the unknown known. Human beings are not solitary, nor a product of a social aggregate, but are in relation to other human beings. Our existence becomes meaningful and justified in relating ourselves to other selves, and this has been possible only by establishing interpersonal/interhuman dialogues. Interhuman relations are a modern day form of interpreting philosophical hermeneutics in order to bring out the understanding of the entire human world and reflecting human consciousness in the case of human art, society, etc. In my opinion, hermeneutics has two major phases: The initial phase focused primarily on the interpretation of meaning basing

on text reading, whereas the contemporary phase focuses mostly on interpersonal relations. Meaning is drawn not only from texts (as traditional hermeneutics proposed) but from cross-cultural encounters, where shared appreciation, knowing the other and a recognition of differences carry the meaning of human actions in the real sense. Hermeneutics does not reside in a purely abstract form but also exists within the concrete lived experiences, wherefrom meanings are derived and the route to true living is discovered. In a hermeneutical affair, inter-human as well as inter-cultural relations are derived, and meanings of human actions are established and signified where each partner aims to bring out the meaning of human actions by engaging constantly in dialogical discourse with the individuals, nation states and community in the broader sense of the context. Let us analyze in context the views of a few existentialist thinkers such as Buber, Marcel, and Heidegger, who were equally concerned about the possibilities of an authentic living.

Buber's View: 'All real living is meeting' says Buber [20], who identifies human relations as dialogue; it is only by relating an individual self with the others that dialogue initiates. For Buber, human life experiences have two different dimensions: One is the authentic relationship determined by interhuman/interpersonal relations, and the other is the manipulative mechanical relationship that humans face every day in this concretized world. In Buber's words, the former is called the *I-Thou* relationship, while the latter is the *I-It* relationship. The *I-It* is primarily characterized as instrumental, where human relations are objectified and treated merely as things to be used. The *I-It* reflects a deterioration of human dignity and authenticity, whereas in *I-Thou*, a being develops his/her personal relationship with god, nature and other human beings. Living in this mechanical consumerist world culture, individuals cannot completely escape from the *I-It* culture. In medical science and research, in collecting empirical evidence, in business and in governmental policies, an individual is treated not as a being in their own right but only as a means for attaining their desired goals. In explaining the *I-Thou* relationship, Buber [21] writes, 'The relation to the Thou is direct. No system of ideas, no foreknowledge, and no fancy intervene between I and Thou. The memory itself is transformed, as it plunges out of its isolation into the unity of the whole. No aim, no lust, and no anticipation intervene between I and Thou. Desire itself is transformed as it plunges out of its dream into the appearance. Every means is an obstacle. Only when every means has collapsed does the meeting come about' [21]. I recall Gabriel Marcel here, for whom the nature or content of *I-Thou* is unverifiable, or rather, it is mysterious. This mysteriousity is to be given due consideration, and if not, it can be devalued by the flow of technocracy of the materialist world. I shall explain Marcel's point in the very next stanza. However, Buber adds up that an individual life becomes meaningful and significant only by appreciating and recognizing the dignity of others and making possible the *I-Thou* relationship. In Buber's [20] philosophy, the *I-Thou* is addressed in two ways, from an epistemological and from an ethical sense. Buber emphasizes discovering authentic relations through *I-Thou* in order to counter 'a progressive augmentation of the world of *It*' [20] (pp. 123–124). Buber sets a dual purpose for himself, by pointing out that humans' personal relationships with God (epistemological relations) hold the same weight and importance as humans' authentic relations with their fellow beings (ethical relations) [22].

Marcel's View: Gabriel Marcel very beautifully brings out how dignity and interpersonal relations work and what are the barriers to it. Marcel talks of two important concepts which are availability and fidelity [23]. Availability refers to an individual's capability that he/she presents to others. An individual becomes anxious and worried to present himself/herself in front of others, and therefore he/she makes him/her unavailable to others. In a narrowed-down life that is closed and blocked, human dignity is violated and harmed, so Marcel speaks out that it is essential for an individual being to protect human dignity by making oneself 'open' to others. To open oneself in front of others, or to be available to others, does not imply mere physical presence; it means coming out of one's narrowed/egoistic self and transcend oneself towards the other. This is an authentic existence for Marcel. As Marcel says, being implies participation and presence, whereas

having implies objectification: it is the *I-It* reflection. The presence that Marcel describes is in Marcelian terms something that is nonobjectifiable; it is a mystery by which 'I experience my openness towards the other and in the other's giving of himself at my disposal' [23]. In Marcel's words, the other before me is not merely an object, but is beyond that, 'between him and me there arises a relationship which, in a sense, surpasses my awareness of him; he is not only before me, he is also within me—or rather these categories are transcended, they have no longer any meaning' [24]. This availability of oneself to others is lightened by fidelity. Fidelity is 'the active perpetuation of presence' [24,25]. Marcel speaks of creative fidelity as a link revitalizing the living relationship between the other and myself. Marcel goes against objectification of any kind, and against the functional values of technocratization that undermines authentic human values. The *I-Thou* relationship achieves a brilliant success when true communication occurs between the I and absolute and the eternal Thou (the unconditioned, i.e., God). It is then that the act of true genuine and authentic relationship takes place.

Heidegger's View: In two of Heidegger's foremost works, *Being and Time* [26] and his 1929 lecture 'What Is Metaphysics?' [27], the concept of authenticity contains a detailed and illustratable analysis. Authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*) primarily refers to ownness, the sense of possessing what is truly one's own, that which belongs to me. Heidegger's conception of authenticity, however, is inextricable and related to the unique experiences of 'Dasein'. Dasein consists of two kinds of existence: ontical and ontological. An ontological existence is authentic one in which an individual (Dasein) questions its being. Dasein is authentic because it has its possibilities, and Dasein has possibilities because it is thrown into possibility-centric given situations, a world 'it has in each case already been thrown into' [26]. Therefore, the world is beyond Dasein's control, not what Dasein makes or create; rather Dasein is thrown into this world with an openness to make choice (so the choice remains a kind of possibility) between the authentic or the inauthentic. In possibilities lies the choice of Dasein for an authentic/inauthentic existence. Heidegger says, '[P]ossibility as an existential [that is, as a constitutive element of Dasein's ontological constitution, as part of what Dasein is as long as it exists] is the primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is characterized ontologically' [26] (p. 68). That is the true nature of Dasein. As opposed to authentic Dasein, inauthentic (*uneigentlich*) Dasein is when Dasein has lost its possibilities. What is to be noted here is that Dasein goes towards authenticity because it is anxious of its existence since being thrown into this world. Hence, anxiety is an essential feature of authenticity. However, anxiety does not mean darkness, or despair; rather, it reflects an inquiry into who am I? What am I for in this world? Anxiety reflects a freedom of beginning to become myself in true sense. But in inauthentic existence, Dasein exists in the mundane world in the ordinary sense of existence. Heidegger says, Dasein is 'essentially something that can be authentic [*eigentliches*], that is, something of its own, [*zueigen*]' . He continues, 'Dasein is authentic if it belongs to the truth of being in such a way that priority over beings is granted to being'. Most of the Dasein live in inauthentic existence as they forget their unique characteristic due to involvement with everyday life. The primordial mode of Dasein that is called 'beings other' sometimes compels him to forget the self-awareness. Heidegger used the term 'They-self' in order to express the inauthentic mode of the self. The primordial mode of *Dasein*, what is called 'They', refers to the cultural and social customs that snatch away Dasein's 'self-awareness' by making Dasein get involved in day-to-day life. Heidegger holds that Dasein (human being) is not static in its processes of human life. Rather, its continuity is seen in the process of becoming itself, in growing into possibilities and in looking into one's future, and therefore becoming is a necessary element of existence. Authenticity is an activity, the act of being human. On the contrary, inauthentic existence is where Dasein is distracted by worldly things, losing the hope to lead a meaningful life. One of the best routes to authenticity is resoluteness. Resoluteness [25] is a way of being in the world authentically by acknowledging others' guilt. It does not imply a suspension of ties with the other entities of the world, but in resoluteness, there is a disclosure of one's being into other; there is a conscience about the other, about being

authentically with the other. Parallel to this thinking, one of Heidegger's contemporaries, existentialist Jean Paul Sartre, defines authenticity as taking full responsibility of one's life, choices and actions [28]. Human's free will allows us to determine our lives from the choices available to us based on our sociocultural situatedness. What is to be pointed out, taking reflections from the above philosophers, is that authenticity cannot be defined, nor can it be measured, since individuals in society are in constant phases of change, always in the process of becoming. Authenticity guarantees individuals a genuine life, a meaningful life, an examined life and never ever an arbitrary one.

4. Human Values in a World of Technology

We have seen the two different approaches, one admitting how technology has unraveled human lives and the second stressing how authenticity can really create human lives. In this hard age we are living, the question we continually ponder is whether the way we lead life is genuinely natural. Is our life an examined one? Are we conscious of our actions in society? In the name of luxury and security, we have actually endangered our own lives. Does technology really set us free, or are we erecting prison for ourselves? Doubtlessly, progress has occurred, but why has more progress that is meaningful not occurred? Why has technology not been used more intelligently? Humanity has used technology for relieving physical apathy, but never thought of how to refrain from moral boredom. Our purposes mainly were driven towards improvising human standards of living; we never sought to improvise humane moral character.

The discussions throughout doubtlessly carry forward some streaming arguments to the concern about how technology has made human lives mechanical (in the first part) and on the other, how we can know ourselves for an authentic life (in the second part). These two contrary elements found in human beings incessantly go together in our society. While for some, the drive for technocratic life takes priority, for some, the drive is for a moral value-based living. Therefore, the challenging query is whether the two can go together. Has 'technology' nothing to do with 'authenticity', which reflects value-orientedness? This query reminds us of Langdon Winner, who made a critique of technologies that undermine democratic practices and ecological sustainability as well as dignity. For Winner [29,30], anything deployed to demean 'humans' is disastrous. We live in an age when technology is thought as value-neutral, whereas living an authentic life implies living a life that is worth valuing. What prevented conventional philosophers from attending to the needs of human society (relating to technology) is their unwritten prejudice that philosophy only deals with universals and what relates to self-consciousness [4], such as the immediate issues bothering human lives such as hunger, insecurity and consumerism remain unaddressed. When we think over whether there exists any relationship between science and technology and values, we come across three primary positions. To some, there is no connection between the two, but it is in how humans make use of technologies that their utilization becomes clearer; hence, technology/science is value-free. To a few, technology is a means for attaining greater human comfort, ease and freedom. Third, some consider technology a growing evil that determines human lives and courses of action. In *Thinking Through Technology*, Carl Mitcham [31] writes that whereas technicians are concerned with the optimistic aspect of technology, philosophers are mainly critics of it, and mostly we fail to set before ourselves the limitations of our actions (mainly scientific/technological). Mitcham continues writing that human lives are not weighed by mere financial successes. It is important as well as significant for human beings to think comprehensively about all our actions in our life and in the world we live in. In the words of Craig Hanks [32], 'The study of technology and values is a critical, reflective examination of the effects and transformation of technologies upon human activities and societies. The aim is to develop critical forms of thought that allow us to understand, evaluate, appreciate, and criticize the ways in which technologies reflect, as well as change, human life, individually, socially, and culturally'. Technology, being an essential feature of modernity, must not be used to take out value from human beings; rather, modernity ought to reflect how a value-based

authentic living is possible in a purer and newer form. What I argue in this paper is that the task of technology must be a revival, not shredding away humanity from life of an individual but rather reflecting human life in its purer form—driven not by capitalist mentality but by morality and humaneness.

Scientific and technological developments stress the application of knowledge, but it becomes troublesome when it causes misleading applications and consequences. In its many aspects, economic, social and even interpersonal, the dreadful impacts of science and technology have spread all through. Digitalization makes a barrier between the rich and the poor and demarcates between rural and urban living. Educationally, technology has helped bring varied classes of people together by making distant learning accessible through the internet, but simultaneous to these merits, it had serious drawbacks where teacher–student face-to-face interactions lessened; students have become dependent on Google world and are reluctant to imagine, think and use their brains to produce some new thoughts or solve problems on their own. Children are always ready to find even known answers through Google; resultantly, their skill of critical reflection and analysis is lost. They lose their own confidence. Even the ongoing computing and communications revolutions are also not astray of danger and hence require serious social investigations. From the premodern to the modern times, there existed a difference between instrumental and intrinsic. Technology is mostly used in instrumental fashion, which exists for the benefit of others. Because of this instrumental–intrinsic tussle, technocrats often fall into the loop while discovering its ethical justifiability. For an instance, a group of engineers decides to test a new video game whose side effects are yet unknown to human beings because the engineers know that playing the game will slowly induce severe neuro-tubal damage as well as heart problems in children. The experimenters know that children will get addicted to the game, but they promote it intentionally because of economic and social profit without even warning the experimental subjects of the risk to their future health and concealing from them the possible side effects the game will cause. The engineers who are guilty have carried out the experiment violating three major ethical principles: First, the deontological principle that we ought to treat everybody as an end and never as a means to our goal; second, the human rights principle that people ought to be treated as autonomous agents having conscious will, rationality and decision-making powers, so they ought to be respected and given due dignity; and third, the legal principle that nobody can intentionally harm another person without having sufficiently justifiable reasons for doing so.

This is only an instance from social life, but many such experiments occur in the laboratory. Sometimes the laboratory remains a closed room; sometimes the laboratory becomes social life. Sometimes humans are made the victims, sometimes the non-humans. Most of the times, the experiments are carried out without informing the ends as required, and hence, any risks that occurred to the subjects fall under the responsibility of the scientists/technocrats. Therefore, with due respect to technology, it is even vital to investigate the aims and values through which knowledge is generated, developed, deciphered and utilized. It is obvious that human beings live in a certain socio-cultural-economic life world where it is almost impossible to shun instrumentality, particularly in cases when we are largely dependent on many products for many of our bodily needs. But our determination to make human life more valued and authentic is not something that remains unattainable even in today's age. Authenticity is an attainable human value. One has to be authentic in one's words, deeds, action and living to realize the true meaning of authenticity. This value of authenticity is not to be realized in abstract but exists in its concrete form, in human world, in the motives and will of human beings and in all human innovations. Authenticity has more to do with human mind and spirituality. For an authentic value-based living (especially in today's world), it is a sheer impracticability to wipe out all human connections with modern technology. We can regain and restore a technological living that is nonharmful to human society, that produces things to bring to light sociocultural creativities and that make human life more acquiescent to the socio-cultural-geographical changes. Therefore,

new directions to address the future of technology have been devised that express values with the new and changing horizons of social systems. We may call it a reorientation of technology towards values, justice and a more refined form of sustainable living.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

1. Plato. *Theatetus*; Waterfield, R.A.H., Translator; Penguin: New York, NY, USA, 2004.
2. Plato. *Plato's Phaedrus*; Hackforth, R., Translator; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, Australia, 1997.
3. Barbour, I. *Ethics in an Age of Technology: The Gifford Lectures (1989–1991)*; SCM Press: London, UK, 1992; Volume 2.
4. Mumford, L. *Technics and Civilization*; Harcourt, Brace and Company: New York, NY, USA, 1934.
5. Husserl, E. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*; Carr, D., Translator; Northwestern University Press: Evanston, IL, USA, 1970.
6. Carr, D. The Life World Revisited. In *Husserl's Phenomenology: A Textbook*; Mohanty, J.N., McKenna, W.R., Eds.; Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology & University Press of America: Washington, DC, USA, 1989; p. 293.
7. Huxley, A. *Science, Liberty and Peace*; Chatto & Windus: London, UK, 1950.
8. Deery, J. *Aldous Huxley and the Mysticism of Science*; Macmillan Press: London, UK, 1996.
9. Marcuse, H. Some Social Implications of Modern Technology. In *Studies in Philosophy and Social Sciences*; The Institute of Social Research: New York, NY, USA, 1941; Volume 9, pp. 138–163.
10. Marcuse, H. *One-Dimensional Man*; Beacon Press: Boston, MA, USA, 1964.
11. Habermas, J. Technical Progress and the Social Life-World. In *Technology and Values: Essential Readings*; Hanks, C., Ed.; Wiley Blackwell: Malden, MA, USA, 2010; p. 169.
12. Marcel, G. *The Mystery of Being, Volume 1: Reflection and Mystery*; The Harvill Press: London, UK, 1950.
13. Wittgenstein, L. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*; Pears, D.F.; McGuinness, B.F., Translators; Routledge: London, UK; New York, NY, USA, 1974.
14. Heidegger, M. The Question Concerning Technology. In *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger*; Krell, D.F., Ed.; Routledge: London, UK, 1953.
15. Heidegger, M. *Identity and Difference*; Stambaugh, J., Translator; Harper & Row: New York, NY, USA, 1957; p. 34.
16. Heidegger, M. *Questions Concerning Technology*; Garland Publishing: New York, NY, USA, 1993; p. 330.
17. Habermas, J. *The Philosophical Discourses of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*; Lawrence, F., Translator; Polity Press: Boston, MA, USA, 2007.
18. Barnes, J. (Ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, NY, USA, 1999; p. 196.
19. Dewey, J. *The Public and Its Problems: An Essay in Political Inquiry*; The Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park, PA, USA, 2012; pp. 119–141.
20. Buber, M. *I and Thou*; Scribner's: New York, NY, USA, 1958; pp. 123–124.
21. Buber, M. *I and Thou*; Smith, R.G., Translator; Continuum Press: London, UK; New York, NY, USA, 2004; p. 17.
22. Charne, S. The Two I-Thou Relations in Martin Buber's Philosophy. *Harv. Theol. Rev.* **1977**, *70*, 161–173. [[CrossRef](#)]
23. Manuel, B.D. *Philosophy of Man: Selected Readings*; Goodwill: Taguig, Phillipines, 2005; p. 289.
24. Marcel, G. *The Philosophy of Existence*; Harvill Press: London, UK, 1949; p. 24.
25. Duff, A.S. *Heidegger and Politics: The Ontology of Radical Discontent*; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, NY, USA, 2015; p. 168.
26. Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*; Harper Perennial Modern Classics: New York, NY, USA, 1927; p. 326.
27. Heidegger, M. What is Metaphysics? In *Existence and Being*; Hull, R.F.C.; Alan, C., Translators; H. Regnery: Berkeley, CA, USA, 1962.
28. Detmer, D. *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity*; Open Court: Chicago, IL, USA; La Salle, IL, USA, 2009.
29. Winner, L. *Autonomous Technology: Technics-Out-of-Control as a Theme in Political Thought*; The MIT Press: London, UK, 1978.
30. Appleyard, B. *Understanding the Present: Science and the Soul of Modern Man*; Doubleday: New York, NY, USA, 1992.
31. Mitcham, C. *Thinking through Technology: The Path between Engineering and Philosophy*; The University of Chicago Press: London, UK, 1994.
32. Hanks, C. (Ed.) General Introduction. In *Technology and Values: Essential Readings*; Willey-Blackwell: Hong Kong, China; Singapore; New York, NY, USA, 2010.