

# Analysis of the Impact of Ethical Dilemmas Brought about by Technological Change——The Philosophy of Life Technology Research Paradigm Revisited

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**Abstract:** There has always been a subtle connection between the development of science and technology and society's ethical beliefs. They mutually constrain and promote each other, collectively forming the fundamental framework of modern social ethics and moral systems. The exploration of the relationship between the two has significant theoretical value and practical significance. Thus, there is an urgent need for a new research paradigm to establish theoretical and practical guidance for the various issues arising between technology and ethics. This paper aims to analyze the binary structure of "human-nature" in the philosophy of life technology. Based on this research paradigm, it seeks to reveal the dialectical unity between technology and ethics. Furthermore, the paper explores how to construct a new ethical perspective of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature in the present era. It also delves into the methods to confront this ethical dilemma.

**Keywords:** Technology; Ethics; Philosophy of Life Technology

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## Introduction

In the contemporary world, the rapid advancement of technology has driven economic progress, and economic development, in turn, has promoted technological innovation. Three industrial and technological revolutions have transformed human society from an agricultural civilization to an industrial one, offering people more convenient and comfortable lifestyles. However, as the level of scientific and technological advancement continues to rise, ethical perspectives in modern society face increasing challenges. In this context, it is necessary for us to reflect on the purpose of technological progress. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to understand the relationship between technology and humanity correctly, as well as the fundamental connection between technology and life. Life technology philosophy regards the "body" as the nexus that connects life and technology. "Through the body, technology is linked to life as an essential strategy and means for life to survive and for humanity to exist."<sup>[1]</sup> From this perspective, we can view technology as a capability for life's existence and use it to balance the many contradictions between technology and human life ethics. By integrating the ethical dilemmas brought about by technological change into philosophical ontology, we can engage in profound contemplation.

## 1. Ontological Analysis of the Relationship between Technology and Life Concepts

To explore the connection between technology and ethics, we need to understand the essence of technology. What is its relation to the thread of human life? Undoubtedly, whether studying technology or ethical issues, they are both related to human beings and their activities.

Bergson believes that technology is a link in the evolution of life and a necessary path for human beings to attain freedom. "Life itself refers to an impulse" <sup>[2]</sup> 363, and it is this impulse that enables life to overcome material constraints and achieve evolution. Human use of tools is precisely the process of transcending material through intelligence. Bergson divides technology into organic and

inorganic categories, where organic technology is governed by instincts, and inorganic technology is created through intelligence. Unlike animals' instinctual use of tools, humans, through the use of inorganic technology, employ intelligence to create "artificial organs" (here, artificial organs are metaphorical, representing Bergson's understanding of inorganic technology). Through intelligence, humans transform matter into a part of their bodies, thereby establishing inorganic technology as an expression of human evolution. Consequently, in Bergson's perspective, technology exists as a means of life's evolution.

Another philosopher who considers technology as a factor driving life's evolution is Stiegler from France. Stiegler uses the error of Prometheus to metaphorize the inherent flaws of human existence. Unlike other animals with innate traits, humans, to compensate for their shortcomings, invent and create "prosthetics" or "artifacts". Although "prosthetics" lack life on their own, they become a defining feature of human life due to human life's imperfections. Stiegler posits that technology and humans are both creators and creations. "Technology invents humans, and humans invent technology; they are both subjects and objects to each other. " [3] 150 Stiegler believes that "prosthetics" determine human characteristics and constitute the reality of human evolution. Technology evolves alongside humans through their mutual invention. Thus, we can consider technology, in ontological terms, as a part of the body and existing because of humans. "The evolution of technology results from the coupling of humans and things, which needs further clarification... It is necessary to reflect on the so-called 'organs. ' They represent a part of the body or instruments of technology. " [3] 52

Similarly, in the writings of Marx and Engels, there were discussions about viewing technology as "organs. " "The development of machinery is the history of the evolution of human society's productive organs. " [4] From Marx's perspective, technology (machinery) is considered an "evolutionary" organ, an extension of human life (body) created to meet social production needs. From the perspective of historical materialism, technology continuously evolves within human society's history, propelling human history forward. As a special social phenomenon, technology is inseparable from its relationship with humanity. This viewpoint enriches the theoretical content of life technology philosophy. It can be said that everything about technology is interconnected with the subject, and it shares the same origin as life and the human body. The study of technology must rely on human ontology. "The value of technology lies in the mutual relationship between technology and the subject, expressing the nature and degree of affirmation or negation of human needs and development. " [5] 26 The value of technology is inseparable from its interaction with the subject. Since its birth, technology has been connected with humans. Whether technology generates human civilization or human civilization (rationality) gives rise to technology, their relationship is already intertwined.

## **2. The Perspective Shift of Life Technology Philosophy on Modern Ethical Issues**

Based on the previous ontological analysis of technology and life concepts, we have concluded that technology and life are interconnected and co-evolve. So, what insights does life technology philosophy offer on modern ethical issues? The core lies in a perspective shift. Life technology philosophy views technology as closely related to the human body and considers the core of addressing ethical issues arising from technology to be the impact of technology through the human body (life) on individuals and society. This shift in perspective means that it is not humans controlling technology, but rather technology, as an extension of life, influencing individuals and groups.

Firstly, we can ponder what the world would be like without technology. The author believes that our ethical world would collapse alongside the technological world. Technology's emergence led humanity from barbarism to modernity, and in this process, ethical civilization emerged. When we are still discussing how technology affects human society, we have already lost a proper understanding of technology. The development of technology that we see is merely a historical phenomenon; it has not fundamentally changed the world's appearance or our way of survival. When we begin to reflect on technology itself, we realize it is, in essence, a moral phenomenon. Therefore, technology's development is actually aimed at better meeting human needs. In this new era, we need to reexamine ourselves, understand the moral power and significance we possess, and be aware of the profound changes happening in our technological environment. As mentioned earlier, the era of artificial intelligence is just a historical phenomenon.

Secondly, in the field of biomedicine, technology also exists as a substitute for life. Let us return to Stiegler's concept of "prosthetics" to consider this question: when technology becomes part of the human body, can it be considered a form of life? "Prosthetics" are also translated as "artifacts. " When these "artifacts" become part of the human body in the biological field, does

technology itself possess life characteristics? Clearly, this is one of the ethical dilemmas brought about by technological change. Perhaps some argue that technology, as "prosthetics," remains mechanical and lifeless. However, consider a scenario where life is forced to use prosthetics due to external factors (accidents), akin to the Ship of Theseus paradox.

Lastly, viewing technology from the perspective of life technology philosophy not only helps us overcome ethical dilemmas caused by modern technology but also provides insights for the future development of our society. In the Marxist view of science and technology, "he believes that technology is the objectification of human essential powers, it extends the natural limbs of humans, it is an intermediary of human practice, a foundation of understanding, and a real productive force." [6] We can see that the Marxist view of science and technology regards technology as an "intermediary of human practice," akin to the perspective of life technology philosophy. Both technology and the human body are intermediaries, essentially part of human practice. Therefore, in the process of practice, we need to continuously develop this intermediary and reflect on technology and ourselves based on practice. Through technology, we can better unleash human value to address the many ethical dilemmas that future social development may encounter.

### **3. Solutions for Ethical Governance of Technology**

The development of modern technology has provided people with broader perspectives and richer opportunities, but it has also brought about more ethical dilemmas. Merely shifting perspectives sometimes cannot provide comprehensive and profound answers to social issues. Therefore, when studying the relationship between modern technology and ethics, it is crucial to adopt a dialectical perspective. On one hand, we should acknowledge its positive role, while on the other hand, we must not overlook the negative impacts it brings. In this context, it is essential to explore the intrinsic connection between technology and ethics from an ethical perspective, addressing issues such as "benefits and harm," "benefits and beauty," "good and evil."

Building a new ethical perspective of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. The core of life technology philosophy is to break the binary structure of "humans-nature" and the inherent dualism of subject and object. From this perspective, humans and material are interconnected and unified, rather than separate or opposing. Following the paradigm of life technology philosophy, the natural world is also a living entity. Therefore, the use of technology should be based on the idea of interconnectedness, promoting rational and restrained development.

Enrich and improve the Marxist philosophical principles through the system of life technology philosophy. The technological concept from the perspective of life technology philosophy can engage in deep dialogue with the Marxist view of science and technology, achieving integration between the two. By extending Marx's concept of "sensory labor" based on the idea of the body, we can integrate life technology philosophy, establishing a theoretical basis for the co-evolution of "sensory labor," life, and technology. Subsequently, we can apply the importance of "sensory labor" in the process of human development to modern social life, aiming to realize the development and progress of technology under a more harmonious ethical perspective.

Promoting the improvement of the life technology philosophy system and the development of social ethics. Strengthen targeted and effective ideological and political education. As a new philosophical research paradigm, life technology philosophy still has many shortcomings and deficiencies. These shortcomings need to be addressed, and applying life technology philosophy in specific practical activities during the process of social ethics construction is a feasible approach. After better integration with Marxist philosophy, it is essential to make it play its due value in the field of education, better serving people's ethical life and overcoming ethical dilemmas. Research on life technology philosophy plays a crucial role in building a harmonious society, ensuring the stable development of our country, and ensuring a happier and better life for the people.

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