Environment and Technology: Finding a Solution within the Modern Framework and Human Responsibilities

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The advancements of human development, both economical and technological, have changed the relationship that people have with nature. In recent years with the acknowledgement of climate change and the climate crisis, the paradigm of the human approach to nature has seen some challenges through technology. Is technology a solution? Is technology the only solution or are there others that haven't yet been considered? These are just a couple of questions to attempt to find a solution to, that might lead to a more balanced framework on people's part in the relationship with nature. Can a solution ultimately be found? This essay seeks to provide an answer to the many challenges to reach such a solution.

"Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing. If we give heed to this, then another whole realm for the essence of technology will open itself up to us. It is the realm of revealing, i.e of truth" (Heidegger,12). Heidegger presents technology as a way to lead people towards the revealing of reality to which they are exposed, this revelation will eventually lead to truth, he states. His statement implies a beginning of a new perception and relation with nature along with understanding of knowledge and experience. Northern European countries, such as Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Scotland and Denmark, have based a possible solution to the environmental crisis on that principle; it is possible to see them advancing towards what might be a series of technological results to lead to a new balance of people and nature.

Are technological solution a way to close the gap between men and nature? Will they lead to a true revealing or a new balance? It is possible to see that through the way Heidegger depicts technology more understanding can be gathered by people on nature and the nature of being. The advancements of the Northern European countries above listed have addressed the popular energy demands by people in different ways: wind farms, sea turbines, biogas and hydroelectric power. It is interesting to analyse how those countries have aimed to rural centres in their pursuit of these technologies, and in those small communities nature has become of value, as to be preserved, as it actually benefit people not solely on economic grounds.

As an example the community of Dardesheim in Germany is aiming to cut his carbon footprint by investing in renewable energy. Namely the choices being enacted in Dardesheim do not effect merely the economy, as a result people's relationship with nature changes towards a more revealing true state of being. It is possible to take Dardesheim's example as a chance for people to re-discover a balance. Similarly to Dardesheim, there are many small communities in Germany and the countries above listed, that are finding new solutions and balance with the environment. Is that a plausible realization to Heidegger's ideas on technology? It is possible to see the example of such small communities as a turn of the tide, a tide in which people and nature are put on the same level, as both benefit from ethical choices of technological use. In other words nature becomes a treasure in which it is allowed to blossom, people do take pride and protect it, since it ultimately protect themselves. Through examples like that it is possible to view the idea of ecological cosmology as well as technology as a benefit to humanity, that should by all means expand.

"Similarly, imagining a "State of law of nature", a *due process* for the discovery of the common world, is not going to make life easier for those who claim to be sending back to the nonexistence of the irrational all the propositions whose looks they do not like" (Latour, 224). Latour, in his book, suggests a discourse to begin to enable people and nature, as well as technology and democracy, to co-exist. For instance it is very interesting to note that a balance can be found in the discourse that Latour suggests, but a change in perspective is needed. Nature and its beings have to be put on the same level as people. It is pretty difficult to picture a reality such as that, but it is a needed step that technology can assist people with. Technology – as well as – democracy have a common system , or a system of law, through which humanity can extend its understanding and rights to the non-humans.

The law of nature, the natural law, forces people to look for a moral law rather than an artificial law and legal system. Furthermore it would allow people to connect with the other beings, and instead of abusing them redefine an existence that is meaningful to both elements of life. The change of perspective is possible because of science and the knowledge that humanity, through technology has gained about the other beings that populate the planet. Technology is key to a level of understanding that can push humanity forward in overcoming a global environmental crisis and a a climate crisis which challenges every living element of planet earth. Besides those factors it is very interesting to see how through *logos* or discourses those objectives can be achieved.

Both Heidegger and Latour present positions in which a change of perspective is needed. They also seem to be optimistic on the fact that the future they present is possible. It is important to see a change in perspective and perception through technology as a series of possibilities. Those elements in fact enable and would enable people to expand knowledge and through knowledge understanding. In other words knowledge is a first step to get to find a solution to the current environmental crisis, since if that proceeds most likely humanity will disappear from planet earth sooner or later, given the environmental conditions that entails. Despite the situation people still have a few chances, and these are clearly related to technology and democracy.

"Because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential upon technology and decisive confrontation which it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it" (Heidegger, 35) . As Heidegger points out the solutions can be found and they can be dealt with on two different levels: the technological one, and the other one that can be seen as the artistic or spiritual. To succeed in overcoming the climate crisis it is possible to find solution by following both routes, the first has been already undertaken with good results, the second is still rather distant given the situation that most countries encounter and approach in dealing with the current climate challenge. Moreover in achieving the artistic solution people first should conquer the technological solution. Through technology in fact people can learn and deal with an enhanced perception and understanding of nature. Nature is not an element of easy or full comprehension by humanity yet. It is a step by step process, which like most important changes, might take a generation or more to be accomplished. For instance given a series of elements, such as dependency on oil, or lack of planning – there are several countries that have not yet considered or looked into clean energy even given the important need to switch from fossil fuels – especially in the light of the recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Yet situations as dramatic as the oil spill are causing uproar in economic terms, while not enough attention goes into moving forward technologies, which can actually improve both economic and environmental standings of people on the planet. Considering all factors it is unlikely for humanity to reach the prospect presented by Heidegger within a generation. It is also possible to see the technological step as a turning point for mankind as it is meant to lead to the artistic and spiritual level of co-existence of people and nature.

Given the impact that oil related technology has had and is having on both people and nature it should be possible to learn from mistakes and improve the human relationship with nature through renewable sources. For instance renewable sources as well as technologies require a certain level of upkeep which will enable and force people to take responsibilities towards nature. Nature is not only men caregiver, and producer of goods, it will also have a role of an exchange, thus it will be important to establish a level of democratization within the new relationship. Namely an exchange is not a one way deal, hence both parties do have to take on board benefits and responsibilities. That is possible when people get goods or energy from nature and make sure that nature is preserved and protected so the exchange can be kept ongoing. On the other hand nature that nourish and protect mankind, also has the duty not to become a negative to humanity. These elements can be maintained only if there is a chance to establish a democracy of the living and non-living like Latour suggests. In doing that all parties will be guaranteed a level of dignity, and this dignity will be then transferred to the chance of developing harmonically: humanity and nature.

To enhance the likelihood of a comprehension between humanity and nature, it is interesting to see how the exchange between the two elements can be understood, for instance the artificial idea of technology suggested by Heidegger can be a key starting point. The artificial way is in fact something that can be seen given its lack of relation to technology as a spiritual or contemplative. Contemplation requires a state of care and relax to be achieved and because of it, it takes longer for practical people, here is where technology comes into play as it allows more people to catch on and understand certain features of life hence fast tracking the development and advancement of humanity. In addition once understanding is reached, it is fundamental to move on to the next step, which can definitely be achieved through more smaller steps.

Spirituality and contemplation within nature are not new to people, but the way they can be taken forward is. Far Eastern cultures such as China, Japan, and Tibet, India and not only those have established a close link between the human role and the nature role in living. Those cultural connections have been created without the enhanced help of technology, yet each and every one of those cultures has a close relationship with nature. Nature is seen in as the superior being to them, whilst on the contrary it has been seen only as something to use in Western cultures up until the realization of the challenges of climate changes. How has that shifted? How can humanity move on even when halted by the first challenge?

It is possible to move past the challenge solely after a process of democratization has been put into place, specifically that example has come into being in Germany in October 2008 when the Renewable Energy Act (EEG, 28.10.2008) was approved. The act enables companies as well as private to invest in renewable energies and profit from it. However regulations are in place to preserve the quality and well being of nature as well. It is possible to see the German Renewable Energy Act, as a step that Heidegger foresaw, when discussing the impact of technology within nature. It is also possible to see the Act as an expansion of a philosophy and way of being within nature that a certain culture has developed. Moreover it is interesting to see how throughout the Act people have limitations on the use of nature they can have as well, nature is protected as it is the element can allow humanity to continue its development and sustain itself. If nature was not preserved in the Act it would be only a new energy policy but it wouldn't be able to take culture as well as people forward. Even so it is possible to see how technology as illustrated by Heidegger can move people ahead and through it the contemplative state can be achieved and captured, so that humanity actually improves thanks to technology. Nevertheless Germany is also the only country that put such regulations ahead for its citizen and its environment, so the road ahead is pretty steep unless people start realizing that those are not solely ideas, but they can be put into place. It is also possible to see a certain level of nature democratization is the Renewable Energy Act in question, since right after each way that people can use to support themselves with natural energy there are also as many rules to make sure nature is protected and not hurt in the balance.

As a manmade Act it isn't perfect, but it is a possible way to create a unity front for both people and nature, also it is a beginning of the democratization of nature too. Latour states that "*due process* for the discovery of the common world" (Latour, 224) can be heard to get to, but if a stepping stone is set, certainly people and nature can start a discourse which benefits both. The realm of possibilities and solutions is achievable, but if the will of moving forward does not arise it is unlikely to reach a solution. Many things can be said and done, but it is important to always move towards the best ethics within a balance for humanity as well as nature. Technology is a tool that can enable men to get closer to the aim to be reached. It is also the tool that can move knowledge of the issue ahead, as it is seen in many reports released by institutions such as NASA and various Governments.

In other words the road ahead is possible but not always straightforward. Heidegger as well as Latour present possible solutions, which as seen in Germany can be achieved, but they come with a series of challenges. Technology does reveal itself as a starting point to take humanity as well as knowledge and handling of the situation people are faced with more manageable, but it isn't the solution, it is the way to reach a two step solution. Nature does deserve the same level of democratization humanity is entailed to, for this reason it is possible to see the German approach through the Renewable Energy Act as a first step. How long until the rest of the world will catch up? Not an easy question to deal with, but a stepping stone to foresee how human future can co-exist with nature, through the use of technology and a new framework in approaching life. Not likely easy but possible, and by possible it is achievable with dignity by all parties. Solutions are out there, the contemplative status can lead people to reach the goal of overcoming the climate challenge as well as many more, but steps need to be made to get started.

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