

Research Article

From Finitude to Mastery: Heidegger on Technology and Being-towards-Transcendence

Mustafa Allouch^{1,*} , Marie Fayad¹ , and Farid Mujabber¹ ¹ Philosophy department, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Holy Spirit University-Kaslik, Lebanon

* Correspondence: allouchmustafa@gmail.com

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Abstract: Contemporary technological development, particularly in the fields of artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and transhumanist enhancement, has renewed philosophical concerns regarding the relationship between human existence and technological power. While Heidegger's critique of technology is often interpreted as a warning against the domination of machines, its deeper significance lies in the ontological conditions that shape how beings are disclosed within the modern age. This article aims to reinterpret Heidegger's analysis of technology by examining the ontological foundations of technological civilization. It investigates the relationship between Heidegger's concept of *Gestell* (enframing), the disclosure of beings as *Bestand* (standing-reserve), and the human tendency to transcend finitude through expanding forms of control. The study further explores the significance of Heidegger's statement, "Only a god can save us," within the context of contemporary technological acceleration. The article employs a phenomenological and hermeneutic methodology grounded in Heidegger's analyses of Being, finitude, anxiety, and technology. Through conceptual interpretation, it develops the notion of Being-towards-transcendence as a complementary existential orientation to Being-towards-death and examines its implications for understanding modern technological projects. The analysis argues that the primary danger of technology does not reside in technological artifacts themselves but in the dominance of a mode of revealing through which beings appear primarily as resources for calculation, prediction, and optimization. It proposes that Being-towards-transcendence emerges from *Dasein* projective structure and its tendency to seek stabilization in response to anxiety and finitude. Consequently, contemporary projects of enhancement, redesign, and life extension appear not as deviations from human existence but as intensified expressions of an underlying ontological tendency. The study also demonstrates that Heidegger's notion of salvation cannot be reduced to technical, political, or ethical reform because the crisis concerns the historical disclosure of Being itself. The article concludes that the challenge posed by technological civilization is fundamentally ontological rather than merely technological. The possibility of another beginning depends not upon further technological mastery but upon cultivating alternative modes of disclosure grounded in dwelling, poetic openness, and receptivity to what cannot be engineered or controlled.

Keywords: Heidegger; technology; *Gestell*; standing-reserve; finitude; transcendence; transhumanism; dwelling

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1. Introduction

Heidegger's analysis of modern technology does not call for the rejection of machines, nor does it romanticize a return to a pre-technical past. His claim is more radical: the technological age is defined by a transformation in the way beings come to presence. Under the sway of modern technology, reality is disclosed primarily as standing-reserve (*Bestand*), where entities appear insofar as they can be ordered, predicted, stored, and optimized for further use (Heidegger, 1977). In this condition, beings no longer show themselves primarily in their own ways of being but as resources within systems of efficiency and control.

The danger, therefore, does not lie in technological power itself but in the exclusivity of this mode of revealing. When enframing (*Gestell*) becomes the dominant measure of intelligibility, alternative ways in which beings might appear – through dwelling, care, restraint,

or poetic disclosure – are displaced or rendered unintelligible. This reduction extends beyond nature to human existence itself: attention becomes data, behavior becomes prediction, and subjectivity is increasingly interpreted through metrics and system integration (Heidegger, 1971; 1977).

Yet the global persistence and reproducibility of this orientation raise a further question. Heidegger describes modern technology as a historical destining (*Geschick*) within the history of Being, a configuration not reducible to human choice (Heidegger, 1977). At the same time, its remarkable stability across cultures and institutions suggests that enframing also resonates with *Dasein* own projective comportment. Without this existential resonance, *Gestell* would appear merely as something that happens to humanity rather than as a disclosure continually enacted through practices of ordering, optimizing, and securing.

This paper argues that modern technological expansion is best understood as the convergence of an epochal mode of revealing with a structural tendency of *Dasein* itself. *Dasein* is essentially projective – “ahead-of-itself,” oriented toward possibilities beyond what is given (Heidegger, 1962). This openness makes meaning and authenticity possible, but it also contains an ambiguity. Faced with the anxiety of finitude and thrownness, projection tends toward stabilization, predictability, and control. Anxiety not only opens the possibility of authenticity; it also motivates flight into the manageable and the calculable (Heidegger, 1962).

On this basis, the article introduces Being-towards-transcendence as a phenomenological extension of Heidegger’s analytic. The term does not name a metaphysical escape from the world but a historically intensified orientation in which existential projection becomes directed toward the operational overcoming of limitation. In the technological age, this tendency takes institutional and cultural form in the drive to optimize systems, eliminate uncertainty, and redesign vulnerability as a technical problem. Contemporary developments such as genetic modification, cognitive enhancement, AI augmentation, and radical longevity thus appear less as cultural anomalies than as intensified expressions of this orientation (Hayles, 1999; Zimmerman, 1990).

Being-towards-transcendence is not proposed as a new existentials but as a historical modification of *Dasein* projective structure, in which openness to possibility is increasingly interpreted as mastery over contingency. It names not transcendence beyond the world but a mode of being-in-the-world in which finitude appears primarily as a deficit to be minimized rather than as the condition that gives possibilities their weight.

The guiding question of the paper is therefore: Can human existence sustain a meaningful relation to finitude within a world increasingly organized around the elimination of limits? If Being-towards-death discloses the space that gives existence urgency and significance, Being-towards-transcendence names the counter-movement that risks hollowing that space from within. The danger of the technological age is not domination by machines, but the possibility that the existential drive to overcome vulnerability may erode the conditions of dwelling, responsibility, and authenticity.

The analysis culminates in a reinterpretation of Heidegger’s remark “Only a god can save us” as indicating the limits of technical and ethical reform when the crisis concerns the historical disclosure of Being itself (Heidegger, 1976; 2002; Young, 2002). Methodologically, the study offers a phenomenological-hermeneutic reconstruction of Heidegger’s analytic combined with an immanent critique of contemporary technological culture. It argues that *Gestell* persists because epochal destining finds uptake within existential structures of projection, anxiety, and fallenness, where openness to possibility is increasingly captured as operational mastery.

This article aims to reinterpret Martin Heidegger’s critique of modern technology by examining the relationship between *Gestell*, finitude, and a historically intensified orientation toward the transcendence of human limitations, conceptualized as Being-towards-transcendence. The research objectives concern the following: (1) to analyze Heidegger’s conception of technology as an ontological mode of revealing (*Gestell*) and to clarify how beings come to appear as standing-reserve (*Bestand*) within technological modernity; (2) to investigate the relationship between Being-towards-death and technological civilization, showing how the experience of finitude, anxiety, and thrownness contributes to the drive for stabilization, prediction, and control; (3) to develop the concept of Being-towards-transcendence as a phenomenological interpretation of *Dasein* projective structure and to distinguish it from Heideggerian authenticity and existential transcendence; (4) to evaluate contemporary transhumanist and enhancement projects as historical expressions of Being-towards-transcendence and to reassess Heidegger’s notion of dwelling and his statement “Only a god can save us” in light of the contemporary technological condition.

2. Finitude, Technological Enframing, and the Desire for Control

2.1. *Being-towards-Death and the Problem of Everyday Nihilism*

In Being-and-Time, Heidegger presents Being-towards-death (*Sein-zum-Tode*) as *Dasein* own-most, non-relational, and unsurpassable possibility. Death does not function as a metaphysical event that confers ultimate meaning, nor does it promise fulfillment beyond existence. Its significance is strictly existential: death discloses finitude and, with it, the singularity and non-substitutability of each life. No one can die in place of another. In anticipating this possibility, *Dasein* encounters the limit that individualizes it and calls it back from dispersion into anonymous existence (Heidegger, 1962).

In everyday life, however, death is interpreted under the rule of *das Man* as a distant and impersonal event – something that happens in general but not yet to oneself. It becomes absorbed into the language of averages, risks, and probabilities. The deeper danger is therefore not mortality itself but fallenness (*Verfallen*): a mode of existence in which *Dasein* is absorbed in routines, public expectations, and socially defined roles. One does what “one does,” thinks what “one thinks,” and evaluates life according to norms of functionality and normalcy (Heidegger, 1962).

This condition may be understood as a form of everyday or implicit nihilism. Meaning is not explicitly denied, but existence is organized entirely around external demands, schedules, and forms of recognition. Temporality is flattened into sequences of tasks, individuality dissolves into interchangeable roles, and anxiety before the openness of existence is avoided through constant occupation and distraction (Heidegger, 1962; Guignon, 2004).

Being-towards-death interrupts this condition. In anxiety (*Angst*), the everyday world loses its taken-for-granted authority, and *Dasein* confronts the possibility of its own impossibility. This disclosure does not produce despair but clarity: possibilities appear in the light of their finitude and irreversibility. Authenticity, therefore, does not mean withdrawal from the world but a modification of everyday existence in which *Dasein* assumes responsibility for its being within it. What is possible matters precisely because it is finite. From this perspective, Heidegger’s concern is not simply that life ends, but that life may continue without a lived relation to its limits. The deeper danger is not death, but the erosion of significance through a mode of existence that extends life without owning it.

2.2. *Technology and the Transformation of World-Relation*

Modern technology does not merely introduce new tools; it reshapes the horizon within which the world and the self appear as meaningful. Under the technological mode of revealing, beings come into view primarily in terms of availability, efficiency, and integration into operational systems. Nature appears as energy and raw material, time as measurable resource, and human activity as performance. This orientation operates less as an explicit ideology than as a background framework that determines what counts as real, valuable, and intelligible (Heidegger, 1977; Borgmann, 1984).

As technological thinking expands, attention is directed toward prediction, optimization, and control. The world appears as a set of problems to be managed, and the question of what it means for beings to be recedes from view. This forgetfulness is structural rather than theoretical: when systems function smoothly and efficiently, the horizon within which beings are interpreted withdraws behind their success (Heidegger, 1977).

Within this horizon, beings appear as standing-reserve (*Bestand*): forests as timber stock, rivers as energy capacity, land as development potential, and biological life as genetic material. The same logic extends to human existence, where attention becomes data, behavior becomes prediction, and identity is increasingly evaluated through performance metrics. What is lost is ontological depth, as beings are encountered primarily in terms of their utility and operational value (Heidegger, 1977; Zuboff, 2019).

The technological ordering of the world is accompanied by growing systemic complexity in infrastructures, governance, and everyday life. Action is increasingly mediated by platforms, models, and automated processes, while responsibility becomes diffuse. Paradoxically, the more systems promise control and reliability, the more existence becomes exposed to large-scale systemic vulnerability and cascading failure. In this context, nihilism takes a subtle form: meaning is flattened rather than denied, as what matters about something is increasingly what it does rather than what it is (Heidegger, 1977; Perrow, 1984; Borgmann, 1984).

These developments reshape the space of intelligibility itself. The danger lies not in technological power alone, but in the possibility that the technological mode of revealing

becomes the only way in which beings are allowed to appear.

2.3. *Thrownness, Finitude, and the Desire for Control*

For Heidegger, existence is characterized by thrownness (*Geworfenheit*): *Dasein* always finds itself already in conditions it did not choose – bodily limits, a historical moment, language, and social-material constraints. Thrownness names a structural exposure to contingency (illness, loss, disruption) that belongs to being-in-the-world rather than occurring accidentally (Heidegger, 1962; Dreyfus, 1991; Blattner, 1999).

Modern technological systems can be read as large-scale responses to this exposure: they aim to stabilize outcomes and extend predictability, translating vulnerability into a field of management (Beck, 1992; Jonas, 1984). Yet success shifts expectation: what was once lived as contingency increasingly appears as preventable failure. The reduction of risk does not settle the desire for security so much as intensify it (Heidegger, 1977; Perrow, 1984). Efficiency demands tighter integration, which reduces tolerance for disruption and expands the demand for monitoring and control. This dynamic is stabilized institutionally: measurement, audit, and predictive analytics translate uncertainty into targets for optimization, making control a condition of legitimacy rather than merely a technical preference.

At the existential level, finitude is reinterpreted: aging becomes a biomedical target, uncertainty a computational task, vulnerability a technical deficit. As life becomes dependent on tightly integrated systems, exposure shifts from local contingencies to systemic fragility – failures propagate rapidly and at scale, often because optimization reduces slack and buffering (Thomson, 2011; Taleb, 2012). The danger is not that efforts to reduce suffering are misguided, but that thrownness – and with it the intelligibility of finitude – withdraws as existence is interpreted primarily through control and stabilization (Heidegger, 1962; Heidegger, 1977).

Being-towards-death, technological enframing, and the desire for control reveal a common existential dynamic. The confrontation with finitude discloses the possibility of authentic existence, yet modern technological culture increasingly responds to vulnerability through prediction, optimization, and stabilization. As a result, contingency is reinterpreted as a problem to be managed, while the technological mode of revealing narrows the space within which beings, including human existence itself, can appear as meaningful. This tension between finitude and control provides the conceptual foundation for the emergence of what this article terms Being-towards-transcendence.

3. Being-towards-Transcendence: From Existential Projection to Posthumanism

3.1. *From Being-towards-Death to Being-towards-Transcendence*

In Being-and-Time, Heidegger presents mortality as the ultimate state within which authenticity becomes possible where Being-towards-death discloses the limit that individualizes *Dasein* and gives weight to its possibilities. Yet the same existential structure that allows *Dasein* to confront its finitude also reveals another fundamental characteristic that existence is essentially projective. *Dasein* is always ahead of itself, oriented toward possibilities that exceed its present condition and human existence, therefore, is not defined only by limitation as well as openness. Heidegger (1962) argues that *Dasein* is characterized by a fundamental Being-ahead-of-itself, where the openness of existential projection is always held in tension with the limit disclosed by Being-towards-death.

This projective structure suggests that alongside Being-towards-death, another orientation must be considered as a movement toward expansion and transformation in order to overcome given conditions. The present study introduces the concept of Being-towards-transcendence to name this dimension. The term does not refer to metaphysical escape from the world, but to the persistent existential effort to extend the possibilities by reducing the limitations of vulnerability and contingency. This is not a causal psychology of motives but a phenomenological description of how possibility is interpreted when anxiety is domesticated as risk. At its most basic level, this orientation belongs to the structure of existence itself. To exist is to project beyond what is given and to transform conditions through action. Human history, in culture, science, institutions, and technology, can be understood as the cumulative expression of this projective openness. However, this transcendence contains an ambiguity that becomes decisive in the technological age.

The notion of Being-towards-transcendence does not introduce a new existential

structure beyond Heidegger's analysis, but rather designates a historically intensified orientation of *Dasein* projective character (*Entwurf*), through which its openness to possibilities becomes increasingly directed toward the expansion of control and the reduction of contingency (Heidegger, 1962; 1977).

3.2. *Two Forms of Transcendence*

In Heidegger's sense, transcendence refers to *Dasein* openness to meaning and possibility, which is not a movement beyond the world but the very condition of being-in-the-world. Through understanding and projection, *Dasein* discloses new ways of inhabiting its situation. This form of transcendence remains grounded in finitude where possibilities are meaningful precisely because they are limited, risky, and situated within a finite temporal state. Existential transcendence deepens responsibility rather than eliminating constraint as it involves interpretation and decision, along with the acceptance that no possibility can eliminate the fundamental uncertainty of existence (Heidegger, 1962; Blattner, 1999).

A different orientation emerges when the projective structure of existence becomes directed primarily toward the expansion of operational power. Technical transcendence, instead of seeking new possibilities within limits, it aims at the progressive neutralization of limits themselves. Vulnerability becomes a problem to be engineered away; contingency managed through prediction; mortality and uncertainty are obstacles to be reduced or postponed.

Within this framework, the expansion of technological capability as optimized enhancement and system integration becomes the primary expression of human projection. Possibility is increasingly defined in terms of what can be controlled and scaled. The openness of existence is translated into the expansion of functional capacity.

Modern technology marks the historical moment in which technical transcendence becomes the dominant cultural and institutional form of human projection. Scientific research, economics, digital infrastructures, and biotechnological innovation are organized around the assumption that limitations are provisional and that uncertainty can progressively be reduced. Expectation shifts from living within finitude to continuously defying it. (Heidegger, 1977; Heidegger, 1991; Jonas, 1984). From this perspective, *Gestell* (enframing) can be understood not merely as an external historical imposition but as the amplification of an ontological tendency already present within *Dasein*. Enframing organizes the world so that everything appears in terms of its potential for expansion and optimization and beings show themselves primarily as what can be mobilized for further transcendence.

The existential background of this development lies in anxiety before finitude in the experience of vulnerability, exposure to death, failure, contingency, and loss, generates the impulse to secure existence through increasing control. Technical systems promise to stabilize what is unstable, predict what is uncertain, and, in this sense, the technological project can be interpreted as a collective response to existential anxiety. Therefore, Being-towards-transcendence and Being-towards-death arise from the same structure of projection.

However, the historical dominance of technical transcendence transforms the balance between these two orientations. When the overcoming of limits becomes the primary condition of meaning, finitude itself risks appearing as a deficiency rather than as the condition that gives existence its weight (Helbing, 2013). Being-towards-death is displaced by a practical orientation toward indefinite extension, and enhancement.

The danger identified by Heidegger thus takes on a deeper significance when enframing resonates with the human tendency to flee from finitude by transforming existential openness into operational expansion. Technology becomes more than a tool for living to become the medium through which the desire to overcome limitation is continuously reinforced. (Thomson, 2011)

Understanding this shift allows the technological age to be interpreted as the historical intensification of a structural tension within *Dasein* between accepting finitude as the condition of meaningful existence and seeking to transcend finitude through expanding control. Being-towards-transcendence names this second movement, not as a historical accident, but as the existential counter-pole to Being-towards-death, whose unchecked expansion finds its most powerful expression in the technological ordering of the world.

3.3. *Criteria of Being-towards-Transcendence*

Being-towards-transcendence can be identified phenomenologically through a shift in how existence interprets contingency, limitation, and possibility. In this orientation, uncertainty is no longer received as a structural feature of thrown existence but as a

preventable failure – something that should have been anticipated, insured against, or designed out. Worth and truth increasingly appear in the register of performance, where what counts is what can be measured, optimized, and improved. Finitude itself – aging, vulnerability, cognitive and bodily limits – comes to be understood less as a constitutive condition than as a technical frontier to be modified or postponed, and the human being appears increasingly as a platform for enhancement.

At the same time, action is reorganized around anticipation rather than response, as institutions and systems seek to forecast behavior and manage the future in advance. Within this horizon, mastery acquires normative force: the expansion of control and security appears not merely desirable but responsible, while the acceptance of limits risks being interpreted as negligence. As a result, the existential disclosure of finitude loses its weight. Possibilities are less owned in the light of mortality than managed in the light of performance, and existence tends toward an indefinite project of adjustment and improvement without measure.

Taken together, these features indicate an orientation in which *Dasein* projective openness is captured by the drive to reduce contingency through expanding control. Being-towards-transcendence thus names not transcendence beyond the world, but the historical narrowing of transcendence into operational mastery.

3.4. *Distinction from Authenticity*

Being-towards-transcendence should not be understood as a contemporary form of Heideggerian authenticity. Although both arise from *Dasein* projective structure, they differ fundamentally in their relation to finitude. Authentic projection is grounded in Being-towards-death, where possibilities are chosen in the light of their irreversibility and limit. What gives a possibility its weight is precisely that it cannot be endlessly postponed or optimized. Projection here does not eliminate uncertainty but assumes responsibility within it, recognizing that no decision can secure existence against its fragility (Heidegger, 1962).

Being-towards-transcendence, by contrast, emerges when projection is oriented toward the neutralization of limits themselves. Finitude is treated as a technical problem, and possibilities are valued less for their existential significance than for their capacity to expand control, extend duration, or improve performance. The temporal horizon shifts from finite decision to indefinite adjustment, where the ongoing optimization of conditions takes precedence over the singular choice made under constraint.

The difference, therefore, lies not between action and passivity but between two interpretations of projection. Authenticity deepens freedom as the assumption of finite possibilities as one's own. Under the orientation of technical transcendence, freedom increasingly appears as the expansion of options and the removal of constraint, even as decision becomes guided by systemic norms of performance and security. For this reason, Being-towards-transcendence is better understood as a modification of fallenness rather than a form of authenticity. It reorganizes existence within an intensified horizon of optimization in which the disclosure of finitude – and with it the weight of responsibility – is progressively obscured.

A possible objection is that the orientation described here simply restates Heidegger's later account of modernity as governed by the will to will, his interpretation of Nietzsche's will to power as a self-intensifying drive that seeks the expansion of control for its own sake (Heidegger, 1991). The concept of Being-towards-transcendence is intended to complement rather than duplicate this diagnosis. Whereas the will to will names the ontological character of an epoch – the historical destining in which beings appear primarily as resources for ordering, mobilization, and enhancement – Being-towards-transcendence identifies the existential resonance of this destining within *Dasein* projective structure. It describes how the openness of existence is lived as a practical imperative to reduce contingency, extend mastery, and redesign limitation. In this sense, Being-towards-transcendence may be understood as the phenomenological underside of the will to will: the way the epochal logic of self-expanding power is enacted and normalized in everyday projection, where possibility itself is interpreted in terms of optimization and operational control.

This existential register matters because it shows why the 'they' today speaks in the grammar of optimization: not merely as ideology, but as a lived interpretation of possibility. The point is explanatory: it shows why enframing is lived as commonsense rather than imposed as doctrine.

3.5. *Posthumanism as the Realization of Technical Transcendence*

In contemporary technological culture, the drive toward control increasingly turns

toward the transformation of the human being itself. What was once directed at mastering nature now seeks to redesign biological and cognitive capacities and to modify the limits of human existence. This shift marks a decisive extension of technical transcendence: the human being becomes not only the subject of technological action but its object.

This transformation appears in several converging domains: genome editing and genetic engineering aimed at preventing disease and shaping future traits (Coller, 2019; Sandel, 2007); pharmacological and neurotechnological cognitive enhancement, including brain-computer interfaces (Bostrom & Sandberg, 2009; Clausen, 2011; Wolpaw & Wolpaw, 2012); the integration of artificial intelligence into decision processes, producing hybrid forms of agency (Davenport & Kirby, 2016; Jarrahi, 2018; Floridi, 2014); and research in biogerontology that treats aging as a modifiable condition rather than a given limit (De Grey & Rae, 2007; López-Otín et al., 2013; Bostrom, 2005).

Taken individually, many of these developments arise from legitimate therapeutic and practical aims. Taken together, however, they signal a broader shift in self-understanding: the human being increasingly appears not as a condition to be inhabited but as a system to be optimized. The technological mode of revealing thus turns reflexively upon human life itself, rendering biological processes as data, cognition as information processing, and identity as a profile of measurable and improvable traits (Heidegger, 1977; Foucault, 1978; Zuboff, 2019).

Within this horizon, finitude – aging, vulnerability, cognitive limitation, even mortality – comes to appear less as an existential condition than as a technical deficiency. The question is no longer how to live well within limits, but how far those limits can be redesigned. The posthuman orientation expresses this shift by treating human capacities as provisional and subject to continuous enhancement, with technical feasibility becoming the primary horizon of possibility (Bostrom, 2003; Fukuyama, 2003).

This development intensifies the tension between Being-towards-death and Being-towards-transcendence. Where the former discloses finitude as the condition that gives existence its urgency and singularity, the posthuman imagination reorients existence toward indefinite extension and continuous improvement. Mortality becomes a problem to be postponed, and limitation a design task.

The danger here is ontological rather than merely ethical. When the human being is understood primarily as a technical project, self-relation becomes mediated by standards of performance and optimization rather than by the interpretive appropriation of a finite life. Moreover, each enhancement establishes new baselines of normality and new expectations, so that what begins as optional improvement gradually becomes implicit obligation (Sandel, 2007; Bostrom & Sandberg, 2009; Foucault, 1977).

In this sense, contemporary posthumanism represents an intensified phase of *Gestell*: the human becomes both the manager and the managed resource. Technical transcendence reaches its most radical form in the attempt not merely to master the environment, but to overcome the ontological condition of finitude itself. The decisive question, therefore, is whether this reconfiguration obscures the very limits that make meaningful existence possible.

4. Heidegger's Response to the Technological Age

4.1. *Dwelling and the Possibility of Another Relation*

Heidegger's response to the technological age is neither rejection nor romantic nostalgia for a pre-technical past. Dwelling is not a "return" to an earlier world, nor a withdrawal from modern infrastructures; it names a different comportment within technological reality. The issue is not the presence of technology but the exclusivity of its measure. To dwell is to inhabit a world of systems, platforms, and optimization without letting optimization, efficiency, and control become the sole criterion of what counts as real or valuable—a selective refusal of total optimization as the measure of all things, even while one remains inside an irreversibly technological condition.

In this sense, dwelling can be understood as releasement (*Gelassenheit*) joined to the preservation of non-instrumental disclosure. Releasement does not mean passivity; it is an active restraint that resists the reflex to translate every question into prediction, control, and enhancement. It lets beings be – allowing things, persons, places, and time to matter in ways not exhausted by use, metrics, or performance. What is preserved is not an idyll but a space in which other modes of revealing can still occur: care, attention, gratitude, mourning, responsibility, and the experience of finitude itself as meaningful rather than as a defect to be engineered away. Dwelling thus functions here as the counterweight to Being-towards-transcendence: a practiced capacity to keep open the dimension of significance that withdraws

whenever calculative mastery becomes the default horizon of intelligibility.

4.2. “Only a God Can Save Us”: Limits of Reform and the Meaning of Preparation

Heidegger’s remark that “only a god can save us” should be read as a meta-level claim about the limits of intervention within the technological age. The point is not theological and not fatalistic: ethical regulation, institutional reform, and improved design often remain internal to calculative rationality, treating the crisis as a problem of optimization, risk management, and efficiency trade-offs – thereby reproducing the very orientation they seek to correct.

Therefore “preparation” cannot mean better management of technology, but a shift in comportment and thinking. Heidegger names this stance *Gelassenheit* (releasement) together with meditative thinking: a cultivated capacity to let beings be, to resist the reflex to translate every question into control, prediction, and enhancement. Meditative thinking does not ask first how to improve outcomes, but attends to what is eclipsed when optimization becomes the default measure of reality.

Preparation, then, is practical in a non-programmatic sense: practices of restraint and attention that interrupt the automatic expansion of optimization as the “answer” to every problem – creating room for finitude, contingency, and other modes of disclosure to matter again, even within an irreversibly technological world.

4.3. The Primacy of Transcendence over Finitude

What, then, was Heidegger’s ultimate concern in his extensive reflection on technology? Was his anxiety grounded primarily in the inevitability of death, or rather in a more fundamental tendency of human existence in its restless drive to overcome its own condition?

Heidegger’s analysis of Being-towards-death is often interpreted as a call to confront finitude in order to retrieve authentic existence. Death, as *Dasein* own-most possibility, discloses the singular and finite character of life. Yet the existential function of this confrontation is not to orient human beings toward another life beyond death. For Heidegger, death is not approached as a metaphysical passage promising fulfillment beyond existence but as the possibility of the absolute impossibility of *Dasein*, the state that individualizes existence and discloses finitude (Heidegger, 1962). The question is therefore not what comes after death, but how life itself is to be lived, as the only space within which existence can unfold (Heidegger, 1962; Blattner, 1999).

From this perspective, the real source of *Angst* is not death itself but the possibility of living in a condition of implicit nihilism, an everyday absorption in technological mediation and social conformity that obscures the question of Being. Heidegger describes this condition as fallenness (*Verfallen*), in which *Dasein* is dispersed in the anonymous norms of *das Man* and absorbed in idle talk, curiosity, and distraction. In such a mode, existence is governed by public interpretations that conceal its own-most possibilities. Heidegger’s call to anticipate death may thus be understood as an attempt to awaken *Dasein* from this condition, interrupting its absorption in everydayness and restoring an authentic openness to the world and to its own finite possibilities (Heidegger, 1962; Guignon, 2004).

At the same time, however, Heidegger’s own analysis reveals a deeper tension. Human existence is not only finite; it is essentially projective. *Dasein* is characterized by a fundamental Being-ahead-of-itself, defined by its capacity, and its necessity, to move beyond what is given, interpreting and transforming its situation in terms of possibilities. This tendency toward self-transcendence is a structural characteristic of existence itself. Technology, in this light, can be understood as the historical expression of this projective structure, through which the openness of *Dasein* increasingly takes the form of expanding control over the conditions of life (Heidegger, 1962; Heidegger, 1977; Zimmerman, 1990; Thomson, 2005).

Indeed, technological development has long accompanied human existence as a means of extending security and capability. Yet each expansion of control that reduces vulnerability simultaneously generates new dependencies and new domains of risk. The effort to stabilize existence produces conditions that call for further monitoring, integration, and regulation. The desire for security thus gives rise to the possibility of greater systemic exposure, and each technological success becomes the platform for further expansion. What emerges is a self-reinforcing dynamic in which the drive to overcome limitation intensifies rather than comes to rest, as the technological ordering of the world continually expands the span of what must be controlled (Heidegger, 1977; Beck, 1992; Perrow, 1984; Thomson, 2011).

From this standpoint, Heidegger’s concern that *Dasein* might “return” to dwelling appears increasingly problematic. The historical movement of modernity suggests that human

beings do not simply recover a prior equilibrium with earth and sky as each technological breakthrough reorganizes the space within which human existence unfolds, and the world itself is reinterpreted accordingly. What once appeared as earth and sky within the fourfold increasingly comes to presence as measurable material and technical resource. Nature is disclosed as object for prediction and intervention, while scientific knowledge and technological capability transform the very conditions under which dwelling is possible (Heidegger, 1977; Borgmann, 1984; Thomson, 2011).

If this is the case, then the project of dwelling confronts a structural resistance, insofar as the human condition itself is marked by dissatisfaction with given limits. The dominant mood of modern existence is structural restlessness and not simply repose. In Heideggerian terms, the anxiety disclosed by finitude does not only open the possibility of authenticity; it also motivates flight into stabilization and control through the everyday structures of fallenness (*Verfallen*), where uncertainty is managed through calculation and predictability (Heidegger, 1962). Modernity institutionalizes this flight, as risk becomes the central organizing problem of social life and technological systems expand in response to the demand for security (Beck, 1992; Perrow, 1984). Historical experience further reinforces this orientation, teaching human beings to distrust contingency and to secure ever-greater reserves of prediction and control. In this sense, the technological world is generated from within the existential condition itself, as a response to the anxiety disclosed by finitude and the effort to stabilize existence against uncertainty.

Heidegger's well-known statement, "Only a god can save us," may therefore be read as an acknowledgment of the depth of this dynamic. If the drive toward technical transcendence arises from the structure of human existence itself, then the possibility of a historical reversal may indeed lie beyond human agency. The remark thus, as I interpret it, carries the tone of philosophical resignation implying that the trajectory of modernity may not be correctable through ethical reflection or cultural renewal alone.

Seen in this light, Being-towards-death may function less as a counterweight to technological expansion than as an insufficient response to a stronger existential force, what might be called Being-towards-transcendence. The relation between these orientations is therefore asymmetrical: the disclosure of finitude does not necessarily lead to acceptance but may instead intensify the impulse to overcome vulnerability and extend control over the conditions of existence. The confrontation with mortality does not necessarily extinguish the desire to overcome limits; rather, it may intensify it by disclosing the vulnerability and contingency of existence. Throughout history, the experience of finitude has repeatedly generated projects aimed at transcendence in various means like religious promises of immortality, metaphysical ideals of perfection, and, in modernity, technological efforts to extend life, enhance cognition, and redesign the human condition itself. The drive to secure existence against death and uncertainty thus finds new historical expression in the technological transformation of the human (Jonas, 1984; Bostrom, 2005; Hayles, 1999; Zimmerman, 1990).

Contemporary developments in posthumanism make this dynamic explicit. Genetic engineering, cognitive enhancement, artificial intelligence integration, and longevity research all express a common orientation that human existence is to be redesigned and optimized. In this sense, the human being increasingly appears as a modifiable system whose biological, cognitive, and behavioral capacities are subject to technical improvement. The distinctive singularity of *Dasein* thus risks dissolving into frameworks of optimization and systemic integration, as human life comes to be interpreted primarily in terms of performance and informational pattern (Hayles, 1999; Bostrom & Sandberg, 2009; Floridi, 2014; Sandel, 2007).

If this trajectory continues, the danger Heidegger identified may take a form more radical than he anticipated when the loss of authenticity would not result from passive conformity alone but from an active and deliberate transformation of the human condition itself. In this context, the call to return to dwelling may appear less as a practical possibility than as a philosophical counter-image to a historical movement whose momentum continues to accelerate.

The tension Heidegger described between world and earth, between expansion and grounding, thus appears structurally asymmetrical. Each act of transcendence does not lead back to the original ground but establishes a new stepping-point from which further expansion begins. Human existence advances by transforming the very limits that once defined it.

From this perspective, the technological age does not represent a deviation from the essence of *Dasein* but its most radical historical realization. The human being emerges as a

being driven not only toward death but toward the continuous overcoming of its own condition, trying to overcome death itself. If so, the central question is no longer whether humanity can return to dwelling, but whether the drive toward transcendence can be reoriented without being suppressed.

In this sense, Heidegger's late thought may be understood as standing at the threshold between diagnosis and despair or may be read as registering the limits of voluntarist redirection from within the technological constellation. His appeal to a transformative event beyond human control reflects the recognition that the deepest forces shaping modernity may exceed the capacity of philosophical reflection to redirect them. The possibility of another beginning remains open, but it is no longer clear that human beings possess the power to bring it about.

5. Discussion: Heidegger, Technology, and Being-towards-Transcendence

This article has argued that Heidegger's critique of modern technology should not be understood primarily as a cultural warning against machines, automation, or technical misuse. Its deeper significance lies in the ontological transformation through which beings come to appear under the rule of *Gestell* as *Bestand*, or standing-reserve. In this framework, the technological age is not defined merely by the multiplication of devices but by the dominance of a mode of revealing in which reality becomes available for ordering, calculation, prediction, and optimization.

This interpretation is consistent with Heidegger's own claim that the essence of technology is "nothing technological" and that the danger of modern technology lies in the reduction of beings to availability and use (Heidegger, 1977). It also corresponds with the "device paradigm," in which modern technology increasingly separates means from meaningful practices and reduces engagement with the world to efficient consumption (Borgmann, 1984). Similarly, the reading of Heidegger emphasizes that technological enframing transforms education, politics, and self-understanding by narrowing what counts as meaningful or real (Thomson, 2005, 2011).

However, the present article extends this literature by linking Heidegger's later critique of *Gestell* with the existential analytic of Being-and-Time. Existing Heidegger scholarship often treats Being-towards-death and the critique of modern technology as related but distinct moments in Heidegger's thought. By contrast, this paper has proposed that technological enframing finds existential resonance within *Dasein* projective structure. *Dasein* is not only finite; it is also ahead-of-itself, oriented toward possibilities and exposed to anxiety before contingency, vulnerability, and death (Heidegger, 1962). The concept of Being-towards-transcendence names this historically intensified orientation in which projection becomes increasingly interpreted as the overcoming of limits through control.

This interpretation also converges with Beck's theory of risk society. Beck (1992) argues that modern societies become organized around the anticipation and management of risks generated by modernization itself. In a similar way, this article has argued that technological civilization does not simply reduce vulnerability; it transforms vulnerability into a permanent object of prediction, regulation, and control. The theory of "normal accidents" further supports this point, showing that highly complex and tightly coupled systems generate new forms of systemic fragility even as they aim to increase security and efficiency (Perrow, 1984). Thus, technological mastery does not abolish contingency; it frequently relocates and intensifies it.

The argument also resonates with ethics of responsibility. Jonas (1984) maintains that modern technological power introduces unprecedented responsibility because human action now affects the future of life itself. Yet the present article differs from Jonas by emphasizing that ethical responsibility alone may be insufficient if it remains framed within the same calculative horizon it seeks to regulate. Regulation is necessary, but it cannot by itself transform the underlying disclosure of beings as manageable resources.

The discussion of transhumanism and enhancement further confirms the relevance of this Heideggerian diagnosis. Bostrom's defense of enhancement presents the modification and expansion of human capacities as a legitimate continuation of human aspiration (Bostrom, 2003; 2005). Bostrom and Sandberg (2009) likewise frame cognitive enhancement as an extension of human improvement through technological means. From the perspective developed here, such projects are not accidental deviations from modernity but exemplary expressions of Being-towards-transcendence. They reveal how the projective structure of

human existence can become captured by the demand to optimize, extend, and redesign life itself.

At the same time, Sandel (2007) and Fukuyama (2003) identify dangers that parallel the concerns of this paper. Sandel (2007) argues that enhancement risks transforming giftedness into mastery, thereby weakening humility, solidarity, and the acceptance of the unbidden character of life. Fukuyama (2003) similarly warns that biotechnology may destabilize shared assumptions about human dignity and equality. This article agrees with these concerns but gives them a more explicitly ontological formulation: the deepest danger is not only moral inequality or social coercion, but the disclosure of the human being itself as a technical project.

The analysis of posthumanism is also relevant here. Hayles (1999) states that the posthuman shows how embodiment can be subordinated to information, pattern, and computational abstraction. According to Floridi (2014), “infosphere” similarly describes a world in which human identity and agency are increasingly mediated by informational environments. These works support the article’s claim that contemporary technology does not merely surround human beings externally; it transforms self-relation, embodiment, agency, and interpretation.

The analysis of surveillance capitalism further demonstrates how human behavior becomes a field of extraction, prediction, and modification (Zuboff, 2019). Her account gives a concrete sociotechnical expression to Heidegger’s ontological insight: attention, preference, and conduct are increasingly rendered as data resources. What Heidegger called standing-reserve therefore now extends not only to nature and labor but to subjectivity itself.

The main contribution of this article lies in showing that these developments are united by a deeper structure. Modern technological civilization is not merely a collection of ethical problems, social risks, or cultural anxieties. It is the historical intensification of a mode of revealing that resonates with *Dasein*’s own tendency to flee from anxiety into stabilization and mastery. Being-towards-transcendence therefore does not replace Heidegger’s Being-towards-death; it names its existential counter-movement. Where Being-towards-death discloses finitude as the condition of authentic responsibility, Being-towards-transcendence interprets finitude as a deficiency to be minimized, postponed, or overcome.

6. Conclusions

The central conclusion of this article is that the danger of modern technology is ontological before it is practical, ethical, or political. Machines, algorithms, biotechnologies, and enhancement systems are not dangerous merely because they can be misused. They become dangerous when they participate in a dominant mode of revealing in which beings, including human beings, appear primarily as resources for optimization.

The concept of Being-towards-transcendence helps clarify why this technological orientation is so persistent. It is not imposed only from outside by institutions, markets, or machines. It also corresponds to a tendency within human existence itself: the desire to overcome vulnerability, contingency, suffering, and death through expanded control. In this sense, technological civilization is not a simple betrayal of human nature but one of its most powerful historical expressions.

My interpretation is therefore neither anti-technological nor transhumanist. The issue is not whether human beings should use technology to reduce suffering, treat disease, or improve life. Such efforts are legitimate and often necessary. The real question is whether technological capability can remain situated within a meaningful relation to finitude. When finitude is understood only as failure, and when existence becomes an endless project of optimization, the human being risks losing the very conditions that give responsibility, care, dwelling, and authenticity their meaning.

Heidegger’s appeal to dwelling, poetic disclosure, and “only a god can save us” should therefore be understood as a call to recognize the limits of technical reform. Another relation to technology cannot itself be engineered as a program. It requires a transformation in the way beings are allowed to appear. This does not mean passivity or resignation. It means cultivating forms of thought, restraint, care, and attention that prevent optimization from becoming the sole measure of reality.

The final philosophical implication is that humanity’s greatest challenge is not simply to control technology, but to understand the desire for control that technology amplifies. If Being-towards-transcendence becomes the exclusive horizon of modern existence, then life may become longer, safer, and more efficient while becoming less capable of dwelling meaningfully within its own limits. The task, therefore, is not to abolish transcendence but to

reorient it: to preserve technological creativity without allowing the dream of mastery to erase finitude as the condition of meaning.

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