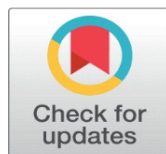


# HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE ON TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED HUMAN REPRODUCTION: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF TECHNOLOGICAL ENFRAMING 'GESTELL'

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## ABSTRACT

Traditional ideas and experiences of motherhood are rapidly being erased as a result of the growing acceptance of ARTs, which are changing in previously unheard-of ways how women conceive, gestate, and give birth as well as the cultural connotations traditionally associated with motherhood. Martin Heidegger offered his thoughts on the technological era which may applied in order to explain the increasing use of Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) in human conception, gestation, and delivery. One of the most important developments in reproductive technology is in vitro fertilization (IVF), which enables people to get over biological constraints by means of technological intervention. Philosophers like Martin Heidegger, however, offer important insights into the ontological and ethical ramifications of IVF that go beyond the medical viewpoint. The criticisms of human autonomy, commercialization, and technology raise significant issues regarding how IVF changes the essence of human reproduction by turning it into a regulated, automated procedure. It applies Heidegger's idea of the technical enframing to modern conceptions of motherhood and human reproduction in a critical and appreciative manner. This paper examine how women's reproductive bodies are revealed as resources in the framed phases of medicalized conception, gestation, and delivery for the mother by applying Heidegger's idea of Gestell(enframing) to the particular context of reproductive enframing.

**Keywords:** Gestell (Enframing), Art (Artificial Reproductive Technology), Standing-Reverse, Commodification, Authentic Existence

"The essence of technology lies in what is concealed in it rather than in its explicit use. Its danger is not the threat to the human being but to the way humans understand their existence."

(Heidegger, 1977,p-28)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Advancement of technology is leading a huge changes in every sector, technology provides comfort and everything become easy to move. Although technology becomes an integral part of our daily life, but it is not only concerned with material things or object, but it also covers areas like human reproduction. Human reproduction was formerly an area where nature bestow the beautiful feelings of motherhood but today its possible through modern technology. The contribution towards human reproduction are notable. Before technology, the biological conformability was not imagined. Now with the help of advance technology biological process has been changed by mechanism reproduction. The future of human reproduction redefined with the help of ART (Assisted Reproductive Technology). Through technological intervention, ART –which including IVF, Surrogacy, gamete donation raises severe existential and ethical questions. In particular, IVF and its derivatives, cytoplasmic transfer, male infertility testing, and the increasingly

common transnational gestational surrogacy are examples of advanced technical interventions into human conception and gestation.

Reproductive technology rapidly changes in the last three decades of twentieth century. World had witnesses the remarkable advance change in reproductive technology with the developments of IVF which took place in England in the late 1970s. IVF is procedures which ensured infertile couple to have their own child. It is a procedure, where eggs are removed from ovaries and places in a petri dish with semen. Then the fertilize egg is inserted into the women's uterus, and it lead to successful pregnancy.

Martin Heidegger a renowned philosopher of Hermeneutics, he was the very first philosopher who put his effort on an extensive and rigorous analysis of contemporary technology. To investigate the quickly growing number of ARTs, the Heidegger concept of Gestell (enframing) must be applied. Heidegger's philosophy introduced a word 'Gestell' to explain it as a essence of technology. Gestell (enframing) hold that everything in the world has been enframed, with the help of his idea of Gestell or enframing, this study investigates the reproductive enframing. In light of reproductive enframing, it is contending that the latter is fundamentally redefining traditional concepts of motherhood and may predict the dawn of a motherless era (Belu,2017, p-33). The primary focus of the research is that how technology enframed human reproduction and it proceed into technology assisted human reproduction which divide it into a several parts or components such as a – egg, wombs, tubes, hormone, cycles and so on, which enables ongoing medical optimization. This reproductive optimization is different from objectification and instrumentalization, which are more conventional procedures (Belu,2017, p-33). According to reproductive enframing, women who participate in IVF, particularly gestational surrogates, are neither the independent agents they are meant to be or just passive objects, but rather are resources used by an apparently self-governing medical network.

The advance growth in medical technology, emphasis on resources optimization and control. It is not that Enframing only happened to employment of technological tools, even though they are frequently used, people might treat one another and the environment as fungible resources without using any tools at all.

## 1.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the research is as follows-

- 1) To examine how IVF transforms human reproduction into a technologically structured, automated procedure.
- 2) To explore how technology framing contributes to the reduction of natural fertility to a clinical intervention system.
- 3) To applied Heidegger's notion of Gestell (enframing) or 'Standing Reserve' for investing future of Human reproduction.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

In order to carry out the proposed research work in a systematic manner the analytic, and qualitative method, is to taken into account. The entire work is based on Primary and secondary sources including articles, books, periodical journal, internet etc.

### 2.1. THE ENFRAMING OF HUMAN REPRODUCTION BY TECHNOLOGY

Heidegger's perspective on technology profoundly philosophical, centred on the notion of Gestell (Enframing), which he mentioned in his essay "The Question Concerning Technology". What is Gestell? The word Gestell derived from the root word stellen, which means 'to put' or 'to place' and combined with the German prefix Ge-, which denotes a form of gathering or collection. The term encompasses all types of entities and orders them in certain way (Wendland, Mewin, Hadjioannou, 2018). According to Heidegger, 'Gestell' or Enframing means the gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve. When Heidegger defined Gestell as the essence of technology, he meant that everything that has emerged in the world has been enframed. . Enframing means that way of revealing which holds sway in the essence of modern technology and which is itself nothing technological (Heidegger, 1977, p-20).

People who born into this “mode of odering” are inherently ingrained in the Gestell (Enframing) which is related to how reality manifests or reveals itself in the era of modern technology (Du, Preez,2009, p- 40). Thus, in order to be seen and understood, what has been disclosed in the world—that is, what has shown itself as itself (the truth of itself)—needs first to be framed, or to be allowed to exist in the world. In terms of the essence of technology and how our perceptions see the things in the technological age, the world has been framed as the “standing-reserve.” Heidegger (1977) stated that the focuses more on the essence (Wesen) of the technological age and how it is concealed than on specific technologies and technical users in the examination of the modern technological era. This technical essence is what he refers to as Gestell, which is most commonly translated as enframing. It may be interpreted as a reference to a “mode of revealing” unique to our age or to a cultural imprint (Gestell). According to Heidegger, the concept of Gestell(Enframing) is the process by considering everything and everyone, including people and natural resources, as object of utilized and optimized and pushing nature and human activity into a system of controlled by technology. Just like a forest which is seen as living ecosystem, but modern technological era define it is a resource for future used.

Technological Emframing of Human Reproduction: The Warnock Report, which was essential in establishing bioethical guidelines for IVF and embryo research, primarily presents reproductive technologies as instruments for fixing problems. This is similar to Heidegger's concept of Gestell, in which technology is framed as a way to regulate and maximize human reproduction, frequently at the price of more profound existential issues with dignity, autonomy, and identity. In the past, reproduction was seen to be a private, natural process. But as a result of assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) like genetic engineering, surrogacy, and IVF, reproduction is increasingly portrayed as a set of technological procedures rather than a natural human experience. Gestell compels us to view reproduction as something that can be managed, maximized, and regulated rather than as an existential occurrence. Surrogacy, for example, enframed the surrogate mother as a carrier, limiting her role to a biological purpose rather than acknowledging her complete human experience. Using medical precision, embryos are implanted, tracked, and removed from the womb, turning it into a site of technological intervention.

## 2.2. HUMAN LIFE IS REDUCED TO A “STANDING RESERVE”

The phenomenology of enframing explains the connection between a general attitude of imposition, or “challenging-forth,” as Heidegger puts it in “The Question Concerning Technology,” and what this attitude reveals: a world organized as a pile of resources, fungible raw materials, or “standing-reserve” (Bestand) that is waiting to be optimized. “Driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense” (Heidegger,1977, p-15). Heidegger asserts that entities possess the quality of standing reserve, which enables them to be perpetually on standby, meaning they are always prepared, available, accessible, and disposable. A method of disclosing known as “standing reserve” allows entities to manifest themselves in their continuously available state for storage, ordering, offering, planning, production, use, and replacement.

To put it simply, standing reserve is a way of showing up or displaying things that are always available, accessible, and disposable. Therefore, ‘standing reserve’ denotes ongoing preparedness, ongoing accessibility and availability, and ongoing disposability. According to Heidegger, in the contemporary world, where technology rules everything and has total control, everything is viewed in terms of its capacity to be stored in order to make it available and plannable at any time, as well as to be offered, used, produced, and replaced whenever necessary.

Modern technology is limited to organizing as a standing reserve since this want to set upon, question, and order characterizes the entire web of interactions in which contemporary humans function as revealers. “When man investigates, observes, and pursues nature as an area of his own conceiving, he has already been claimed by a way of revealing that challenges him to approach nature as an object of research, until even the object disappears into the objectless ness of standing reserve,” (Heidegger,1977, p-300). Heidegger contends we are not given the choice to accept or reject this way of looking at the world. Modern technology is an integral part of our lives and has been ingrained in our culture, so we cannot escape its essence.

Human Reproduction hold as ‘Standing Reserve’: In terms of reproductive ethics, Heidegger's caution that technology has the power to reinterpret life in terms of mere utility is consistent with the commercialization of gametes, embryos, and even surrogate labour. The perception that life itself is a resource is reinforced when reproductive procedures are improved by technology techniques, such as surrogacy, embryo selection, and preimplantation genetic diagnosis. This optimization subjects the act of creation to efficiency calculations.

Heidegger's concept of standing reserve may be extended to the way human embryos and reproductive processes are viewed as resources that can be altered, preserved, and optimized in the context of assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs). For instance, consider about sperm banking and egg freezing. By storing reproductive cells for later use, these technologies enable people to regard them as standing reserves, constantly accessible and prepared to be utilized when needed. Similar to this, in vitro fertilization (IVF) selects embryos according to their genetic characteristics, increasing the likelihood that they will survive, and even eliminating those that are thought to be less viable. This procedure is consistent with Heidegger's criticism of contemporary technology, which frames and controls existence itself.

### 2.3. THE LOSS OF AUTHENTIC EXISTENCE

People created technology to help themselves and to make things easier and faster, but they never imagined that technology would one day take over and destroy our identity. Technology transforms human existence into a mere artefact. The existential crisis actually occurred due to conscious act of human being. So the very essence of existence is shaped and manipulated by human. Its replaces the natural cycle and healthy concept of reproduction with efficiency measurement and laboratory methods. The potential life represented by embryos, is became subject to technical ordering, where its worth is determined by its attractiveness and viability. This reframes human reproduction as a manufacturing process instead of an existential or relational experience.

Marxist criticisms of alienation, especially in surrogate work, converge with Heidegger's worries about contemporary technology. Marcuse's views on commodification, as you have examined, illuminate the ways in which reproductive work is separated from true human agency. Under some circumstances, surrogacy may be viewed as a continuation of technological enframing, in which the body is used as a tool to satisfy the needs of reproductive markets.

The ethical issues surrounding the enframing of life by IVF are consistent with Heidegger's philosophical concerns. The commodification of embryos, the selection of "desirable" features, and the commercialization of reproductive procedures all reflect a mind-set in which humans run the risk of becoming technological objects. Reducing life to a mere tool or means to an end can undermine the fundamental worth and dignity of individuals.

The existential aspect of fatherhood is also impacted. Once accepted as a gift, the kid may come to be considered as a product of choice and control. This change may affect the dynamics of relationships and parental expectations, which might compromise unconditional acceptance. Even in the face of pain or constraint, Heidegger's concept of *Gelassenheit*—a letting-be or releasement—offers an alternative ethical perspective that respects the autonomy and mystery of being.

### 2.4. TECHNOLOGICAL THREAT TO FUTURE OF HUMAN

According to Heidegger modern technology is not a neutral, but one that inherently poses a threat to human beings. Heidegger never consider technology is more than just a set of implements or tools made to fulfil human needs. Instead, he contends that technology is a mode of revealing – a form of disclosing reality. For instance, traditional craftsmanship lets nature show itself naturally, whereas contemporary technology coerces nature into a system of controlled. The fundamentals and human existence, identity, and autonomy are all significantly impacted by the changing era of technology where people are shift their way of interaction with world.

According to Heidegger, the danger that modern technology presents to people "does not, in the first instance, come from the potentially lethal machines and apparatus of technology." (Heidegger,1977, p-309) Man has already been affected by the true threat in his most fundamental form. Simply said, contemporary technical devices are the solidified version of our contemporary method of knowledge. Therefore, the design of modern technology is both within and outward extending.

The goal of the Warnock Report was to define ethical guidelines, however according to Heidegger's philosophy, these regulatory measures may still function inside the technical mind-set and miss the fundamental issues with *Gestell*. The question that ethical research should instead focus on is: How can we see reproduction's deeper ontological importance and stop seeing it as a technological act?

### 3. CONCLUSION

Martin Heidegger's philosophy of technology offers an insightful prism through which to evaluate IVF. His idea of enframing shows how contemporary reproductive technologies might influence our perception of life by disclosing who we are as well as what they do. IVF raises the risk of turning life into a technical artefact, despite its evident advantages. In order to preserve the ambiguity, dignity, and relational core of human existence, a Heideggerian perspective encourages us to have an open connection with technology. Heideggerian framing is best illustrated by IVF, which reduces the personal act of reproduction to a set of technological procedures. Based on developmental and genetic factors, eggs are retrieved, fertilized on petri plates, and chosen for implantation. Occasionally, embryos are thrown away after being frozen and kept. Life is shown at each stage of IVF as a material process to be optimized rather than as a mystery to be solved. Putting this into practice could entail creating moral frameworks that oppose commercialization, support informed consent, and foster relational conceptions of reproduction as opposed to merely instrumental ones. Instead of going back to a pre-technological era, the objective is to develop a post-technological consciousness that respects existential depth and human dignity.

According to Dana S. Belu's critique in *Heidegger, Reproductive Technology, and the Motherless Age*, assisted reproductive technology exposes a specific type of technological dominance known as reproductive enframing. By means of a phenomenological examination of the various methods by which women conceive (IVF, surrogacy) and give birth (planned C-section, induction), Belu illustrates how the ideology of a technological age that Heidegger calls *Gestell* (enframing) views women's bodies as resources subject to medical optimization. Belu ends her study by attempting to discover a method of giving birth that avoids dominating and controlling laboring procedures, a method that is not reproductive enframing.

A Heideggerian critique advocates for a more contemplative approach rather than calling for the rejection of IVF. It is important to incorporate medical innovations into life with philosophical understanding rather than adopting them blindly. This entails acknowledging the boundaries of control and the significance of protecting areas for non-technological states of being, including awe, thankfulness, and vulnerability.

### CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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