THEONTOLOGICAL PARADOX OF OUTSOURCING HUMAN RESOURCES TO TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract: *The relationship between Human Resource [HR] and Technological Services Outsourcing [TSO] is a fundamental issue that needs to be explored in detail in today's human-technology interface. My argument in this article is that outsourcing human resources to technology has led to an ontological shift in the way we regard both humans and technology. It is the objective of this article to explore the implications of such implied shift. Appropriating Heidegger's ontology of the human subject provides a philosophical and normative basis for a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of outsourcing HR to technology since it allows us to rethink more seriously the destiny of human nature in today's growing technological society. The entire article is a general-case reflection on the paradox of outsourcing HR to technology.*

Key Words: Ontological Paradox, Outsourcing.

Introduction

Human Resource Outsourcing [HRO] is relatively a new phenomenon that is gaining a wide influence in today's technological society such that all aspects of life assessment are done *in, by* and *through* technology. My claim in this article is that given the influence of modern technology on many aspects of human life assessment, outsourcing human resources to technology has led to an ontological shift in the way we regard both human nature and technology itself. The entire reflection on the matter will clarify fundamental questions such as: What does Human Resource [HR]mean? What does HRO mean? What are its ontological implications? Would outsourcing humans diminish our humanity or the ultimate achievement of human aspirations? The think piece of these questions is not merely to question for the sake of questioning, or is the issue to leave the answer up to the reader, but to give a profound philosophical reflection on the threatening ontological implications of outsourcing HR to technology. This is further motivated by the fact that technology is continually externalizing and transforming our relationship with the world and ourselves in such a way that our capacity for self-determination is gradually diminishing. My critical analysis of the ontological paradox of outsourcing humans to technology should not at any given point be taken to imply we assume a Luddite standpoint to technology.

The Concept of Outsourcement

In the context of my discussion, HR refers to all forms of understanding, skills, capacities and abilities, which permit a person to realize a particular activity for self-determination and realization. HRO is the contracting out of parts or the whole functions of HR to external agents or providers, rather than the subject performing those functions by herself.[i] It is an external transfer of human subjectivity — a breakup from internal subjective self-determination to external and instrumental realization and apprehension of human tasks. The implied external HR managers are to give calculated decisions supposed to be provided by human.[ii] They are perceived to offer a relief in having all the tasks to be performed manually by the individual.

In a technological society, there is no disbelief that HRO is a "useful invention" that we humans take up on a daily basis to respond to our daily calculations of life. It has made our lives easier by helping us technically to manage our tasks, the environment, record and store useful information that we need in a protected manner. *Technology* facilitates humans to work efficiently, while saving time, which can further be spent on other constructive activities. Personally, I do benefit from technology, particularly

the changes it has made to my personal and communal life. I employ technology every day, whereby I realize lots of work from my home or office desk, and still available for other extra works. I have made impressive relations online that have resulted in vast friendships. All this reflects Albert Borgmann's assertion that we are in the regime of the *device paradigm*[iii], which has become a determining principle of a technological society, aiming at efficiency as the goal of our operations. By outsourcing HR to technology, we are able to shape our needs and ensure that we enjoy a quality and dependable services. Acknowledging the contribution of technology, Martin Heidegger critically remarks:

> "For all of us, the arrangements, devices, and machinery of technology are to a greater or lesser extent indispensable. It would be foolish to attack technology blindly. It would be short-sighted to condemn it as the work of the devil. We depend on technical devices; they even challenge us to ever greater advances."[iv]

With incontestable facts about the positive influence of technology, any Luddite regard to it, to treat technology as our enemy is self-defeating since we cannot do without it. Reasons to love and employ technology are numerous and pretty obvious, however, the fundamental question, which eludes the concern of many, is: What are the ontological implications of this indispensable technological embracement (of outsourcing HR to technology)? From our experience with technology, we all acknowledge the positive role it plays in our existential structure; nevertheless, any progress in the development of modern technology does not necessarily translate into the betterment of the human condition. This is essentially important because any technology and technological objects that originally are supposed to be intrinsically good also embed certain perils in themselves. Under such claims, we cannot walk the path of technological progress without a philosophical and critical reflection.

The Ontological Paradox of Human Outsourcement

As Heidegger remarked, technology represents a distinctive mode of being in which moderns find themselves in the world. This new way of being is indispensable and it is not of our individual choice, though we take it up as our reality. But it is also imperative to take into account that as we interface with technology, the modern ontology of technology is constantly challenging human ontology. This is exemplified by the difference between the technological, mediated manner of *being-in-the-world* and our natural pristine, unmediated form of existence. The constant desire for a mediated form of life has given rise to a deeply crucial phenomenon of outsourcing HR to technology under the principle of efficient delivery of services, thereby creating a decisive ontological shift in the way we perceive and regard both human nature and technology in their specific considerations. To properly understand the alleged ontological shift, I explore the concept of human ontology according to Heidegger, giving a considerable emphasis on its remarkable aspects that should not be undermined through HRO.

a. Human Experience and Cybernetic Consciousness

Human ontology is relentlessly threatened by modern cybernetic consciousness. To support this claim, I develop Heidegger's innovative thesis of the human subject under the concept of *being-in-the-world*[v], which for him is a concrete, unmediated experience of reality, such that mere intellectual awareness or representations plays insignificant role. For Heidegger, the human subject (what he calls the 'factual *Dasein*')[vi] is defined by her practical unmediated engagement with the world, such that entities are not interpreted as mere data of human consciousness as found in the power of the Cartesian *thinking subject*, especially identified with logic, but as practically meaningful. Human engagement with entities, including technology is fundamentally of comportment towards them in terms of disclosing their context

of significance or meaningfulness.[vii] Heidegger develops this idea of comportment towards objects in the world under the concept of *being-in* or literally, *in-ness*.

In-ness or *being-in-the-world,* according to Heidegger, is specific to humans; the rock for him is *within-the-world* and not *in-the-world*. This is basically because, as humans, we *are-in-the-world*[viii] by definition. The way *we-are-in-the-world* is fundamentally a different mode of existence than the way the rock is *in-the-world*. Why? Because we experience the world; the rock does not experience anything, and it does not ask fundamental questions about its mode of *being-in-the-world*. The human manner of *being-in-the-world* is primarily a matter of human involvement, a kind of active residing or *dwelling*[ix]in the sense of being *open-to-the-world* and by our presence disclosing-it.[x] Under such ontology, the rock and all other *non-human* entities represented are *within-the-world*[xi]for Heidegger because they lack experiences.

Heidegger's concept of *being-in-the-world* in terms of human experience puts into question modern attempts to outsource HRs to technology. Today, technology has become the foundation for understanding and determining human concerns. But the critical issue about it is that, when we outsource ourselves to technology, we tend to dissolve our lived-experience with the virtual reality represented in the implied technologies. The machine that we outsource ourselves to is bound up with self-alienating characteristics to the point where our subjective comportment is substituted by device engagement. Using Heidegger's language, when we outsource our HRs we are no longer 'world-forming' subjects, but 'device consuming' agents, to the height where the limitations of the referred machines confine our engagement with the world to a small area of operations of the implied machines, creating cybernetic consciousness. But destruction of unmediated human experience with the world, as enhanced by outsourcement has a tremendous impact on the way in which we regard ourselves and give form to our existence and the being of entities of our experience. When we outsource our resources to technology, we turn out to be mere spectators of our own lives, where life can be seen as a series of events occurring outside of oneself; events which impact or determine the course of personal experience without a personal and individual influence. Philip Hefner critically affirms the negative impact of this ontological shift when he says that technology rearranges both our world and our views of our own human nature[xii] in relation to the world; while Charles Guignon in an exclusive way claims that "with the coming of the disenchanted outlook of modernity, a primal unity and wholeness of life has been lost."[xiii]Disregarding direct experience is one of the fundamental characteristics of technological outsourcement.[xiv]

The technologies we outsource our HRs make the world and ourselves no longer a matter of human determination and experience. It is an eradication of our capacities for self-decision, alienating us from our natural selves.[xv]In our everyday engagements, between us and the world of our experience, electronic magnetic processes that we do not even understand are at work. These magnetic processes transform or mechanize human experience of the world, delinking us from our determinative role and our internal relation to it, thereby *alienating* us from our own basic comportment towards reality and towards ourselves. But to do away with the world of a lived-experience or make it anything like a mediated reality and therefore a representation of the mind is tantamount to doing away with the human self.[xvi] Why? Because each of us in his/her relation to the world composes his/her own unique individual identity, and once that direct and immediate relation or experience is destroyed, the individual is equally removed from her lived-experience. We become distant or alien to ourselves mainly because we are not the ones comporting, but the outsourced technology does the work on our behalf, gradually pulling us away from who we are as experiencing and world-forming subjects.

We all think that technology is meant to avert problems that we face, and it is true that technology helps us to solve our problems, but it is also true that the same technology is busy complicating and irreversibly reconstituting our lives. This is an issue that we less pay attention to because of our naive instrumental and self-interested regard of technology.

b. Human Unconcealmentand Technological Revealing

Another fundamental aspect of human ontology that is reconstituted by outsourcing HRs is that of *disclosure* or *un concealment*. Heidegger uses the analogy of *lumen naturale,*[xvii] which means both *light* and *clearing* in the woods to explain this notion of *disclosure*. In the *clearing* in the woods, one can observe trees, grass, bushes; also there is a place where there are no trees and the sunlight can reach the ground, so that things are revealed to us as mattering, attractive, useful, and sometimes as threatening, which is equally important. Heidegger describes this idea of *clearing* as:

> Beyond what is, not away from it but before it, there is still something else that happens. In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs. There is a clearing, lighting.... This open centre is ... not surrounded by what is; rather, the lighting centre itself encircles all that is.... Only this clearing grants and guarantees to human beings a passage to those entities that we ourselves are not, and access to the being that we ourselves are."[xviii]

Heidegger's analogy of *clearing* in the woods or *lumen natural* is a fundamental description of humanmeaning; humans are reminiscent of clearing in the woods. Our being as humans is to disclose the ontological significance of entities that we experience. As *lumen naturale,* Heidegger claims that "*Dasein* is its disclosedness",[xix] so that without human *Dasein* there will be just the woods. For example, when I enter a room or any environment, I bring with me this capacity to experience all that is around me, and things get revealed around me; I disclose them in their ontological significance. This is our unique way of existing that differentiates us from mere entities (be they technological entities)*within-the-world.*To exist as humans means not just to be present to our own consciousness as understood by Descartes with his concept of *cogito ergo sum*, but to exist is always to be absorbed in practical tasksof disclosing reality in its meaningful context; we are, "tuned in" to a given set of concerns.[xx] This is the meaning of being human, which should not be surrendered to modern manipulable technological disclosure of reality.[xxi]

Regrettably, when we outsource our HRs to whichever technology, we are deceived into thinking that the purpose of the technology employed is to disclose things for us, such that our duty of *un-concealment/revealing*is exclusively taken over by modern technological *revealing.* The critical issue with this technological disclosure is that human ontological relation to the world, which is a fundamental aspect of human subjectivity becomes mediated and eventually undermined, making us mere viewers of our own existence.

We moderns uncritically opt for HR outsourcement and give importance to technological well-being without giving way to our individual disclosure of facts about our own existence. We routinely go for the technological model of directing and resolving our concerns that later on leaves us wedged and unable to have recourse to what actually matters, thereby threatening human existence by destroying or eliminating the necessary and direct relation with the world. The profound repercussion of mediating human disclosive nature is its alienating character such that we are estranged from ourselves, and rendered unable to create and reveal the world as meaningful to us. Outsourcement deny us the ontological role of making entities in the world known; it makes us lose the ontological value of a

relational world of human tasks and engagement, which is fundamental for human self-realization as responsible world-forming agents.[xxii]HRO reduces humans to the level of entities *within-the-world.* We need to rethink our modern way of comporting ourselves towards the avalanche of emerging technologies and towards ourselves.

c. Existentiality and Technological Apprehension

Today, we are busy outsourcing human minds in our attempt to understand and comprehend the world as pre-given, not regarding it as a source of our engagement for a meaningful human existence.To critically explain the ontological shift in mediating human capacity for understanding through outsourcing, I appropriate Heidegger's concept of *existentiality.*[xxiii]*Existentiality* for Heidegger means *understanding,*which is the projection of possibilities of disclosing things. He categorically explains this claiming that "understanding is the existential Being of *Dasein's* own potentiality-for-Being; and it is so in such a way that this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of."[xxiv]Principally, what Heidegger indicates is the fact that *existentiality/understanding* is not a matter of understanding through abstractions, in the cognitive, epistemological and psychologistic sense or to ask philosophical questions about the existence of external reality,[xxv]but is an act of experience involving unmediated relations with objects of our concern. Understanding is connected with the idea of possibilities attributed to things.[xxvi]When I encounter objects in any physical place, be it in a room or anywhere else, I see them in terms of their possibilities of use; what can be done with them in the future. For example, when I see a chair, I see it as an object that I can use to sit on. The purpose and practice of the chair are already embodied before my action on it is realized.

In that context of use, technological tools are instrumental, not just instrumental as means for effecting change in the external world, nor are the tools just enhancements of our potential faculties or bodies. Rather, it is a way of our engagement with the world,[xxvii] where the world is disclosed to us as a meaningful part of our existential structure.[xxviii]Tools form the being of the agents using them by mediating the interactive and interpretive relationships of human beings with the world. While employing tools, users are also engaged through their openness to new perspectives, interpretations, and further action toward the revelation of the ontological significance of the entities forming the world. The fact that I can do something with the table (for eating, for placing valuables, etc.) is basically because I am already familiar with tables in terms of their relevance; I understand the table in terms of what can be done with it; its ontological relevance.[xxix] Heidegger says that "the work which we chiefly encounter in our concernful dealings-the work to be found when one is 'at work' on something, has a usability which belongs to it essentially; in this usability it lets us encounter already the "towards-which" for which it is usable."[xxx]

Heidegger describes this kind of relation to entities, by drawing on his concept of understanding as a *ready-to-hand* relation with things. Whenever I have a *ready-to-hand* relation to objects (including technological objects), those objects become my practical world,[xxxi] so that I cannot relate to them from a detached or mediated perspective. Wrath all affirms this when he says that "our experience of the world is pervaded by an understanding of what things are, or how they are used,"[xxxii] and equally Feenbergin support of Heidegger states that "...knowledge is ultimately rooted in the enactment of meanings in everyday practice."[xxxiii]The claim is that our understanding of the world is based on the possible ways that the various objects, tools and other humans around us are related or relate to each other and to us, and we constantly project contexts of possibilities in which the same objects of experiences are revealed to us in their ontological significance in the future.[xxxiv] In the proper sense, technological objects in our daily world are what they are because of the way they fit into a specific context of what can be done with them in the future; in terms of meaningfulness to their users.[xxxv] They

form an internal relation to their users, and are never objectified nor perceived to have an external relation. Michael Zimmerman in his commentary on Heidegger's tool analysis explains this claim saying:

> "All the elements in the work world are internally related. There is no such a thing as an isolated tool; tools occur within an equip mental-referential context in terms of which a particular thing can reveal itself as a tool. Without this meaningful referential context, this familiar domain in which we have lived from the start, this 'world,' tools could not be."[xxxvi]

From an existential standpoint, understanding is always oriented towards the context of future possibilities, pointing towards possible actions and possible experiences that can be had with an object in the future. Only in the context of human needs or desires do the tools we employ make sense and have a presence for us. Moreover, when I understand an object as *ready-to-hand*, I demonstrate not only a theoretical conception of it, but also, and above all, the context or "world" that gives it relevance (or lack thereof). The claim is that understanding is dependent upon the world already having been revealed to me or experienced by me in the whole background of use. Therefore, to know our lived-world, we must live in a practical engagement with it.[xxxvii]

Heidegger's practical concept of *existentiality*, today, in the technological world, despite the whole spectrum of technological benefits, is fundamentally challenged. Today, we have introduced machines into the whole relation or picture, where machines as tools replace man's engagement with his world, so that now humans labour according to a mechanical rhythm; the human rhythm is replaced with the machinery rhythm under the pretext of efficient and quick services, thereby undermining human ontology. For example, today, any intended trip makes me type the address into the Global Positioning System (G.P.S); I deposit all knowledge of geographic places into her, making her "my other self"and then blissfully follow her satellite-fed commands, thereby removing in me the mood of curiosity and the explorative mind. My G.P.S releases me from the hard work of memorizing the direction or from asking my neighbours the direction to take. It enables me to externalize geographic information from my own brain to a satellite brain and without it I can get nowhere. This is the wonder of the external and objectified mind, whereby we can outsource those mental tasks that we do not want to perform, thereby making our lives effortless and comfortable. However, the critical matter here is what Husserl had criticised regarding modern scientific and technological services. Husserl critically asserted:

> "Is it not the case that we have attempted here something rather inappropriate, to our time, an attempt to rescue the honour of rationalism, of 'enlightenment,' of an intellectualism which loses itself in theories alienated from the world…? Does this not mean that we are being led again into the fateful error of believing that science makes men wise, that it is destined to create a genuine and contented humanity that is master of its fate? Who would still take such notions seriously?"[xxxviii]

We are continually engaged in outsourcing our brains to the internet, mobile phones, etc., as better interfaces; we are enabled to search for and access all of the stuff we need since it is all stored up for us by our "second self". For example, the internet externalises memory more significantly than writing and the printing press did. With apps like Self-control and Drunk Mode, we outsource essential human capabilities. We do not have to cling to specific facts and figures like our ancestors did in oral cultures; we no longer need to have a memory, for we have Google, Yahoo and Wikipedia as our efficient and fortified external memory. When we need to know some facts about the world, tap some keys and obtain the efficient results of the external mind. We can manipulate exponentially more information as we find convenient. These are incontestable marvels of technological outsourcement. However, this

conceals fundamental and critical questions about human meaning: Are we not erasing memory as the basic human faculty and embrace technology as the claimed "second self"? When technology fails, can we still rely on our natural capacities for knowledge and relation to the world? Of course, I love the fact that I can find whatever I want or need on the internet, but why not make some of the discoveries a reason for discussion?

We misguidedly think that by externalizing our brains through outsourcement, it allows us to know more, but the reality on the ground is that it allows us to know less since it reduces our possibilities and capacities for knowing and engagement with our practical life-world. It provides us with external cognitive and acting servants — silicon memory systems, collaborative online filters, consumer preference algorithms and networked individuals that serve as springs of technological rule, while undermining the individual subjective experience and autonomy. Emily Carr criticizes this whole situation claiming that it is a reversal of the early trajectory of civilization to the height that we are evolving from being cultivators of personal knowledge to being hunters and gatherers in the electronic data jungle.[xxxix]In a very affirmative way Joseph Weizenbaumargues that "the machines of man have strongly determined his very understanding of his world and hence of himself. Man is conscious of himself, of the existence of others like himself, and of a world, that is, at least to some extent, malleable."[xl] The weighty implication of these claims is that a modern-day Descartes would perhaps be proud to say, "I am a synaptic substance," or to be more accurate, "I am the information transmitted across neural networks."

When all human capacities like knowledge are outsourced/on-line, humans run the menace of losing their personal ability or willingness to think and memorize. How many of us, today, know the phone numbers of friends and family members? How often do we realize that the shop assistant does not know how to work out the change she needs to give when the cash register fails or the calculator has broken down? Computers, cell phones, iPods, iPads and tablets are wonderful things but our ability to think individually is definitely being diminished. We live in an age where we do not need to "know" reality in terms of our direct engagement with it, as long as we identify where (how) to "find" it.

We should not underestimate the perils and complexity of the ontological shift embodied in knowledge transfer. Knowledge is an internal relationship and to externalize it extricates its whole significance in relation to human meaning. This very situation was foreseen by Herbert A. Simon and Allen Newell when they robustly wrote that "there are now in the world machines that think, that learn and that create. Moreover, their ability to do these things is going to increase rapidly until – in the visible future – the range of problems they can handle will be coextensive with the range to which the human mind has been applied."[xli]

d. Moods and Technological Experience

Emphasizing the inadequacy of outsourcing HRs to technology with regard to human ontology, I introduce yet another fundamental concept: *moods*. *Moods* are a constitutive internal state of our subjectivity that relates us to the world in a more profound and meaningful way. Heidegger argues that our *understanding* of the being of entities *within-the-world* and ourselves is grounded on our state of mind or *mood*.[xlii]*Moods* are related to our specific purposes, thereby essentially deepening our experience of entities *with-in-the-world*, so that their meaning is oriented affectively and instrumentally in our experience.[xliii]This claim is strengthened by Heidegger's affirmation that "*mood* has already disclosed, in every case, *being-in-the-world* as a whole, and makes it possible first of all to direct oneself

towards something."[xliv]The argument is that *moods*as an internal relation, mediate our *understanding* and relation to others and to the world; they engage, disclose and tune us into experiencing the world in a particular way.[xlv] Emphasising the ontological significance of *moods*, William Large thinks that, unlike solicited intellectual knowledge that directs itself to particular objects and persons in the world, through *moods* we can know what matters to us as directed by our feelings, passion, interests, love, etc.[xlvi] In so doing, we come to know how the world looks, how it is for us. *Moods* define the way the world affects us, and how it matters to us in a way that could not happen with mere theoretical understanding of reality brought by technology.[xlvii] Since the world matters to us, we are passionately and directly concerned about it by developing interests to experience that world as mediated not by anything else, but by our moods.[xlviii] To use Hubert Dreyfus' words, *moods* are not just about how we understand the world outside there; rather, they also show how things are going on with us and within us.[xlix]

To claim that *moods* orient a meaningful understanding of the world is not to yearn for a merely nostalgic and pre-ontological level of consciousness, uninterrupted by the mechanical rhythms of technology, but rather, an ontological rethinking of the fundamental place *moods*occupy in human subjectivity in a world that is constantly mediated by technology. Today, with the deep intrusion of technological calculative thinking, manifested through HR outsourcement, we try to control this fundamental aspect of our subjectivity, which relates us to the world and to ourselves by treating our *moods* as external, thereby undermining their ontological significance. With technological mediation or outsourcement, we engage our *moods* unreflectively, so that *moods* as fundamental and internal aspects of being human for a creative, subjective experience are manipulated and undermined. So, too, our unmediated and affective individual involvement with whatever is or supposed to the object of human experience. But, then, all this leads to a perversity of the human condition, a mechanistic experience of reality, where we are estranged from our own internal phenomenal experience of the world.

There is no single doubt that through outsourcement, technology fascinates us, it captivates our *moods* and we are enticed to employ it as an external medium to express our relationship with reality, to the point where we are not able to have a deeper ontological and subjective experience of things in the natural world. McLuhan Marshall once asserted that technology not only extends our bodies and actions in space, but it also superficially allows us in a manipulated way to extend our internal desires or 'imagination' into concrete and universal manifestations.[l] In other words, technology manipulatively extends our *moods* as internal relation into external realities, so that it becomes difficult to establish the difference between them. To illustrate this upcoming global exchange of *moods* or sensations, again I take the example of the G.P.S, the popularity and influence of which has not only revolutionized the personal hand-held device industry, but the very space of our senses and relations. Like many people, I realize that I have established a romantic attachment to my G.P.S. I find company in her sweet and comforting voice. I feel warm and safe when following her thin red, white or blue line. More than once I experience her mercy, for each of my transgressions would be greeted by nothing worse than a gentle, "Make a U-turn if possible." As I get used to it, I realize that I can no longer get anywhere without her, since I have developed a dependency syndrome to her.

The critical matter is that, outsourcing HRs to technology has the ability to manipulate *moods* as fundamental aspects of our constitution by increasing transient sensations and directing them to our desired ends, so that we no longer sense or imagine from *within* or see reality as it is through our relational experience. Today, reality can be affected and changed by the turn of an external dial, the press of a button, twist of a knob, as the case with the G.P.S, and so on, displacing the subjective role of moods in experiencing reality. Such technological mediations, because of their external influence,

ontologically, do not enable us to engage with the world, since they have also transformed our *moods* of engagement with the world into something external, subject to technological manipulation and decision.

With the idea of a meaningful context of significance of entities[li] and human experience earlier raised by Heidegger, the technological way of relating to ourselves and the world implies that we can separate the objective world from the subjective world of immediate experience. It further means that we experience the world cybernetically in our minds or in some other gargets and thereby form meaning relations where the meaning relates the object to us, as is the case with signs. In this way, we are not directly in touch with the outer world because our relation to it is mediated by meanings and signs that carry those meanings.

General Philosophical Assertions

The philosophical hypothesis of the discussion has been that we are so accustomed to technology to the level that if it were to disappear tomorrow, then our lives would be in disarray; we are so used to having computerised services to the point that we feel utterly disconnected when we do not receive our 'hit' of what is happening in the cyber-space. This dependence on technology has deeply provided an incentive to a massive desire to outsource our HRs to technology for "efficient" performance.[lii]But, then, this raises a fundamental philosophical question is: Are the technologies we outsource ourselves destroy or enhance human nature? The thought provoking reaction to the enquiry is the claim that HR outsourcement appears to have come at the most critical point in time when we seem not to have need for our natural selves anymore. It challenges our subjectivity as conscious world-forming beings. These claims are justified under the following arguments:

Outsourcement Challenges Human Subjectivity: Outsourcing ourselves to technology logically short-circuits our ability to direct ourselves with the use of our natural reason since it undermines any effort to modify the technological tool to serve well our human purposes, without destabilizing human resources. It has nihilistic effects on humans in the sense that it undermines other forms of life assessment, causing an existential tension or waging war against the individual subject who engages in outsourcement. Emphasising the claim, David Kolb affirms that "technological production, bureaucratic administration, and other modernizing factors bring about an economy that is efficient, but also encourages the spread of an atomizing and calculating style into other areas of our lives".[liii]It is true that outsourcing guarantees us freedom and more time for other things, but it also gives us a possibility of a deadening routine of the same life.

When we outsource HR, it transforms the concept of the *self* in that our identity and individuality are in essence externalized and mechanized, creating a kind of disillusionment with our natural human resources and capacities, thereby obscuring the normative content of our individuality in order to embrace a life that can be described in terms of its formal presentation. We are compelled to follow some mechanical and programmed offers for our organization to the height that "we assure ourselves that our self-understanding is final because it is formal."[liv]In technological outsourcement, we tend to treat ourselves from merely formal and external manifestations, where our outsourced cognitive and volitional lives are integrated into a process that works for a technological end of consistency and efficiency to the degree that human subjectivity has no part to play in our selfhood. We look upon life in a manner embodying an ambiguous split of formal processes from its content such that we assign our efforts to maximize the intensity and satisfaction brought by the employed technology, without any overall demand for authentic subjectivity that gives individual character. Ultimately, wedepend on the

outsourced technologies for a mutual recognition of themselves prior to the achieved selfhood of the individuals involved.[lv]

The general and undisputable assertion of the claims is that we are under the unsupported control of technology, which according to Heidegger manifests the groundlessness of our human condition,[lvi]where all the subjective content of life (natural gifts, talents, labour power, values, ways of thinking and living) become subsidiary objects of individual development. This whole technological process generates human "inability to perform anything" without technological mediation; it generates a crucialseparation of formal process from the informal and subjective self; it puts individual identity secondary to individual technological choices, which takes up a primary position. The solicited technological functions jeopardise the good effects of our subjectivity, situating and narrowing down human life to the mechanical sphere of technology. Definitely, the meaning of life and our existence is being disconnected from our subjectivity and given to the machine/technology such that the basis of meaning is no longer the human subject anymore, but instead the technology being employed. The excruciating ontological implications of this, without amplifying are that we actually operate under a sub-human level of existence, incapable of determining a particular way of life or existence for ourselves. Disgracefully, we are being swallowed up by the general technological identity.

Outsourcement impoverishes Philosophical reflections on the true picture of Technology: Outsourcing ourselves to technology weakens human efforts to philosophically reflect why a course of technological action is good or awful to our individual development due to the naive and instrumental realism created by technology. It makes it difficult for us to engage ourselves with philosophical issues about the human condition in the technological society. With the influence of device paradigms, it is easier to interpret ourselves technologically as information processing systems since software programmes run by explicitly stated instructions and our computerised gadgets work on the level of intelligibility. However, the profound implication of this naive, false and misleading assumption[lvii] is that human life in technology has been made into a mere mathematical issue, and the technological devices are its calculators.

It is important, therefore, to seriously consider that when technological device paradigmsare deeply entrenched into our vision of existence, it not only informs most of our decisions to outsource our natural capabilities, but it also patterns/structures our entire organization: the daily experience, the structures of human development and even the ways in which we interpret nature. All of human reality is structured according to the technological paradigm transforming it into entirely usual standard for human operations. We have to take into account that when we outsource our HR, we fuse ourselves with the knowledge of the cyber-sphere, and enter the delight of a higher and complex metaphysics with profound ontological implications, where we experience a tremendous shift from human ontology to technological ontology. When such technological shift is deeply entrenched into our vision of existence, it not only informs most of our decisions, but it also patterns/structures our entire subjectivity as claimed earlier.

Conclusion

In this article I have argued that outsourcing our human resources to technology in search for short or long-term answers to human concerns is not entirely a negative phenomenon. However, I have also emphatically argued that outsourcing ourselves to technology basing exclusively on technical solutions to our immediate or remote concerns of life makes it critical, particularly when there is an attempt to get rid of human natural capacities, that is, the capacity to use our given potentials to direct our own lives in varied wanting situations.With technological outsourcement, we are deeply going through a

critical transformative phase of human meaning; it poses fundamental questions with regard to human nature. Certainly, the indubitable fact is that even though in the whole process of outsourcing our HR to technology we do not utterly lose our individuality, what we lose is basically our autonomy for self-determination, where we surrender our subjectivity, control over our meaningful engagement with life to the universal outsourced technological mind or machine. This only limits our autonomy, particularly the occasions where such autonomy is to be exercised since we become busy reducing life to simple scenarios that fit into the world we are most interested in, which is of a comfortable technological life. It is an invention of new and cybernetic forms of life, instead of creatively renewing natural forms of life that constitute the basis of our subjectivity and individuality.

As discussed, we humans have a unique way of being that cannot be reduced to the level of the being of entities *within-the-world*; we have a unique way of existing. Any attempt to undermine this uniqueness would imply that we define ourselves from the region of "calculative thinking" as opposed to "essential thinking", which addresses the meaning of human subjectivity.[lviii]Obviously, there is nothing seriously wrong with this thinking in itself; calculation is in the service of our subjectivity, "such thinking pattern is indispensable."[lix] What makes it destructive, as discussed, is the homelessness behind it, which is its undermining role of other forms of life assessment;[lx] we dispel the great fact that there are some harmonious scheme of human values and abilities rooted not in technology but in our subjectivity. In "calculative thinking" things are converted into commodities, human nature is treated only as a passive recipient of the technological offer; everything is to be resolved by calculation.

I consider any attempt not to take time to understand the ontological implications of our own technological choices discussed in this article to be a mistake that we are prone to make in our various attempts to outsource ourselves to technology. No one doubts the benefits of having computers [with all their working programs] to carry out some work, however, computers cannot really replicate memory and human activity. All they can do is to store facts — but we need to know that facts are not memories and human activity. What real and natural memories do is to store human features like smells and sounds and emotions, things that no computer or cyber-based systems can store. The thing that the cyber memory can do quite well is to store my phone numbers, photos or the tweets I send, and facilitate me to relive the memories associated with those facts. Therefore, it is imperative not lose our subjectivity in an attempt to unreflectively embrace technology. Instead, as world-forming subjects, we should define ourselves as over and against technological objects. If we have to outsource ourselves, then, it should be done in a system that it does not consist in disassociating humans from the practical ontological duty of engagement with reality that defines their meaning in life.

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[xlix] Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time,* p. 174.
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[li] By 'meaningful contexts,' Heidegger means the contexts of relations, of ordinary engagements with objects within the world. This is different from Husserl's Cartesian understanding where the world and the human subjects are conceived as two distinct entities, with the human subject as a *res cogitans*, a thinking substance that objectifies the world, the "pure 'I'" that contemplates the external world. The *res cogitans* is conceived by Heidegger as the breakdown of our ordinary engagement in the world.
[lii]Joseph Weizenbaum, *Computer Power and Human Reason*, p. 30
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[liv]Ibid.,p. 10.
[lv]Ibid., p. 25.
[lvi] Martin Heidegger, *Discourse On Thinking*, p. 46
[lvii]Michael Heim, "Heidegger and McLuhan and the Essence of Virtual Reality", in *Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition, Anthology*, p.540.
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