# The Twins Paradox: Bifurcation & Unification

Tom Lopez

"Once there was a time when the bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful
was called *technē. And the Poïēsis* of the fine arts also was called technē."[1]
—Martin Heidegger (trans. by William Lovitt)

In this thought experiment, *Technē* and *Poïēsis* will be twins.
We will set them on their separate ways and see if they reunite.
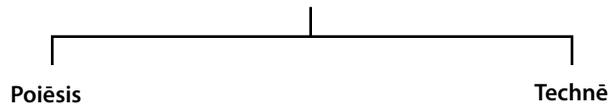
Poïēsis	**Technē**
Technology hungers. Technology nourishes. Technology grows.	[author] Which came first, man or technology?
However, technology reveals a perilous crossing. We encounter T-rex glaring, springing, landing precisely, without error.	[philosopher] "The impression comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct. This illusion gives rise in turn to one final delusion: It seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself."[2]
We fear technology, turn inward, examine our selves and our lives, re-examine our selves and our lives, our selves, our lives. Technology repeats…	
Technology thunders. Technology shocks. Technology barks.	[author] What is the essence of your experience?
	[audience] We watch dance and listen to music.
T-minus-eight-and-counting distresses us, demands of us acts of grave inconsequence. We recoil and seek solace.	[author] What is the nature of this phenomenon, this appearance?
We wrap our family and friends in technology and talk about it, not them, it. It estranges us, and them, and thus… Technology repeats.	[audience] The *causa materialis* is human, dancers & musicians. The *causa formalis* is wave, light waves & sound waves. The *causa finalis* is performance, music & dance. The *causa efficiens* is human, choreographer & composer.
Technology leers. Technology lures. Technology arouses.	
Our be-ing changes and we all gain, small accomplishments, little victories, tiny implants.	[philosopher] "The four causes are at play within bringing-forth and through bringing-forth whatever is completed through the arts come to their appearance.[3] Yet the more questioningly we ponder the essence of technology, the more mysterious the essence of art becomes."[4]
Technology breathes on our neck, down our back, and across our thighs.	[author] What is the essence of modern technology?
We reveal our own seduction, our e-motional senses susceptible to every hairbreadth of movement.	▶ [philosopher] "The essence of modern technology starts man upon the way."[5]
We begin.	

Technology grabs us by the shoulders and shakes us; remains faceless and apathetic, our gaze rolls askew.

Technology faces us, points us in a direction, and we move. But technology moves us and simultaneously inhibits our sight.

Engines move the train forward and block our view forward, our destination hidden from us. Instead, our view lies through glass, colored by smoke and steam.

We sit and forage for familiar features in the blur beyond the window.

Technology breaches the mountain and tunnels our vision. Our tunnelogical movement runs transverse to our view, our eyes flitting back and forth; we cannot see where we are going.

It is easier to simply watch our reflection in the glass.

We move.

Technology roars. We emerge from the tunnel and see that technology moves massive mountains, the entirety of our perpendicular past, time itself.

Technology bridges lakes and rivers.
Far below, the water satisfies, fulfills, pleasures, condenses in droplets of joy, waterfalls of magic.

Technology spans the valley floor, the streambed, carries us ahead while we look away.

Technology soars forward and we stare sideways, clouds tinted by fingerprints on the windowpane. Technology is a causality, falling, free of gravity.

Technology sparks from fire and lightning! Technology appears clear, illuminating, intelligent; but technology filters the marsh and swamp.

Technology screens the dragon in the meadow, bleeding black and yellow.

Technology moves us passed fortune and danger, frames our vision, and focuses our gaze upon ruins and treasures.

We move faster.

[author] Ah, *chemin de fer*, the "way of iron!" I love trains, especially in early film and *musique concrète*, their massive and animalistic features expose themselves beautifully through sound and image, the way of metaphor.

[philosopher] "The way is a way of thinking.[6] A train is surely an object. But then it conceals itself as to what and how it is.[7] This includes holding always before our eyes the extreme danger.[8] The closer we come to the danger, the more brightly do the ways into the saving power begin to shine and the more questioning we become."[9]

[author] The film winds its way through sprockets and the light shines through each individual image cutting a rectangular tunnel through the smoky room, a flickering aspect ratio against the wall. I want to look directly into the technology. I want to feel the bright light burning into my retina, so tempting, so dangerous. I avert my eyes and find something else. What is the essence of your experience?

[dancer]   I move, my body carves through time & space.
[musician]   I vibrate, my voice projects into time & space.
[choreographer]   I organize bodies in time & space.
[composer]   I organize sound in time & space.

[philosopher] "The four causes are the ways, all belonging at once to each other, of being responsible for something."[10]

[collaborators] We pool our efforts, share responsibilities.

[philosopher] "The four ways of being responsible bring something into appearance."[11]

[collaborators] We gather our selves and our resources, we meet and devise and improvise.

[philosopher] "The principle characteristic of being responsible is this starting something on its way to arrival.[12] But *causa* belongs to the verb *cadere*, 'to fall'…"[13]

[collaborators] In a flash of inspiration, an artifact arrives! Yes, something falls to the ground, a tree limb; picked up, it extends the length of the arm and articulates a grander arc, broken in two and scraped against itself, it extends the pulse of the voice and accentuates an arboreal rhythm. How can it function, like this, or that, or another way?

[philosopher] "Does the essence of technology endure in the sense of the permanent enduring of an Idea that hovers over everything technological, thus making it seem that by technology we mean some mythological abstraction?"[14]

Technology flies so far away, out of our control,
and burrows under our skin, so far within,
beneath even our senses.

Technology penetrates everything, including us.

Technology sears our eyes, strikes from the sun
and clings to us like armor.

Technology bears arms, wears shells like the
tortoise, crab and oyster, but hollow and withered
within.

Technology lies, beside us, in parallel motion,
murmuring secrets between our ears.
Technology chafes our dry, cracked toes.

Technology infiltrates us and we speak through it.
Our tongues mash and tear at the conch.
Our fingers rub and rub and rub the surface.
Technology erases one digit at a time.

                    Faster still.

But technology moves, where?
Where does technology aim?

A hobo riding the rails, a pregnant sorceress.

Our purpose grows, our be-ing emerges.

Our goal feels dangerous, mysterious, and
adventurous;
meanwhile, technology builds a torrent of
indifference.

We work at cross-purposes with technology and
the distance between us expands and shrinks with
every invention.

But technology is not the adversary, s/he is us;
we are two forces addressing individual needs.
Are the needs mutually exclusive?

Is there common ground?

Technology moves in all directions.
We fly off the tracks, accelerating toward zero-*g*.

We feel weightless and aimless, trapped by our
own devices and borderless frontiers.

If we stray, we will find ourselves frozen, sitting in a
sack, without purpose.

[collaborators] Our essential core resides in time &
space, neither technological nor mythological. Our
temporal & spatial happening is here and now,
must be right here at this exact place and right
now in this exact moment.

[philosopher] "Here and now and in little things,
that we may foster the saving power in its
increase."[15]

[collaborators] We play with it and practice and
practice with it and play.

[philosopher] "So long as we represent technology
as an instrument, we remain held fast in the will
to master it.[16] Everywhere we remain unfree and
chained to technology."[17]

[collaborators] Actually, there is another chain we
feel more acutely. Falling reveals the mundane
yet most profound bond amongst us, gravity.
Technology is anti-gravity. We can escape the
embrace of time & space; happenings appear
anywhere and anytime, may be everywhere and
everytime. Bodies float upside-down, reflect from
ceilings, dance on other bodies, and effervesce
in mists.

[author] What is the essence of this technology?

[philosopher] "Technology is a means to an end,
and technology is a human activity.[18] Technology
is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way
of revealing."[19]

[collaborators] Technology is no mere end
either. The feedback loop siphons us into an
infinitely variable chain of transducers: from aural
to mechanical to visual to electrical and back
again…

[philosopher] "Unlocking, transforming, storing,
distributing, and switching about are ways of
revealing."[20]

[author] Technological revealing is through
capturing and releasing. In trains, the coal is
captured and energy is released through steam. In
rivers, the water is captured and energy is released
through electricity.

[philosopher] "The earth reveals itself as a coal
mining district.[21] The coal that has been hauled
out is stockpiled; it is on call, ready to deliver the
sun's warmth that is stored in it.[22] A hydroelectric
plant is built into the river. The river is now a water
power supplier."[23]

[author] In music and dance, the energy is
captured and art is released. Who can account for
the change in mass?

[philosopher] "But where have we strayed to?"[24]

Technology supports our rituals.

We should undertake something, offer something, confront our unforeseen ambition.

Our goal is a deluge of creation upon those in need.

And we can see who needs help,
we can renew our spirits in heart-to-heart exchanges,
we can offer simple gifts.

Ever faster.

We may be confused, but if we are sincere, we can grasp hands and laugh again without regret.

We can travel without blame.
We can let ourselves be drawn and heard.
We can sigh and face humiliation with a flood of tears.

Remorse will disappear; our be-ing will shift from weeping to the moaning ecstasy of joyful pleasures.

Our objective gathers together, be-coming before us. ⟷

Despite the danger, we must maintain genuine composure without rage and anger, maintain determination without compromise, and face the insults. ⟷

We unify in gravitational attraction. Here and now, on this spot, we rise, with dignity, releasing the *g* -force.
We vibrate our sounds into music, our bodies into dance;
we ripple benevolence outward, balancing the world. In this way, the earth is our devoted companion.

We create our humble offering: music and dance, ⟷

so fast, they blend into one,

so fast, there remains no time for space.

stillness—silence.

Our arrival brings us to a body of waters; we are wet with waves of aspiration. Ideas and feelings inspire one another to spiritual achievement, and transform us into pure empowerment.

We experience relativity, chaste energy exchanges through forces in motion, sublime success.

{ [philosopher] "Could it be that revealing lays claim to the arts most primally, so that they for their part may expressly foster the growth of the saving power.[25] Thus the coming to presence of technology harbors in itself what we least suspect, the possible arising of the saving power."[26]

[author] In art, waves are recorded and projected. Through recording, the camera and micro-phone enframe the light and sound waves. Then later (perhaps only nanoseconds, though later nonetheless) through projecting, the waves are enframed again, in a different temporal & spatial context from whence they were recorded (perhaps on a screen and through a speaker).

[philosopher] "The essence of modern tech-nology shows itself in what we call enframing.[27] Enframing blocks the shining forth. But the rule of enframing cannot exhaust itself solely in blocking all shining forth."[28]

[author] The double-act of en-framing (recording and projecting) is like the journey of the traveling twin, whose experience crossing two different time-frames illustrates principles of relativity. We witness the power of time travel the sublime paradox of simultaneity.

[philosopher] "Yet when destining reigns in the mode of Enframing is the supreme danger."[29] As soon as what is unconcealed no longer concerns man even as object, but does so, rather, exclu-sively as standing-reserve, and man in the midst of objectlessness is nothing but the orderer of the standing-reserve, then he comes to the very brink of a precipitous fall, that is, he comes to the point where he himself will have to be taken as standing-reserve."[30]

[collaborators] We are moving and sounding and sweating. If you are here & now, you can feel and smell our effort. Or you might be far from here, our signals carried to you across great distance at the speed of light. You might be later than now, our signals carried for you across long duration. This is our expertise. We store our energy in berries and buds; spreading, burying, and nurturing our crafting until springing-time.

[philosopher] "The bursting of a blossom into bloom."[31]

[audience] Waves of light from projectors saturate our eyes and waves of sound from speakers drench our bodies, simultaneously in time-lapse and slow-motion. In a sea of splashy real-time multi-site hyper-media, an emergence is revealed in full-dimensional glory.

The waters disappear into the horizon.   ↔   [collaborators] We are the ether and our senses are subsumed by a topography of relativity, receding and cascading into the event horizon.

Magnetism pulls us toward strength, creativity, and heaven.   [philosopher] "The arts brought the presence of the gods, brought the dialogue of divine and human destiny, to radiance."[32]

We should remain unique within technology, because technology will grab us, disfigure us, and leave us to die.   [audience] Shhhhhhh, we're watching and listening…

But we will survive, endure, and triumph.
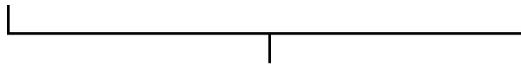
The bifurcated twins have completed their journeys, rejoined, and rejoice. Let us examine their maps: *Technē* and *Poiēsis* were born side-by-side, looking into each others' eyes, and moment-by-moment, basking in simultaneity. But they were moved into the universe. They traversed unique spatial terrains and temporal frames. They each felt their trajectory to be wholly visceral and completely coherent, each felt their own lifeline was the one reality. Yet when they reunited, one was younger than the other. They should have been puzzled by the inconsistencies of where they had been and what they had seen and heard, but they were too astounded by the sheer joy of looking into each others eyes again, celebrating synchronicity. They did not notice that one was younger than the other. They did not worry about the implausibility of it all, the implausibility of literally everything, the implausibility of the very fabric of the entire universe around them, or the implausibility of nothing less than their existences. They were not destroyed by the technical or gravitational or existential forces at work on their unified be-ing.

Notes

1 Martin Heidegger, The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 34.

2 Ibid., 27.

3 Ibid., 11.

4 Ibid., 35.

5 Ibid., 24.

6 Ibid., 3.

7 Ibid., 17.

8 Ibid., 33.

9 Ibid., 35.

10 Ibid., 7.

11 Ibid., 9.

12 Ibid., 9.

13 Ibid., 7.

14 Ibid., 30-31.

15 Ibid., 33.

16 Ibid., 32.

17 Ibid., 4.

18 Ibid., 4.

19 Ibid., 12.

20 Ibid., 16.

21 Ibid., 14.

22 Ibid., 15.

23 Ibid., 16.

24 Ibid., 12.

25 Ibid., 35.

26 Ibid., 32.

27 Ibid., 23.

28 Ibid., 28.

29 Ibid., 26.

30 Ibid., 26-27.

31 Ibid., 10.

32 Ibid., 34.