

Agostino Cera
(Academy of Fine Arts of Naples)

*FROM EMPIRICAL TURN TO ONTOPHOBIC TURN.
A CRITICAL HISTORICIZATION IN THE RECENT PHILOSOPHY OF TECHNOLOGY*

Keywords: Empirical Turn; History of the Philosophy of Technology; Heidegger

ABSTRACT

My paper aims a *critical historicization of the so-called Empirical Turn* in philosophy of technology (according to Hans Achterhuis' definition). My thesis is that after 35 years *the Empirical Turn has proven to be an Ontophobic Turn*. By this expression, I mean an *over-reaction against the essentialist approach* to the question of technology, in particular against Heidegger's legacy. This over-reaction consists of an almost total interest in the ontic dimension (i.e. the social, political, practical implications) of technology, with a consequent a priori disinterest in its ontological dimension. That is to say, an *Onto-Phobia*.

The benchmark of this epistemic metamorphosis in the philosophy of technology is the *lexical replacement of its object*, i.e. the change from "technology" to "technologies". Such a replacement corresponds to the inability to acknowledge technology as something in itself (i.e., as epochal phenomenon or potential *Weltanschauung* of our age).

With regard to this issue, my objection is the following. If technology as such becomes nothing – i.e. if the philosophy of technology becomes a problem solving activity in the presence of concrete problems emerging from the single technologies –, then it must be admitted that this kind of activity can be performed much better by scientists, engineers, politicians... than by philosophers. As a consequence, the Ontophobic Turn corresponds to the disappearance of the reason itself for a strictly philosophical approach to the question of technology.

Given this assumption, the paradoxical accomplishment of the Empirical Turn should be the final self-suppression, or at least self-overcoming, of the *philosophy* of technology.
