

JK Lakshmipat University, Jaipur
INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

End Term Examination, May 2025

B. Tech., Semester VI, 2024-25

Roll No.....

IL1216: Technology and Philosophy

Time: 2 hours

Max. Marks: 30

Instructions to students:

1. Do not write anything other than your full roll number on the question paper.
 2. **Answer any three out of the following questions.**
 3. Write full sentences and do not resort to bullet points while answering any questions.
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- Q.1 Building on earlier ideas of memory and perception, Bernard Stiegler, the French philosopher, explores how digital tools externalise human memory—turning it into a commodity—and replace thoughtful interaction with passive consumption. As memory shifts from the body to digital platforms (like social media feeds or video reels), algorithms increasingly shape our reality, creating a seamless, endless stream of content. This shift disrupts how people connect with their physical surroundings, leading to a crisis in how we experience the world. This transition leads us to two ways of being present: one dominated by digital interfaces (for example, scrolling through curated feeds) and another rooted in direct, unmediated engagement with the world (i.e., physically interacting with our environment). Heavy reliance on screens reduces bodily movement and purposeful actions (like looking around or reaching for objects), trapping users in a detached, disembodied state (or what we can call mindless scrolling). Algorithms also break time into isolated fragments (for example, short videos), creating a sense of immediacy that prevents reflection or forming a stable understanding of the reality. Stiegler argues that outsourcing memory to digital systems replaces shared cultural symbols with mass-produced content, deepening alienation. Without coherent memories of fragmented digital experiences, people feel disconnected—consuming endlessly but never feel at home with the world.
- 5 x 2.0
(LO3,
4)

Attempt any two:

- 1.1. How does the shift from active, bodily engagement to algorithm-driven content consumption alter our perception of reality and self-reality?
- 1.2. In what ways do digital interfaces enforce the culture of sameness while claiming to personalise experiences?
- 1.3. Can disposable digital content ever foster a sense of collective belonging, or does it inherently deepen alienation?

- Q. 2 The disappearance of the material character of objects from modern life signals a transition towards a world that lacks a sense of pastness. The manner in which humans interact with their surroundings has undergone drastic transformation, and we can observe an evolution in the very nature of objects driven by exponential technological advancements. This shift moves objects from their ritualistic roles to functional ones in a society shaped by information and the digitalisation of reality. The uniformity of industrial production has made objects interchangeable, which results in a human condition marked by an excess of products lacking intimacy; there is a noticeable absence of a sense of belonging or ownership towards them. This lack of intimacy not only alienates humans from the products they create, but it also extends to their detachment from the way they utilise objects, as they have become integrated into a disposable reality. Not only have the objects in the modern world lost their reliability, but they have also assumed a transparent quality. To put it differently, the shift in the nature of ownership has led objects from a ritualistic to a reel-listic world.
- 5 x 2.0
(LO2,3,
4)

Attempt any two:

- 2.1. How has the shift from ritualistic to functional roles of objects affected the way people feel connected to the things they own?
- 2.2. In what ways does the uniformity of industrial production affect our relationship with objects?
- 2.3. What does it mean to say that objects are assuming a “transparent quality,” and how does this relate to the idea of a “disposable reality”?

- Q. 3 How can humans navigate the ethical complexities arising from the rapid advancement of technology, which often goes beyond the evolution of cultural norms and ethical standards? What transformative changes in our collective mindset and institutional practices are required to foster a harmonious and ethical integration of technology into society, and what might be the societal implications if we do not successfully address this challenge?
- 1 x 10.0
(LO1,
2)

Q. 4 Byung-Chul Han, the South Korean-German philosopher, writes:

5 x 2.0

“Thinking is characterized not by intelligence but by idiocy. Every philosopher who creates a new idiom, a new thinking, a new language, is an idiot. The philosopher bids farewell to all that *went before*. A philosopher inhabits a *virgin, hitherto undescribed immanent level* of thinking. By adopting the principle of *faire l’idiot* [mess around], thinking risks the leap into the altogether other, ventures on untrodden paths. The history of philosophy is a history of idiocy, of idiotic leaps...Artificial intelligence cannot think because it is incapable of *faire l’idiot*. *It is too intelligent for becoming an idiot.*” (LO3,4)

Han, Byung-Chul. *Non-things: Upheaval in the Lifeworld*. Translated by Daniel Steuer. Cambridge: Polity Press, 43-44.

Attempt any two:

- 4.1. How does Han conceptualise thinking as “idiocy” rather than intelligence, and why is this distinction critical for human creativity?
- 4.2. Is AI inherently incapable of thought? If capable, how does its cognitive process diverge from human thinking? Can information generation be equated with thinking? Justify your response with specific examples.
- 4.3. In what ways does the notion of “acting foolishly” underscore the contrasts between human and AI cognition, particularly in innovation and risk-taking?

