

ARCHAEOLOGY AND/OF TECHNOLOGY:
A FOUCAULDIAN APPROACH

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PHILOSOPHY

by

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March 2007

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This dissertation entitled ARCHAEOLOGY AND/OF TECHNOLOGY A FOUCAULDIAN APPROACH prepared and submitted by ORLANDO ALI M MANDANE JR. in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PHILOSOPHY has been examined and is recommended for acceptance and approval for ORAL EXAMINATION.

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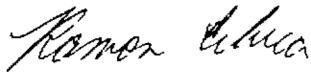
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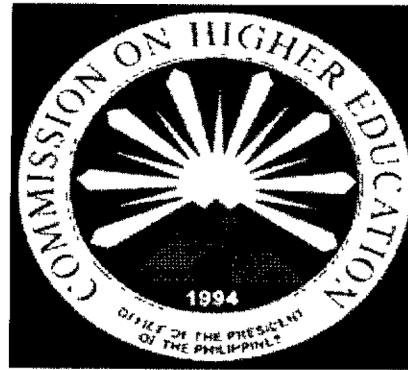

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ABSTRACT

"Archaeology and/of Technology: A Foucauldian Approach." Mandane, Orlando Ali Jr. Ph.D. Philosophy, University of San Carlos (Cebu City, Philippines), 2007, ix + 238 pp. Adviser: Br. Romualdo E. Abulad, S.V.D., Ph. D.

This work sees the world as rapidly changing because of the impact of technological devices that surround us. In many ways, these technologies have influenced our way of life such that a thorough reflection on them has become a compelling task. Although different philosophers have already proffered several views, three of which are presented in chapter two, this study argues that using a different method can enrich the current body of knowledge. Hence, it explores Michel Foucault's archaeological method in the analysis of technology.

In his early works, Foucault archaeologically described such topics as madness, clinical practice, human sciences, and so on. In his description, he studied them from the level of events, of specific practices, and he revealed that our knowledge of these phenomena is attributed to these specific discursive practices that are formed out of the describable rules of enunciations, objects, concepts, and strategies. By treating events from the standpoint of their regularity, locating the points of contradiction, establishing describable relations for comparison, and accounting for transformations, Foucault articulated knowledge from the level of events, from the level of discourse where "words and things" are not yet separated.

Using Foucault's archaeology, this work claims that technology as a discourse has transformed into what it is now because of the specific technological practices, which in the process have become the discursive formations. From these practices, there emerge the technology's formations of enunciations, objects, concepts, and strategies. In other words, technology involves various institutions of meanings, different instruments and tools, mass of successive statements, and sundry theoretical models of understanding. In this sense, technology is multifarious, dynamic, creative, and open.

Heidegger, Borgmann, Marcuse, and other philosophers of technology have claimed, however, that the contemporary technology poses a lot of problems because it has become alienating, intrusive, dominating, ideological, or in Marcuse's word, one-dimensional. Hence, technology needs reforms. And, this archaeological attempt argues that the direction of technological reform must start from the bottom to the top, from the grassroots, that is, from the discursive practices of alternative technologies.

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TECHNOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

The Clock. This is a simple artifact that Benedictine Monks in the 12th to 13th centuries developed supposedly to regulate their daily routine inside the monastery.¹ The intention for the invention was simple: to help regulate, in a more precise manner, the monastic routine of *ora et labora*. At a glance, a device like the clock seems to be neutral and passive, as it is merely an instrument for attaining human objectives or aims. However, as the case will show, this is not simple since the introduction of such an artifact helps in attaining not only human objectives, but it also changes the character of human activity, both social and personal.² This subtle change, furthermore, influences the characteristic of human choice as seen within the paradigm of time.

It seems that such a change is so minor that it hardly merits thinking. But the whole phenomenon appears different when the artifact or device, through constant usage, solicits a response that sooner or later emerges as a norm. An example is necessary. When the King of France, King Charles V, institutionalized the use of clock in 1370 to synchronize all the activities of the kingdom,³ the consequence was almost

¹ Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 14. Henceforth will be cited as *Technopoly*.

² Borgmann analyzed the role of technology in the human life and developed his famous device paradigm of technology. See Albert Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of the Contemporary Life: A Philosophical Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

³ Postman, *Technopoly*, 27.