

## Rationality: Beyond Aesthetics and Communication

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### *Abstract*

This research proposal focuses on the acceleration of technical progress, rationality, and associated socio-political issues. Control over communication, media, and the arts may not imply that this power is exercised politically, but rather that it is contained in politics (Weber, 1924). Technological development is an outstanding representative of forms: however, it can be observed that the creation of images is generally dependent on the artificer or artist's ability to develop and perform transformation or improvement. Apart from the attraction of images, which are central in the development of communication and language, the experience of aesthetics itself is undergoing change as a result of technological advances. Moreover, several notions have been introduced to the discussion, such as ideas of progress, the social impact of automation, and the role of intellectuals and scientists as builders of inventions and hence the attendant figures of the artificer.

*Keywords:* reason, technology, politics, art, media.

### 1. Introduction

Considering science and technology in relation to society implies accounting for how the disciplines falling under this category affect their social environments and vice versa. A paradox inherent in this consideration stems from the conflict that is faced in the coming to consciousness of our existence as human beings. On the one hand, this involves acknowledging our mortality, an essential aspect of human life: the creation of new models is thus a way of our limitations can be transcended. On the other hand, technology has been revealing social and philosophical implications since the nineteenth century and the onset of the Industrial Revolution. Among these is the dehumanization that follows in its wake: this is a universally employed means of designating the effects of technology, as it becomes shaped and structured to fit the new society that it has in part created. Dehumanization takes into account the general impression of acceleration in technological progress and its attendant effects. These effects are often interpreted as problematic to life, because human beings are dependent on its functions. However, human beings have always depended on better social relationships and increasingly depend on them more and more.

The range of concepts that go along with technological development, such as the myth of progress and the role of human beings, i.e. dehumanization or the existence of the nonhuman, mean that individuals are increasingly demanding identification and significance. They imagine that their new creations imply better communication, always relative to the continuous

productivity in various sectors. In such ways, complex social concerns related to the imaginations of different audiences, with forms of communication embodying the most appropriate relationship. Technology thus contributes to the ability to reproduce ideas, improvements, and new developments.

- Analysis of how socio-political factors are determined by rationality through art and media.
- Understanding the range of concepts relating to technological developments and the role of human beings.
- Discussing the ability humans have to achieve positive results in relation to their sociocultural circumstances.

According to Wiener (1948), the founder of cybernetics, information is the “term designating the content of what we exchange with the outside world to adjust to it”, and that makes us adjust without realizing it. The process of receiving and utilizing information is the process of our adjustment to the contingencies of the environment. Communication and control for part of the essence of the inner life of the human being and belong to the life of society. As we well know, human beings need to adapt to society, shaping themselves around an outside world, and becoming “real” when informed by creative skills. Technology offers communication possibilities that enable us to join a social environment and be renewed by it. Controllable or not, constant transformation is advanced by such technological development, which gives rise to new possibilities of communication experience in a sociocultural context.

Beyond theories of surplus value and the masses relating to science and technology in their socio-political implications, Marx’s concept of general intellect, found in a passage in the *Grundrisse* (Marx, 1857–61) called the “Fragment on Machines”, is relevant here. Žižek’s take on this is significant, that “the ambiguity of the notion of multitude is only the latest example of a more general deadlock of revolutionary thought: from the Marxian ‘reappropriation of surplus value’, the very formula of overcoming capitalist logic remains indebted to what it wants to abolish” (Žižek, 2006). However, McLuhan’s work (1964), which explored the impact of communication technologies at the human level, and that of Wiener (1948), who created the fundamental concepts of cybernetics and explored its main socio-philosophical implications, still play a role in discussions of the social impact of automation and the role it plays in the intellectual and scientific construction of invention.

However, Žižek’s understanding and opinion related to the subject is very different to the American thinkers, who mostly developed an analytical philosophy. So, that, as Žižek (2012) argued, “philosophy is inherently axiomatic, the consequent deployment of fundamental insight. Hence, all great ‘dialogs’ in the history of philosophy were so many cases of misunderstanding”. He described thoughts’ influence as misunderstanding throughout the history of Western thought, and culminating in the final contention that such influences are “without exception grounded in a productive misreading”, posing the question: “did not the entirety of analytic philosophy emerge from misreading the early Wittgenstein?” It should be recalled from Descartes (1640) that consciousness in all its operations is conditioned by error, mistake, and illusion. Therefore, Cartesian doubt relates to consciousness’ self-affirmation in the context of mistake and error; that is, it always seeks affirmations to account for everything not confirmed as true (Wagner, 2017). At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond, logical empiricism played a fundamental role in the work of the thinkers of the Cambridge and Oxford schools, as well as on the Vienna Circle, leading to the development of cognitive science and an approach to mathematical philosophy.

Since ancient times, human beings have been determined to overcome the difficulty of treating what is unknown in the outside world by means of the construction of an inner world and through subjectivity, relative to coexistence with changes in the outside world. The relationships between human beings define our image of the world, which is constructed and continuously

transformed. In this era of transition from analog to digital, constant transformation of social relationships is underway in the chain of existence. A convergence in how human beings relate to machines is appearing at the present time.

With the advent of human-operated machines and artificial intelligence in communication technology, innovative continuities of image flows are emphasized as differentiating procedures. However, this continuity is convergent at a common point: technological convergence. Techno-human nature is consolidating updated images and transporting them through history. Furthermore, beginning with the first concept of human beings and technical evolution, scientific experiments have focused not only on the past or the future but also on present achievements. The relationship between human beings and techniques is greatly influenced by scientific research and its compatibilities and incompatibilities with technological convergence, which could entail a convergence of our senses. Thus, communication is no longer restricted to symbolic analysis; it is now an attempt to articulate new images as social facts and message. The most relevant aspects of new technologies are their mediating functions (devices and inventions).

According to Jürgen Habermas in *Technology and Science as Ideology* (1968), his main work on this subject, since the earliest development of human technical concepts, scientists have been gradually experimenting, not in a way that is limited to a definite past or an idealized future, but by expanding interrelationships of both of these through their results and conclusions. Aristotelian thought relates *techné* and *praxis*; Habermas takes up this relationship in our society, analyzing it based on the interests the human species, considering in particular two ways in which human beings can take action and achieve their aims. The first is through rational choice, which implies a systematized and strategic method, and the other entails the interaction of social actors acting together, creating common cause with consensual norms (*Geltungsansprüche*). Habermas develops his theory of reason in this way, arguing for an understanding of technology and science as statements of beliefs. This is an important aspect of Habermasian thought for the critical analysis of practical uses of technology and its social implications, such as current trends of reducing life to sets of technical problems for experts to resolve.

Habermas' reflections on and clarifications of Weber's (1924) rationality concern the choice of strategy for the use of technologies and the organization of systems according to the objectives of institutions that aim at world organization. We must especially consider who has mastery of this capitalist system, whether it is nature or society, who it is that has control over technology and science.

Politics are intrinsic to the existence of the individual in society in the public space at the level of the citizen; as stated by Aristotle, man is a political animal.

In the contemporary world, the citizen generally stays in touch with the public space through the media, whose association with relevant issues determine the responses of the public and grant additional power to public opinion. However, the results of innovation as a solution depend on political will. Habermas states that the rationality of decision makers' discourse guides the collective conscience by their communicative actions. How can one be sure that these actions entail positive effects? What determining force, beyond capital, is there for the mastery and control of these actions to guide them to achieve results?

## 2. Technical control in politics and arts

The development of the economy, technology, and industry is enabling new forms of communication that entail access to information and the acquisition of a greater amplitude of knowledge. Processes of social transformation cause new necessities to appear within relations between individuals, along with fundamental rights and conditions of social inclusion, as well as

new requirements, i.e. new rights. The diversity and complexity of human rights lie in difficulties based on morality and, by extension, are in common agreement with the rationalization of society.

It is widely acknowledged that the state and society connive in the development of technologies and the sciences, and it is advantageous for both parties. On the one hand, the strength of the state is exercised here with the aim of control. On the other hand, the resistance, needs, and aspirations relative to rights and freedoms are concentrated in the power of the masses. Finally, the two opposing forces, the state and society, come together, equally able to maintain their positions, neutralize their differences, and create a balanced system that would ensure the conditions for their survival. For this reason, rationality can be characterized as a science and a technique, a process of organizing elements and guiding progress, and a simple productive power. However, this stems from a history in which, due to the negative consequences of capitalism, rationality was stigmatized and understood to be nothing more than a form of manipulation.

The rationality illuminated by Habermas relates to an ambiguity in Max Weber's thought: on the one hand, it embodies dissatisfaction in the form of critical reasoning about development's productive forces. On the other hand, it also presents reasoning to justify relations production as the status of institutions that have adapted to real objectives. There is some meaningful analysis of the meaning of technological development in the work of Habermas cited above, *Technology and Science as Ideology*. In it, Habermas analyzes the consequences of arbitrary scientific and technological development, in which productive forces form new relations as the result of production.

The legitimate human interest in the technical control of nature thus functions as an ideology – a screen that masks the value-laden character of government decision-making in the service of the capitalist status quo. Unlike Herbert Marcuse, who regarded that interest as specific to capitalist society, Habermas affirmed the technical control of nature as a genuinely universal species-interest; *pace* Horkheimer and Adorno in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the technical interest did not necessitate social domination (Bohman & Rehg, 2014).

Adorno and Horkheimer, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), distinguished two meanings of the faculty of reason, in its relation to absolute truth and to knowledge. For both relations, reason is ambiguous and dialectical. On the one hand, it liberates human beings from subservience, bringing clarification. On the other hand, it conditions human beings to technocratic consciousness in the service of the development of capitalism and the economic interests of the dominant class. A way leading out of reason is planned, but its reversal is by no means inevitable. From technological development, Marcuse expected individual liberation, or the discharge of necessity, as well as sacrifices of energy and time. Still maintaining the strength of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* (*Ästhetische Theorie*) (1970), influenced by Kant, Hegel, and Marx, was a major object of discussion in aesthetic reflection from 1970 until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Adorno, like Lukács, reinterpreted artistic creation throughout history, seeking an understanding of what relationships exist between modern art and the society that gave it birth. Lukács (1972), for his part, rejected modern art, considering it the expression of the decadence of society. Adorno, however, defended it, arguing that it was able to resist the mastery of the culture of massification, differentiating itself from reproduced art, superficially perceived as kitsch in its simple and ephemeral forms in a mass culture that is dominated by technological development. The use of the term rationality in the Adornian aesthetic was used to denounce the technical and scientific rationality of the social and economic development of the liberal market. This paradoxical interpretation of reasoning is decisive for understanding the heteronomies in Adorno's aesthetics. Rationality in the universe of the arts must be used to accomplish works of art. This art, in this period, is understood as modern art, which, according to Adorno, is to be understood as a work of art precisely because it is found to differentiate itself from other products. Reflection on the concept of *mimesis* should be noted in Adorno's aesthetics, as

well as the influence Kant (1724–1804) and Hegel (1770–1831), especially the latter, in terms of the form and content of art. Hegel's art system was coherently grounded in the spirit of the time through its translation of the idea into a conceptualization as material form. Concepts were universalized and, in a specific art, overcame subjectivity by being externalized and materialized. Hegel noted that schools of art had lifecycles (birth, development, and decline) that were outweighed by the particularities of each period of history. Symbolic art was overcome by classical art, which finally was surpassed by the romantic school. Poetry, with its universal force of technical development and the evolution of the spirit seen in it in the forms of expression of ideas, became more and more dematerialized, in an affirmation of the absolute. Thus, Adorno affirms that the imitation by modern art of the predominance in social reality of the disenchantment of the universe increases the distance between artistic appearances and social realities. This is understood as an aesthetic orientation, in which the work of art presents, with its technical resources, the artist's mastery and talent, and in which the spectator perceives the representation of our reality. This to be is understood in terms of Adornian aesthetics, which are not concerned with realistic content, to objectify critiques of social realities with the specific subject and the intention of expressing political ideologies, while dissimulating an intentional propaganda.

As important as Adorno's works remain, contemporary concerns, beginning in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, were developed by analytic philosophers, involving a conception of art as the language of reality. However, there prevents Adorno and Horkheimer's reflections on rationality from being used in studies of the risk of uniformity in technoculture or of imitation, copying, and reproduction to the detriment of the differentiated and original experiences of individuals. Further, Lukács' thought about reification regarding classical German philosophy is significant, as related by Westerman (2010):

Classical German philosophy, [Lukács] argues, resolves the problem of knowledge of external reality by showing that the world as known is the product of the subject's reason: all consciousness consists of experience systematized according to rational categories. However, such categories derive their validity from rational necessity, not on their relation to a specific subject. Consequently, the world "appears as a necessary consequence of known, knowable, rational systems of laws, as their necessity, which in fact cannot ultimately and entirely be comprehended".

Currently, in Germany, concepts of aesthetic rationality, as relate to the work of Jürgen Habermas, are used to analyze each sphere of production in society and affirm the relation of its own truth for each segment. In general, in the examination of the main German conceptualizations of aesthetics, after Adorno Jürgen Habermas' theories concerning the rationality of communication should be considered as a reference. Some philosophers of art, aware of the historical limitations of Adorno's theory, treat aesthetic problems with reference to the specificity of the current art. Among them is Seel, who published *The Art of Division. The Concept of Aesthetic Rationality (Die Kunst der Entzweiung. Zum Begriff der ästhetischen Rationalität)* in 1985. Seel develops his thinking on contemporary rationality linked to the capacity of distinction and division of analysis. His analyses of experience and aesthetic judgment, as well as his concept of criticism, treat of an aesthetic rationality presupposing the specific liberation of art from any reconciling function, of a real reason transcending perception, reducing it to an elusive reality (Deschepper, 1993).

### 3. Aesthetics: Between fact and fiction

Human beings have employed different means of acquiring knowledge ever since a consciousness of its existence in relation to the world became developed in the human species. The primary goal was and remains that of achieving discoveries. The ability to organize, classify, select, and analyze using reasoning as a method of inquiry and deduction leads to a sense of

truthfulness that is not content with organized demonstration but demands precise analytical presentation. However, precise evidence of facts is absent in visual culture; this lack in representation and reproduction stems from the lack of rational analyses through aesthetic experience. This rational analysis is possible only if a plan is implemented for reasoning out the passage of time passage and the location in space of the aesthetic experience, in addition to interpretations governing the arts in history. Hence, to understand the arts and the sense of technique is to understand the history of human evolution.

Art and technique were expressed by the Greek word *techné*, translated into Latin as *ars* and *art* in current English. Western thinkers have focused on the concept of *techné*. This focus originates in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with its revival of the ancient Greek τέχνη, meaning art and craft and its adoption of the term technology, which it related to scientific knowledge, incorporating the creation, theory, and praxis of technical skills. The term technology itself has its origin in the Greek “*tekhnologia* or ‘systematic treatment’, from *tekhnē* ‘art, craft’ + *-logia*”, according to the Oxford Dictionary. Cultures have been centered around technology as a type of knowledge through techniques like arts and crafts. The tendency of humanity to produce art or artistic products must be understood as a necessity, evident in the history of art and in the history of civilization itself as well. A major goal of human beings is to overcome nature. Further, this tendency is also evident in the applied sciences and in advances in information technology and industrial development. Moreover, if we measure the differences between previous technologies and current ones, together with their relationships with their envioning societies, we can see that all our senses continually adapt to new technologies. If evolution and technical progress are measured, it is clear that individuals have always used the power of techniques to realize art in new forms. Benjamin (1936) reminds us:

Reproductive technology, we might say in general terms, removes the thing reproduced from the realm of tradition. In making many copies of the reproduction, it substitutes for its unique incidence a multiplicity of incidences. And in allowing the reproduction to come closer to whatever situation the person apprehending it is in, it actualizes what is reproduced.

Benjamin is an essential reference for many different approaches to aesthetics and communication and their intersection, because his work relates to the “disintegration of the culture of goods in objects that humanity could possess,” as characterized by Habermas (1978), although he never spoke publicly of any revocation of culture (*Aufhebung der Kultur*). Moreover, according to Benjamin (1936), the techniques and means of reproduction vary throughout history. For example, drawing became reproducible with the advent of xylography, which was first employed for the reproduction of writings; then the printing press appeared. Thus, mechanical reproduction first began with xylography; lithography was then developed as a printing technique, together with the copper plate and etching. With these techniques, the graphic arts came to illustrate everyday life. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, photography appeared, and the process of the reproduction of images was on par with that of capturing speech. At this period, the majority of the population remained unable to read, but interest was growing. By reading, people obtained entertainment and information. This in turn led to a transformation in the social environment, as the Industrial Revolution and the innovations and knowledge derived from it and the increasing scientific discoveries and literature spread. Beginning with this period, many popular works of fiction appeared, and remaining on the margins of progress. Hence, the wealth that was being created by the Industrial Revolution became concrete reality in the form of gadgets, inventions, or stories for those who lived on the margins, who, consequently, came to feel included in society. Whether or not we believe that a message conveyed in narrative appears real, its truth is not the truth of life; it remains a representation of interpretation or invention, techniques to show possibilities for world vision through music, painting, and photography or film.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, much creativity was expressed through reproduction and was

increasingly influenced by commercial markets. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the emergence of the consumer society generated growth in social need related to the demands of daily life as a result of automation and the resultant decreases in the workforce, which was replaced by machines and computers. Thus, new ideas appeared almost simultaneously in different parts of Europe and the United States, revealing sources of innovation and ideas for the use of the culture industry. Industrial culture redistributes the burden of various technical functions, seeking, above all, a functionality of trade and the market. Society then submits to new achievements of development, adopting, for instance, new communication technologies, which have made radio, television, and cinema accessible through the Internet and social media. Consumer culture plays the role of market amplifier for affluent societies.

Wiener's (1948) work *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*, which centers on processes of receiving and utilizing forms of information, allows an understanding of social participation in its micro- and macro-dimensions. This process begins with communication from individual to individual and then progresses from one community to another, from one society to another, and from a community or society to the individual and *vice versa*, with the constant formation of measures that can fit the dimensions idealized by the supposed outer world. Such measurements can be understood as rules, limits, standards, norms, and orders disposed and provided by the individual, who always compares and judges all values. Following this line of reasoning, it is clear that the only motive for life in society is participation, with the establishment of laws, ethics, and morality. Analyzed rationally, this process of participation allows the individual to contribute to society, which can sum up individual factors. For example, if information is considered as a term that designates content, that is, an idea, then when the argument is empty (that is, without content), it has no value for measurement, canceling out participation in society. Individuals without information do not enjoy social participation, instead living their ideologies from the fundamental idea that the entirety of social processes regulates values and behaviors through exchanges of cultural values. Each society is supported by the interdependence of subjective and objective values in social relationships, and societies receive and emit messages through gradual technological evolution. This leads to the conclusion that, along with McLuhan (1964) in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, technologies and their consequent environments succeed each other with great rapidity, but each environment prepares humanity for the following one. Technologies take control as functions of training perception, bringing to the psychic and social consequences of new technology to awareness.

Social transformation leads to the idea of dehumanization in the face of the development of industry and technology. The mastery of machines maintains us within the barriers of the human condition relative to the natural and the artificial, the real and the virtual, and among all things in which inventiveness stems from the intrinsic necessity to create in human beings. This simulates, enables, and transforms society, but leading it to an essential transformation of the human condition to a technological and programmed one. However, this condition relates to a humanity that maintains an identical itinerary of permanent goals, adapting itself to society in the midst of revolution toward welfare and, consequently, marking its epoch in the linearity of its time. The state of the individual within this revolution of communication technologies can be grasped following McLuhan's conclusion that "the medium is the message" (1964).

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, science fiction began focusing on the social impact of science in Europe. Another school of science fiction originated in the United States that did not share the abstraction represented by European social science fiction. Under the influence of the American dream, screens and magazines were stamped with exotic objects that transformed American fiction into an invention of gadgets and things. These appeared, then, as literature for the masses, with fantastic and science fiction stories. Good science fiction depends on the ability to invent and to predict future achievements human beings. The significant influence of science fiction on

humanity's future lies in the creation of everyday objects that come from ideas of an infinite world of discoveries and conquest at an indeterminate time. Science popularization through this means began in 1950 with Isaac Asimov, an example of a science fiction author and an individual who had the capacity to create ideas. Asimov, in his stories, devoted himself almost exclusively to science fiction literature, publicizing science's findings. In a talk he gave in 1968, he said that everyone writing science fiction by necessity was forced to make predictions. By the word prediction, he did not mean the statement that something would occur, but the fact that it was even a possibility and could happen. This affirmation was due to the popularization of ideas fueled the expectations of the masses and the cultural industry, which, attentive to demand for new products, motivated both the market and science to invent them. This expectation of novelty in occurrences and products leads to an obvious conclusion on the possibility of cultural transformation by means of the emission and reception of new meanings with, of course, results being expressed in invention in the fields of arts and communication.

Most recently, for instance, it has been possible to observe the promulgation of many scientific theories that lack scientific evidence, but stimulate discussion between academics and agents of culture. One such is developed in a published lecture given by Julian Jaynes, based on his book *The Origins of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, published in 1976. More recently, the TV series *Westworld* appeared, which took inspiration from Jaynes's theory, exploring the clearing out of the human condition by means of artificial intelligence. *Westworld* gives a portrait of human consciousness that is carried out from the confines of the bicameral mind, taking inspiration from Jaynes's theory. Hence, in the sociocultural system, artifice and invention belong to science fiction and its products, which are derived from creators' ideas that mediate the functions of consumers and markets, encouraging progress and continually adding novelty.

#### 4. Communication and technical interest

In general, the association between conceptions of the imagination and its variations has been approached in research through the analysis of inventions and artifices in cultural production and their relation to technological advancement. Possible knowledge on the transformation and characterization of the tendencies was deduced by the analysis of media as a method of study. The primary goal was the deduction of the system of cultural production, while the discussion of the industrial impact of automation extended from an obvious and natural consequence to other fields, resulting in the perception of purposes established by human society with regard to ethics, morality, reason, and practice. Finally, the development of a knowledge of tendencies came as a product of invention and artifice, following in the wake of new cultural and technological practices and demands. The main concerns of this research were the intention to create transformations in societies and to understand how new technologies interacted with everyday life, drawing attention to the relevance of the idea that, based on culture, humans could construct both formal and informal modes of communication, transmitting knowledge and perspectives, leading the participants of a given community to develop their values, beliefs, habits, and knowledge, or elements of culture that are expressed via human creativity and the intellectual faculties of the participants.

The creative and communicative interests of humankind, beginning with the first discoveries of energy, such as fire, allowed them to dominate. Furthermore, individuals since the onset of modernity have been characterized by know-how. This is a quality of an individual technician endowed with the expertise and the proficiency that allows him or her to know how things are done. Underpinning the technological evolution of the individual and his know-how over the course of history is the notion that humanity is following a path created by invention on a journey toward the fulfillment of dreams and achievements, which are artificially constructed,

through adaptation to technology. However, synthetic conditions can be established between human beings as users and technological services and products. This relates to the materialization of ideas as an overcoming characterized in the evolution of technologies as a way of improving relations, albeit in the context of the mastery of social and ideological political systems.

Technology can also be used to increase interest or mastery. Thus, applications are employed for improvements in safety, protection, accompaniment, and freedom of movement or are misused in surveillance or in invasion, disrespect, and obstruction of movement. All new technologies are tested in secret and used by the intelligence services of states. They are considered, above all, to be essential techniques for human beings to overcome themselves as a mere means of production and to become social beings with invention and artifice, by means of community creation. However, people distinguished and separated by ideals remain separated, employing such artifices as diversity of culture and language.

The development of technology and new forms of communication is, in principle, supported by economic and state power, but is done for the strategic purposes of domination. The elements of information are precious and kept as guarded secrets in the business world used to gain advantage in competition and world domination. By their national policies, states maintain communication networks, both national and international, to promote control in accordance with political and ideological goals. However, such elements are the inventions of those who are only interested in developing processes and products using new technologies, without any political or ideological interest. Scientific culture cannot challenge the government by keeping secret anything that has the potential to be used by political power, because it is financially dependent and subordinate to the law. Relative to this attitude taken by civilization on communication technology, a technological revolution in creation and development is underway that goes beyond the understanding of the mass of people. What determines this production cannot predict the consequences taking place in the sociocultural context.

The relationship between human beings and technology is thus centered on the scientific research assessing the compatibilities and incompatibilities of technological convergence and possible convergence related to socio-political engagement that has taken place since 1989 and the end of the Cold War. Following this event, there has been much academic discussion on the political ideology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These made to a new generation, of those born in the 1960s and 1970s, who realized the consequence of this time and the narratives of adventure and space discovery. This generation played a role in the technological revolution. Indeed, in *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972) it is found that “capitalism’s command is utterly simple: connect deterritorialized flows of labor and capital and extract a surplus from that connection”. Recently, we see a highly technological but deterritorialized youth using new technologies within their social networks. In one sense, their subjects represent a wide range of activities, from financial interest in media action, making their pages dominant social media presences, and more significantly, the creation of fake news, which bears a strong anti-democratic trend. They are also searching for ideals of freedom through attention to democratic values. The negative consequences of rationality in all technological developments were outlined in Horkheimer and Adorno’s *Dialect of Enlightenment*. The consequences witnessed in the Arab Spring of 2010–2011, which resulted in an extended period, still present today, of transition and chaos in many countries of the Middle East and North Africa. The main goal should be to find the political will can undertake solutions, because such conflicts are unlikely to be resolved in a final sense. All of this is taking place in a tenuous and ephemeral penumbra of hope and desire for world justice, which is used to transcend our limitations, which may arise with the creation of new models. In this sense, rationality, beyond any aim of communication and aesthetics, as determination, can create a solution through capitalizing on the belief in a better condition for human beings. As a parting thought, we can mention Aristotle who, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, argued that the aim of his studies “is not just to explain the philosophy of the excellence for human

beings, but also to demonstrate specifically how human beings can lead lives of excellence as activity in accordance with practical and theoretical reason” (Archie, 2003).

## 5. Conclusion

This study examines the complexity of reason’s role in social life, and especially its questionable instantiation in the use of science and technology in general. However, in spite of all the development of discussions of instrumental rationality in the whole course of classical literature, which thoughtfully engages with the issue in its entirety, the understanding of reason remains a great enigma.

However, throughout our history, humankind has always lived in spite of a lack of absolute mastery of reason, and it is important to affirm that most inventions, at their origin, do not play a destructive role in society, but rather are created to meet the needs and conditions of human survival.

It is always possible to understand evil as the consequence of misuse, that is, of the freedom of the will, permitting the use of reason for destructive purposes. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) attributed this misuse of reason to the negativity of the values upheld by society, influences that can corrupt an individual. Rousseau, who is regarded as having great importance among the thinkers of the French Enlightenment, also argued that the nature of the human will can be traced primarily to the natural passions, namely, love of the self, love of the neighbor, and desire for the preservation of the good and peace.

*Amour de soi, amour propre* and *pitié* are not the full complement of passions in Rousseau’s thinking. Once people have achieved consciousness of themselves as social beings, morality also becomes possible and this relies on the further faculty of conscience. The fullest accounts of Rousseau’s conception of morality are found in the *Lettres Morales* and in sections of the *Confession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar*, a part of *Emile*. In the most primitive forms of human existence, before the emergence of *amour propre*, *pitié* balances or restrains self-interest (Bertram, 2017).

All creatures display a drive toward self-preservation. Hence, for Rousseau, genuinely moral qualities can only be found in the application of reason to human affairs and conduct. This reasoning “requires the mental faculty that is the source of genuinely moral motivation, namely conscience. Conscience impels us to the love of justice and morality in a quasi-aesthetic manner” (Bertram, 2017). It may be for these reasons that certain artworks are consecrated by the passage of time, which has transformed them into masterpieces. Although the criteria for the aesthetic evaluation of artworks and the communication of their purpose are globally acknowledged, Western art has become essentially regarded as having an eternal presence expressed through its history, due to its instantiation of the fundamental values of what is right for a human being. Thus, an audience that does not have a specialization in a certain art takes account of the vital presence of masterpiece, which receives the benefit of intrinsic human nature (Wagner, 2016) with an understanding (*Verstand*) of the human condition in a Kantian sense. Along these lines, the recent publication of Steven Pinker’s *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress* (2018) reminds us of the human condition, which is fundamentally not rational.

The thought of the Enlightenment was influenced by Bacon (1561–1626), Descartes (1596–1650), Spinoza (1632–1677), and Leibniz (1646–1716), among others, and Enlightenment thinkers did not ignore the emotions. They only confirmed that we share an ability to be rational, seeking enlightenment in terms of considering the consequences for good. This thought forms the basis of Kant’s affirmation of the categorical imperative, which formed part of the thought of the classical Enlightenment, in addition to his thesis that reason is above action, because it grants the possibility of autonomy to the subject. For Kant, goodwill is a principle (fundamental law): it is

the obligation to think of the consequences of actions for the good of humanity and its freedom. However, Kant's freedom does not consist in doing what one desires, but in doing what is right. An individual and his/her reason may be the best master of his/her own life, allowing for respect for others. Individuals guide themselves to produce respect among others and to benefit everyone, without exception. Each person must act with fundamental respect for others in virtue of their autonomy. Kant's categorical imperative, in "the third formulation of which in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (the so-called formula of the kingdom of ends) recalls Rousseau's discussion of the general will in *The Social Contract*" (Bertram, 2012), thus bears Rousseau's influence, an influence that can also be seen in Hegel's and Marx's ideas, as noted above, and contemporary epistemic conceptions of democracy make reference to Rousseau's discussion of *The Social Contract*. However, a comparison of Rousseau's political philosophy with Weber's sociology provokes the problem of legitimacy at an international level (Merquior, 1994).

Rousseau and Weber are as different in spirit as they are distant in time. [...] Nevertheless, the very contrast between our two theorists yields a fairly illuminating perspective on the concept of legitimacy. Indeed, each of them might very well be taken as the supreme representative, the archetype, so to speak, of one of two basic ways of looking at the phenomenon of legitimacy: that which views it in terms of belief, and that which sees it in terms of power. While Jean-Jacques Rousseau was the main founder of what might call the "power theory of legitimacy", Max Weber remains the *locus classicus* of the "belief theory of legitimacy".

Rousseau examines legitimacy in relation to the purpose of government and conduct. However, if legitimacy is to be related to the inherence of power in traditional legitimate domination, as formulated by Weber, the rationalization of social structures to preserve dominion by means of references meeting the fundamental interests of the state and the collectivity is to be found in the creation of a global culture and their values. Moreover, the values of art and literature are not unrelated; on the contrary. These form expressions of natural human feelings in their most subjective aspects in the shape of communication with society, which nowadays passes through the cultural industry. Politics is contained within this. In general, a rationality that transcends aesthetics and communication is concentrated in positive aspects of development (Wagner, 2014). Reason's primary objectives express themselves as science and technology as progress, in the sense of productive powers that politically and economically serve global interests.

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