



The changing manufacturing process and responsibility for the world from Hannah Arendt's perspective*

Vinícius Silva de Souza**

Abstract: This text tries to understand the universe of durable goods manufacturing that make up the world. This production space is largely responsible for producing products for human beings, even if it costs the destruction of nature. According to Hannah Arendt, however, with modernity there was a significant change in the process of manufacturing these artifacts. This has brought about not only an invasion of consumption, but has also made the world and its utensils even more throwable. Therefore, representing a transformation of the essence of technique and its knowledge process, as Martin Heidegger points out. The conclusion aims to unveil the loss of the distinction between means and ends by placing the human being as the protagonist of the world. The consequence is, as the Greeks warned, the devaluation of nature and of the political agent, since it is the human being, as consumer and user of products, who is elected as the reference for the world.

* Translation by the author of an article published in: SILVA DE SOUZA, V. *A mudança no processo de fabricação e a responsabilidade pelo mundo na perspectiva de Hannah Arendt*. **Educação e Filosofia**, Uberlândia, v. 37, n. 79, p. 687–714, 2023. DOI: 10.14393/REVEDFIL.v37n79a2023-65083. Disponível em: <https://seer.ufu.br/index.php/EducaoFilosofia/article/view/65083>. Acesso em: 1 ago. 2023. Technical Review: Doctor Professor Gerson Brea. Professor at the Philosophy Department of the University of Brasília.

** PhD student in Education on Comparative Studies in Education - ECOE, linked to the Graduate Program of the Faculty of Education of the Universidade de Brasília - PPGE/FE/UnB, Darcy Ribeiro university campus. (Professor of Philosophy at the Department of Education of the Federal District). E-mail: desilvavinicius@gmail.com Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/0539459236180395> ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5805-9177>

Key-words: Fabrication; Human; World; Nature; Modernity.

A mudança no processo de fabricação e a responsabilidade pelo mundo na perspectiva de Hannah Arendt

Resumo: Este texto se empenha em entender sobre o universo da fabricação de bens duráveis que compõem o mundo. Esse espaço de produção é o grande responsável por produzir produtos para o ser humano, mesmo que isso custe a destruição da natureza. Segundo Hannah Arendt, entretanto, com a modernidade houve uma mudança significativa do processo de fabricar esses artefatos. Isso desencadeou não só uma invasão do consumo, bem como deixou o mundo e seus utensílios ainda mais descartáveis. Portanto, representando uma transformação da essência da técnica e de seu processo de conhecimento, como aponta Martin Heidegger. A conclusão busca desvelar a perda da distinção entre meios e fins ao colocar o ser humano como o protagonista do mundo. A consequência é, como alertava os gregos, a desvalorização da natureza e do agente político, pois é o humano, enquanto consumidor e usuário de produtos, o eleito como referência para o mundo.

Palavras-chave: Fabricação; Humano; Mundo; Natureza; Modernidade.

Der veränderte Produktionsprozess und die Verantwortung für die Welt aus der Perspektive von Hannah Arendt

Zusammenfassend: Dieser Text versucht, das Universum der Herstellung langlebiger Güter zu verstehen, das die Welt ausmacht. Dieser Produktionsraum ist weitgehend für die Herstellung von Produkten für den Menschen verantwortlich, auch wenn dies die Zerstörung der Natur kostet. Nach Hannah Arendt gab es jedoch mit der Moderne eine bedeutende Veränderung im Prozess der Herstellung dieser Artefakte. Dies hat nicht nur zu einer Invasion des Konsums geführt, sondern auch dazu, dass die Welt und ihre Utensilien noch wegwerfbarer geworden sind. Es handelt sich also um eine Transformation des Wesens der Technik und ihres Erkenntnisprozesses, wie Martin Heidegger hervorhebt. Die Schlussfolgerung zielt darauf ab, den Verlust der Unterscheidung zwischen Mitteln und Zwecken aufzuzeigen, indem der Mensch zum Protagonisten der Welt gemacht wird. Die Folge ist, wie die Griechen warnten, die Abwertung der Natur und des politischen

Akteurs, da der Mensch als Konsument und Nutzer von Produkten zum Bezugspunkt der Welt gewählt wird.

Schlüsselwörter: Fabrikation; Mensch; Welt; Natur; Modernität..

Introduction

Turning off the alarm clock, using the hairdryer to dry your hair, turning on the television, taking the bread rolls out of the toaster, and reading your e-mails. Everyday life is full of tasks that need the help of utensils to be performed and, behind these simple activities, there is a universe of products produced by manufacturing. There is a variety of artifacts that are present not only in the home, but also on the street, in politics, in school, as well as in other living and working environments. It is not common to think about what function a refrigerator or a chair has in the world, what is expected of these objects is that they function and serve to be used. Thus, these artifacts, fruits of manufacturing, are like satellites that orbit around the life and work of any human being.

The focus of manufacturing today is not simply on producing objects for everyday life, but on developing electronic devices and digital products that continue to serve and function to satisfy the different needs of humans in need of technological advancement. This shows the change in the artifact manufacturing model. Because the star of the moment is no longer

the old mechanical technology that powered steam-powered machines, but digital devices and applications that are more advanced than before.

In this context, however, it is important to be aware how decisively the technological world we live in, or perhaps begin to live in, differs from the mechanized world as it arose with the Industrial evolution. This difference corresponds essentially to the difference between action and fabrication. Industrialization still consisted primarily of the mechanization of work processes, the improvement in the making of objects, and man's attitude to nature still remained that of *homo faber*, to whom nature gives the material out of which the human artifice is erected. The world we have now come to live in, however, is much more determined by man acting into nature, creating natural processes and directing them into the human artifice and the realm of human affairs, than by building and preserving the human artifice as a relatively permanent entity. (ARENDR, 1961, p. 59).

According to Hannah Arendt (1998), it is the environment of manufacturing that is responsible for the production of durable goods in the world. However, the advent of the disposable logic of consumption has conditioned this human activity of manufacturing to the needs of labor, because “The world in which the *vita activa* spends itself consists of things produced by human activities; but the things that owe their existence exclusively to men nevertheless constantly condition their human makers” (ARENDR, 1998, p.9). In this way, the human being found himself facing an impasse that began to condition his existence, because manufacturing became dependent on consumption and its discardable goods.

Therefore, Arendt's concern was to denounce the reduction of the human to an animal that consumes and works, which, in current times, has its personification in the users of digital technologies. This is because, with the elimination of social and cultural frontiers promoted by the Internet, all its consumers were placed in communication networks, immersed and

connected, not as creators, but as consumers and users of virtual platforms. Soon, they become individuals who have nothing to differentiate them from each other, and are dissolved into a human mass with no identity and no freedom.

Moreover, the atrophy of politics is perceptible, as it increasingly loses its creative and freeing capacity. What we are seeing is the transformation of citizens from political beings to consumer animals - clients of a gradually more consumerist technology, managed by digital platforms that encourage consumption. "Its radical novelty lay in the attempt to manufacture an exclusive type of man and thus in the rejection of the human condition of plurality." (AGUIAR, 2008, p. 29).

Hans Jonas (2006), contemporary and friend of Arendt (2011a) shares with the author the idea of the way out of consumerism through politics. Because it is politics that makes the planet a safe and secure place from this discardable logic of production and consumption that continually threatens and depreciates the Earth and its inhabitants. For Jonas (2006), the main work of the human being is the city, this means a border between what is made by human hands and nature. Therefore, the house is the refuge for his existence, besides being a new artifact that marks the total separation of the human being with the environment. But because of the level of production, consumption and violation of nature that is in place today, there is no way to distinguish these boundaries between the world and nature.

For the boundary between "city" and "nature" has been obliterated: the city of men, once an enclave in the nonhuman world, spreads over the whole of terrestrial nature and usurps its place. The difference between the artificial and the natural has vanished, the natural is swallowed up in the sphere of the artificial; and at the same time the total artifact (the works of man that have become "the world" and as such envelop their makers") generates a "nature" of its own, that is, a necessity with which human freedom has to cope in an entirely new sense. (JONAS, 1984, p. 10).

In this way, nature and its creatures are subjugated to subservience to the needs and wills of this owner of the planet, who develops his existence between what remains (the city) and what changes (nature). However, the Earth continuously undergoes changes, both climatic and with the appearance of unknown diseases, due to the advance of the cities. These urban spaces were, until recently, a safe place for humanity, however, the current pandemic times show that this polis environment is no longer a safe place for survival, for, “and no matter how many illnesses he contrives to cure, mortality does not bow to his cunning”. (JONAS, 1984, p. 3). Therefore, faced with these constant transformations of nature, human life is challenged to persist in existing. This exposes humanity's only fear of nature, its mortality.

The presence of man in the world had been a first and unquestionable given, from which all idea of obligation in human conduct started out. Now it has itself become an object of obligation: the obligation namely to ensure the very premise of all obligation, that is, the foothold for a moral universe in the physical world – the existence of mere candidates for a moral order. This entails, among other things, the duty to preserve this physical world in such a state that the conditions for that presence remain intact; which in turn means protecting the world's vulnerability from what could imperil those very conditions. The difference this makes for ethics may be illustrated in one example. (JONAS, 1984, p. 10).

The human today, in order to protect himself from nature, he plays at being a god and places himself at the center of the world. With this, he finds himself capable of creating and developing elements never found in nature, transforming both mass into energy and radiation into material. This puts you in a place where past epochs were regarded as the deepest mystery of nature, and in the not-so-distant future, the uncovering of how to create and recreate the miracle of life may be a reality.

Since his productivity was seen in the image of a Creator-God, so that where God creates *ex nihilo*, man creates out of given substance, human productivity was by definition bound to result in a Promethean revolt because it could erect a man-made world only after destroying part of God created nature. (ARENDR, 1998, p. 139).

Philosophy, then, changes its conception of how to think in terms of universalities. Thus, there is no longer room for the discussion between heaven and earth, but between the human and the universe. The focus is between understanding the individual who occupies a place on earth and the universal laws of nature that govern the planet.

Instead of the old dichotomy between earth and sky we have a new one between man and the universe, or between the capacities of the human mind for understanding and the universal laws which man can discover and handle without true comprehension. (ARENDR, 1998, p. 270).

By observing nature, science elaborates its investigation from the observed data, and thus, also like nature, science needs not only to copy the effects of nature, but also to develop instruments that help it in this task. "As the maker of instruments and machines that come to his assistance, *homo faber* has created a world on the basis of mediations whose qualities have always been conceived exclusively in an anthropocentric sense." (BACH, 2018, p. 273).

1 The distinction between labor and fabrication - the role of *homo faber*

The products of fabrication are not simply available as are those collected from nature. For example, both a fruit from a tree and the feedstock

for manufacturing are from nature, but extracting a mineral resource is different from picking a fruit from your backyard. "It is characteristic of all natural processes that they come into being without the help of man, and those things are natural which are not "made" but grow by themselves into whatever they become." (ARENDT, 1998, p. 150). In this way, the raw material extracted from the inside of the earth, as in the case of iron or coal, is itself, at that moment of extraction, a product of human hands, because when it is removed from its environment, there is an interruption of the natural process of which it was a part. "In all these instances, we changed and denaturalized nature for our own worldly ends, so that the human world or artifice on one hand and nature on the other remained two distinctly separate entities." (ARENDT, 1998, p. 148). *Homo faber*, as Arendt names him, is, in this way, a kind of destroyer of the planet, that is, he behaves as the master of the Earth and as its creator, since, in order to produce his products, he takes his raw material from the environment. He can only build a world by destroying part of it, which already exists independently of his hands, namely nature.

This element of violation and violence is present in all fabrication, and *homo faber*, the creator of the human artifice, has always been a destroyer of nature. The *animal laborans*, which with its body and the help of tame animals nourishes life, may be the lord and master of all living creatures, but he still remains the servant of nature and the earth; only *homo faber* conducts himself as lord and master of the whole earth. (ARENDT, 1998, p. 139).

The violation of nature is one of the characteristics of the difference between the concepts of manufacturing and work according to Arendt, because, for this thinker, work requires a harmony between the worker's body and the environment. Therefore, there is an effort by the farmer, for example, to cultivate the land in order to harvest its fruits. However, the maker's joy is not his care for the environment, but his effort to multiply his

tools beyond the reach of his physical body. Thus, the products of human hands are exalted by their makers for not being fruits of the environment, although they would not all exist if they were not extracted from nature.

Another characteristic of fabrication is to build your object according to an image, an imagetic model that is a draft, which passes through the mind's eye of the *homo faber* and materializes in your product. “Alone with his image of the future product, *homo faber* is free to produce, and again facing alone the work of his hands, he is free to destroy.” (ARENDR, 1998, p. 144). This image of the future product is outside of him, for it precedes him as the contemplative process of production. It does not disappear with the finished product, but precedes it and remains intact, ready to serve again as a model for another makers.

Having a beginning and a predictable end are also steps in the manufacturing process, because the end is inherent and happens when a durable and entirely new object is put into the world. In this way it is added to the human artifice of already existing products and artifacts. Thus, by market demand, new products are multiplied by the manufacturing process. Labor, on the other hand, is hostage to the body's needs, and there is no way to tell its beginning, as well as its end. It is a continuous activity, and its products are to be consumed and do not have the same durability as the objects of manufacture. Therefore, to make tools for the workers and products for commerce are the goals of manufacturing, regardless of the cost to nature that this may cause; that is, everything must have an end and a usefulness in itself.

Human work, the goal or purpose of which always lies outside the activity itself, not only complements labor by making tools that are useful for easing it and rendering it more productive, but with them constructs an artificial world, an elaborate and changing cultural artifact as structurally complex and intricately contrived as the web of relationships that sensibly and legally binds those who live together within it. (KOHN, 2006, p. 124).

The human being, with modernity, became the measure of all things, and this distorted the manufacturing model of *homo faber*, which elected labor power and the consumption of its products as values for its production. The consequence of the invasion of this way of life and work in the manufacturing sphere has taken away from the human being the ability to produce artifacts with a certain durability and permanence in the world. This not only strengthened the development of a commercial society, but also favored the devaluation of nature and everything in it. In this way, *homo faber* suffered a significant loss with the modification of his manufacturing model sponsored by modernity, which began to use manufacturing only to develop products for the maintenance and permanence of life. As Robinson dos Santos points out, in the chapter, *O problema da técnica e a crítica à tradição na ética de Hans Jonas*, nature no longer holds an attribution of "dignity" and thus destruction is a characteristic precedent to its existence, i.e., "it is always seen as something that has no value in itself". (SANTOS, 2011. p. 31).

In this way, one of the results made possible by the constant improvement of tools and products elaborated by *homo faber* for the comfort and usefulness of the human being was the extension of the population's life expectancy with a greater aging between generations.

Having to die is bound up with having been born: mortality is but the other side of the perennial spring of "natality" (to use Hannah Arendt's term). This had always been ordained; now its meaning has to be pondered in the sphere of decision. (JONAS, 1984, p. 19).

Therefore, *homo faber* is not indifferent to the possibility of intervening in the human genes of the next generations, an ambition very characteristic of his profile, which always aims to have in his hands the evolution of his species and, thus, to modify or improve it according to his own project. "Whether we have the right to do it, whether we are qualified for that creative role, is the most serious question that can be posed to man

finding himself suddenly in possession of such fateful powers.” (JONAS, 1984, p. 21).

Jonas' defense consists in being responsible not for a certain human future, but for an idea of humanity, which requires an incorporation and a presence in the world, which, at the actual moment, is threatened by the constant interference in nature and in the planet's life cycle. Therefore, the responsibility for the next generations needs to be assumed now in the present, because the human being has exceeded the boundaries of the employment of his technique, and *techne*, which was previously used only in the non-human field, today takes on the role of remanufacturing its own inventor.

In the image he entertains of himself – the programmatic idea which determines his actual being as much as it reflects it – man now is evermore the maker of what he has made and the doer of what he can do, and most of all the preparer of what he will be able to do next. (JONAS, 2006, p. 43).

2 The knowledge and the technique

For Arendt, in the modern era, fabrication broke the stable cycle between the producer and his product, which was, until then, the valid model of production, because it put the *homo faber* to produce exclusively objects to facilitate human beings' daily life and work. This old way of manufacturing objects only took from nature the raw material for the manufacture of its products. However, the new manufacturing model, influenced by modernity, started not only to take, but also to create and develop elements that, until then, did not exist in nature.

This stage can no longer be described in terms of a gigantic enlargement and continuation of the old arts and crafts, and it is only to this world that the categories

of *homo faber*, to whom every instrument is a means to achieve a prescribed end, no longer apply. For here we no longer use material as nature yields it to us, killing natural processes or interrupting or imitating them. (ARENDR, 1998, p. 148).

Thus, the innovations that came from the modern era changed an entire conception of manufacturing, in which the products produced became mere results of the investigation of a process that became more and more complicated and distant from everyone's general knowledge. The human being, as builder and fabricator, became the greatest emblem of modernity and, with this, began to wonder no longer about "why" or "what" nature is, but rather "how" the unknown elements and effects exist in the universe.

If it should turn out to be true that knowledge (in the modern sense of know-how) and thought have parted company for good, then we would indeed become the helpless slaves, not so much of our machines as of our know-how, thoughtless creatures at the mercy of every gadget which is technically possible, no matter how murderous it is. (ARENDR, 1998, p. 3).

Martin Heidegger, Arendt's professor and with whom the author had a confiding relationship, between love, separation and close friendship also illustrates a bit more the distinction between modern technique and its earlier version. As the German philosopher explains through the example of the farmer, who had a protective relationship with nature, of care, of preparation for production and not of seeing the field as a source of resources for food production. Arendt, in turn, makes a differentiation between the work with the field and manufacturing. For the author, the cultivation of the soil is in the realm of necessity, that is, in labor, in daily work. Fabrication, on the other hand, is intended for the production of artifacts that are independent from their producers and that do not need to be cultivated for them to have their durability and permanence in the world. According to Jardim's interpretation,

Heidegger observed that contemporary technique is not just a specific sector of experience, but is a principle that governs the understanding and organization of all human life today. The fact that humanity comes to follow and favor only what is revealed in technique, and to take from it all its parameters and measures, constitutes the real danger present in today's world. Heidegger is not an enemy of technique. His philosophy does not express a repudiation of the present world, but rather engages in a task of elucidation. He also considers the possibility of man changing his relationship with technical things. Instead of subordinating himself to technical criteria, Heidegger inquires into the possibility of maintaining a serene relationship with technique. (JARDIM, 2011, p. 106).

For Heidegger (2007), technique, with modernity, loses its sense of "bringing forward" the manufacture of objects and becomes a constant challenge of nature. This has put technique in a position of exploitation of nature, that is, it has been employed for specific purposes, such as, for example, in the construction of hydroelectric power plants, which, by interrupting the flow of rivers and damming their waters, generates energy for human consumption. However, although modern technique still retains the characteristic of its "revealing", it has become something of a challenge in the constant exploration of natural resources.

The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging [*Herausfordern*], which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such. But does this not hold true for the old windmill as well? No. Its sails do indeed turn in the wind; they are left entirely to the wind's blowing. But the windmill does not unlock energy from the air currents in order to store it. (HEIDEGGER, 1977, p. 14).

For the German philosopher, the relationship between knowledge and understanding is intrinsic in the technique prior to modernity. In this way, for the author, revealing is translated by what is not produced by itself; therefore, it can have one form and another, depending on the source material and on the builder who will shape the product. However, the thinker's emphasis is not on making the object, but on bringing it forward, on its appearance. This, for Heidegger, signifies the independence of technique from the relation of means and ends, for it is through production that the effect of appearing, that is, of the act of withdrawing from concealment takes place. Thus, the movement of bringing something forward is called by Heidegger as *unhousing*. Therefore, technique is a human activity and, as such, designates both the relations of producing artifacts for everyday use and works of art.

Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing. If we give heed to this, then another whole realm for the essence of technology will open itself up to us. It is the realm of revealing, i.e., of truth. This prospect strikes us as strange. Indeed, it should do so, should do so as persistently as possible and with so much urgency that we will finally take seriously the simple question of what the name "technology" means. (HEIDEGGER, 1977, p. 12).

However, if the user is the highest of ends and the measure of all things, then not only is nature seen as a worthless brute mass, but also the products of manufacture themselves, because everything becomes a mere means to other ends. Thus, there is an appreciation of the means and a devaluation of the end, because the production process is the protagonist and not the product, which becomes a mere result of the process. Thus, the new challenge posed to *homo faber* is to understand the processes that take place in nature so that, by the fragmentation of nature, he will be able to know them and then fabricate them.

The trouble is only — or so it seems now — that while man can do things from a "universal," absolute standpoint, what the philosophers had never deemed possible, he has lost his capacity to think in universal, absolute terms, thus realizing and defeating at the same time the standards and ideals of traditional philosophy. (ARENDDT, 1998, p. 270).

The process of how life happens became the object of research of fabrication, and both nature and the universe became hostages of a human knowledge only understandable through the hands of *homo faber*, which by the fragmentation of the parts tries to discover the meaning of everything that exists. Therefore, a change no longer in the question of "being" but in the question of "process", because it is the nature of "being" to reveal itself and appear. The "process", on the other hand, is to remain invisible. Its existence is only perceived by some specific phenomena (HEIDEGGER, 2007). The process of the fabrication is submerged within the final product of the fabrication, yet knowing how it happens is not comprehensible to all by the final product. Therefore, it is characteristic of *homo faber* through the process of fabrication to say of the existence of its objects, since, it is through this concept that artifacts are manufactured in the world. "Processes, therefore, and not ideas, the models and shapes of the things to be, become the guide for the making and fabricating activities of *homo faber* in the modern age." (ARENDDT, 1998, p. 300).

In this way, there is an appreciation of the medium, that is, the process of how things come into existence in the world. Modern science, for example, investigates the world, not by itself, as a final product, but as a process in constant transformation. Thus, the ready-made artifact loses its protagonism in the wake of manufacturing and becomes a mere result of production processes. "We will, as we say, "get" technology "spiritually in hand." We will master it. The will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatens to slip from human control." (HEIDEGGER, 1977, p. 5). In this way, the mechanistic vision of *homo faber* serves to reveal natural processes through their fragmentation, in order to know them and then fabricate them.

The direct consequence of this new perspective on fabrication is to decrease the production of artifacts for everyday life and work and to increase research on what happens both in the environment and in the universe. Therefore, in order to know about nature and the cosmos, human beings need to know how to manufacture them, that is, how they work, so that they can later, in their laboratories, be able to reproduce the investigated effects. Knowledge is now the victim of its own hands, for it is only known when it is done. Therefore, in modernity, knowledge is no longer contemplated, but produced, and this changes the space of the image of *homo faber*, who searches, in introspection, in his conscience, for the model of the product that will be manufactured.

The results yielded by introspection, the only method likely to deliver certain knowledge, are in the nature of movements: only the objects of the senses remain as they are and endure, precede and survive, the act of sensation; only the objects of the passions are permanent and fixed to the extent that they are not devoured by the attainment of some passionate desire; only the objects of thoughts, but never thinking itself, are beyond motion and perishability. (ARENDR, 1998, p. 300).

In fact, distrust in data and trust in production led human consciousness to search for a balance point between knowledge and fabrication. Thus, *homo faber's* mode of production meant not only an introspection of the world through scientific experiments, but a break with contemplation. This caused a break in the way history was interpreted until now, because, in ancient philosophy, there was no opposition between fabrication and contemplation, they did not oppose each other; on the contrary, the fabricator needed to resort to the space of ideas in order to elaborate his artifact. That is, the human needed contemplation to be able to produce his products, which, when contemplated by the mind's eye, showed the images of future products. It was through this representation that he built his artifact, and not through introspection. Following Jardim's interpretation

For Hannah Arendt, alienation constitutes the main characteristic of modern mentality. Its most dramatic manifestation consists in man's flight from the world into himself. The next step in this historical journey will consider the specific subject of this seminar - the making. The Modern Age was inaugurated with a suspicion of the receptive capacity of truth. Everything that is immediately given is subject to mistrust. But if we cannot receive truth, are we then unable to construct it? The affirmative answer to this question set the course for Western civilization in the following centuries. The contemplative attitude was discredited and active forms of relating to reality, especially productive activity, were elevated to a superior position. The figure of the *homo faber* was emphasized to the detriment of all other images of man. (JARDIM, 2011, p. 114).

A contemplation that, for classical antiquity, is not translated by words, but a space of the mind that allows one to see the models for fabrication. This image is thus a reference, but not a product of the human mind, because it exists independent of the human being. When he begins to materialize this mental figure, there is a break from contemplation. This means that when he starts to produce there is a break in contemplation. Therefore, the human being participates in the eternity of the image only when he absolves himself from making it real, and even if the object being contemplated is fabricated, he does not eliminate the perfect image that is in the contemplation and thus outside of him.

Therefore, the proper attitude toward the models which guide work and fabrication, that is, toward Platonic ideas, is to leave them as they are and appear to the inner eye of the mind. If man only renounces his capacity for work and does not do anything, he can behold them and thus participate in their eternity. (ARENDR, 1998, p. 303).

Through this kind of contemplation, the philosophical tradition of antiquity wanted humans to realize that the beautiful and the eternal cannot simply be fabricated by their hands. However, *homo faber* has, in his essence, the ability to manufacture artifacts, and the space of contemplation was his learning refuge to later materialize his visions.

Thus, with modernity, the human turns inward to himself and to his sensations of pain and pleasure which are the fruits of modern introspection. This posits a modern hedonism marked not by pleasure, but by pain and its subtraction, because pleasure only exists there as fear of pain. "For this philosophy, "hedonism" is even more of a misnomer than for the epicureanism of late antiquity, to which modern hedonism is only superficially related." (ARENDR, 1998, p. 309). This greater emphasis of modernity on pain has led humans to take refuge within themselves in order to escape from it. This escape flows from the painful feeling of living in the world. Thus, the removal of human beings from their worldly cover and the search for security within themselves became the way modernity used to imprison human relationships inside the modern individual.

The easier that life has become in a consumers' or laborers' society, the more difficult it will be to remain aware of the urges of necessity by which it is driven, even when pain and effort, the outward manifestations of necessity, are hardly noticeable at all. The danger is that such a society, dazzled by the abundance of its growing fertility and caught in the smooth functioning of a never-ending process, would no longer be able to recognize its own futility. (ARENDR, 1998, p.135).

The ancients relied on imagination and memory to tell about happiness, while the moderns use the play relationship between pain and pleasure. "In other words, the ultimate standard of measurement is not utility and usage at all, but "happiness," that is, the amount of pain and pleasure experienced in the production or in the consumption of things." (ARENDR, 1998, p. 309). The desire was to put not happiness as the main point in

modern societies, but the maintenance of individual life through the pleasure of the body and its sensations, without any form of critical reflection on the behavior of human beings in the world; an individual equation focused on the life of the human species and not on humanity. Soon, through the metabolic process between humans and nature, there are the bodily processes that serve to put the external world back in contact with men; a living organism that needs the incorporation and consumption of what exists outside of it.

3 Artifacts, the means and the ends - the escape from the work of art

The fabrication of objects turned only to consumption causes the product to lose its independence and durability. This transforms everything that exists into means to other ends, and thus a scenario of overvaluation of the human and his needs is installed. The Greeks already drew attention to this misrepresentation of the world and nature, resulting from the anthropocentrism that places the human as the highest being in relation to the world and nature. In this way, this producer of artifacts interprets everything that exists as a means to the ends he and his user desire.

The point of the matter is that Plato saw immediately that if one makes man the measure of all things for use, it is man the user and instrumentalizer, and not man the speaker and doer or man the thinker, to whom the world is being related. And since it is in the nature of man the user and instrumentalizer to look upon everything as means to an end — upon every tree as potential wood — this must eventually mean that man becomes the measure not only of things whose existence depends upon him but of literally everything there is. (ARENDDT, 1998, p. 158).

Plato knew that considering everything that exists as a means opens up an infinite range of possibilities between means and ends. For example,

for the sphere of fabrication, the end of carpentry is the chair, and its utility is only conceivable when it is a means for the exchange or comfort of those who use it. Thus, a community of makers values the idea of usefulness of their utensils for use. On the other side, the commercialization of these artifacts shows their utility in the purchase and sale of these products. Therefore, it is by reason of what is useful that the *homo faber* judges and produces an artifact, however, by the entanglement of means and ends that the utilitarian works, “in other words, utility established as meaning generates meaninglessness”. (ARENDR, 1998, p. 154). In other words, the fabricator thinks only by means and ends, and this is his exercise with production, he is unable to understand another meaning that does not participate in this instrumental and utilitarian relationship. In this way, there is no possibility of putting an end to the relationship between means and ends that fabrication exposes, because the only way out is to point to a determined object with an end in itself.

Fabrication, but not action or speech, always involves means and ends; in fact, the category of means and ends derives its legitimacy from the sphere of making and fabricating where a clearly recognizable end, the final product, determines and organizes everything that plays a part in the process - the material, the tools, the activity itself, and even the persons participating in it; they all become mere means toward the end and they are justified as such. Fabricators cannot help regarding all things as means to their ends or, as the case may be, judging all things by their specific utility. (ARENDR, 1961, p. 216).

The way out is to seek, in the subjectivity of use, the meaning that is proper, because its absence is a mark in this world of artifacts. Only in the anthropocentric world, is the human the final purpose, which ends the unlimited range of means and ends. However, an impasse appears, if the user is the greatest of ends and the measure of all things, then not only is nature seen as a worthless raw mass that is subject to intervention, now the

objects that come from production lose their importance and become simple means to other ends.

The goal of *homo faber's* anthropocentrism, and its disorientation between means and ends, makes the human the supreme end and subjugates all of nature to it. This leads to the degradation of both the environment and the world, extorting, from all that exists, dignified independence. However, not even Kant can take the blindfolds off *homo faber* from the end in itself, although manufacturing alone is capable of producing a world, which is as worthless as its raw material, only means to various other ends.

Now I say that the human being and in general every rational being exists as an end in itself, not merely as a means to be used by this or that will at its discretion; instead he must in all his actions, whether directed to himself or also to other rational beings, always be regarded at the same time as an end. (KANT, 1998, p. 37).

However, objects that are fruits of art have peculiarities different from other objects of fabrication and escape this logic of means and ends. The independence and durability of art objects are free from the consumption process, since, only because they have a form, there is the possibility of considering them as artifacts existing in the world. This means that all objects, be they objects of use, of consumption or of art, have a form to appear in the world, that is, they are all products of the space of fabrication and, thus, fruits of the hands of *homo faber*.

However, the uniqueness of works of art is the guarantee of their existence, in the fact that, regardless of its utility or not, its role as an art object in the world and in human relations gives it existence. These artifacts belong to the artistic universe, they are objects made by the artist, who is just like *homo faber*, a builder of human artifice. There is no way to use a work of art. It escapes this kind of relationship and is outside this practical context of use and consumption. Its space in the world is not given by everyday relations, nor by the needs and wants of its owners. There is no

way to ask about its uselessness or usefulness; this question has no answer for art. It resists this inquiry, just as it has survived its connection to religion.

These characteristics of the work of art make it the most mundane artifact of all, and its continuity transcends the unattainable. There is no purpose that demarcates its identity as in other objects. For example, the chair, primarily, has the function of serving as a rest for the body. The artistic artifact, however, goes beyond this relationship of subjection, and meaning, to the human, in other words,

Among the things which do not occur in nature but only in the man-made world, we distinguish between use objects and art works, both of which possess a certain permanence ranging from ordinary durability to potential immortality in the case of works of art. As such, they are distinguished from consumer goods on one hand, whose duration in the world scarcely exceeds the time necessary to prepare them, and, on the other hand, from the products of action, such as events, deeds, and words, all of which are in themselves so transitory that they would hardly survive the hour or day they appeared in the world, if they were not preserved first by man's memory, which weaves them into stories, and then through his fabricating abilities. (ARENDR, 1961, p. 209).

The superiority of art over all other artifacts is due that it has a relationship that goes beyond time, an essential and caricatured characteristic of this artistic universe. There are no other objects made by human hands that hold such permanence and transcend the boundaries of mortality like artistic objects. Moreover, art institutes a permanent dwelling for its admirers, an immortality not through life or soul, but to be touched and sharpened by the human senses. The artifacts of the work of art possess a durability far superior to the other artifacts of manufacture and thus remain in the world much longer than the others. They are thus the most mundane of objects. They are also unique in that they have no function in the human life process, as Arendt points out.

Moreover, they are the only things without any function in the life process of society; strictly speaking, they are fabricated not for men, but for the world which is meant to outlast the life-span of mortals, the coming and going of the generations. Not only are they not consumed like consumer goods and not used up like use objects; they are deliberately removed from the processes of consumption and usage and isolated against the sphere of human life necessities. This removal can be achieved in a great variety of ways; and only where it is done does culture, in the specific sense, come into being. (ARENDR, 1961, p. 209).

Art has the ability to make its observers think, unlike exchange and negotiation that do not cease to be human categories, but its focus is on consumption and use. The artistic work, being an attribute owned by man and not by the world, creates a relationship that involves feelings, which are personified in the artistic object. The exchange and greed are for use, for the needs and wants of the body. These artifacts draw on their relationship with human beings to create their meaning in the world. By being open to the world, artworks free the individual from the prison barred on himself.

The work of art places its reification beyond the modification, the transfiguration of the object. Its space is the field of thinking, yet it does not stop being a product, for making artifacts for the world, such as: music, sculptures, books, and others. The metamorphosis of art's compositions is in the thought that succeeds it, giving it an empirical consistency, molding an object that will exist, that is, like handicrafts that, through the production process, make durable objects for human artifacts. (ARENDR, 2011b) It is through the dead lyrics of music that the spirit lives and survives, creating a resurrection process; it is like a cycle of life and death in which it is tied to the subjectivity of the appreciator or the artist who, searches in the sphere of art, the inspiration for his creations.

Concluding remarks

It is the fabricator who produces the instrumentality and the deterioration of the planet; thus the loss of value and independence is not only of the products of fabrication, but also of the nature that exists without and prior to this means of producing artifacts. The problem is not instrumentality, as the use of means to an end, but the act of generalizing the *homo faber* experience, in which usefulness and utility are the ultimate criteria for both life and the planet. This is something inherent to the human being, for the experience of means and ends, as it is for the fabrication, does not end with the product, but remains while it is being handled. The instrumentalization of the Earth and the devaluation of everything that is given generate a meaninglessness in which the end is transformed into means, and this process is only broken when the human being places himself as lord and master of everything, the only one with an end in himself.

With the manufacture of objects only for use, these artifacts become only means, just like the organic cycle of life, which assumes the role of commander of the instrumentalization of everything that exists without any barrier. The human is the only one who exists independently, because he is not a means to other goals, the singular inhabitant of the globe who is free to wish to surpass even the cosmic laws; the environment around him is just a piece that will make this dream possible.

The Greeks were attentive to this devaluation of nature and, also, to the danger of anthropocentrism of having the human as the highest being. Plato's speech against Protagoras is an example of this Hellenic alertness, because the measurement of all artifacts by the griffin of utility makes the *homo faber* and its user the center of the world, and not the political agent or the thinker. Therefore, they interpret everything as means to certain ends and not just the objects that depend on it, "literally everything there is" (ARENDR, 1998, p. 158).

The human, by Protagoras' line, is the only one who escapes from the means-and-ends relationship, and he is the only one capable of using everything as a means. A ruler as *homo faber* considers everything at his

disposal, that is, objects of use. In this way, the wind would no longer mean a natural force that exists by itself, but a human need to cool and move mills.

In order to be what the world is always meant to be, a home for men during their life on earth, the human artifice must be a place fit for action and speech, for activities not only entirely useless for the necessities of life but of an entirely different nature from the manifold activities of fabrication by which the world itself and all things in it are produced. We need not choose here between Plato and Protagoras, or decide whether man or a god should be the measure of all things; what is certain is that the measure can be neither the driving necessity of biological life and labor nor the utilitarian instrumentalism of fabrication and usage. (ARENDDT, 1998, p. 173).

The loss of the distinction between means and ends leads to the unification between the worker's body and his tool, in which labor acts as this uniting force, a rhythmic coordination between workers that become, with modernity, agglomerated in large factories of mass production. This blurs the distinction between the worker and his tool, and work is marked by effort rather than by product. The rhythm of the work stop swallows up, through repetitive motion and the use of machines, the body, and the tool, for it is this mechanical artifice that is confused with the human body. And, then, this artificial movement assumes the role of regent of this cycle. This is reflected today in the relationship between cell phones and the extension of the physical body of their users.

There is no denying that, throughout history, individuals have always been adapting to the different contexts that presented themselves, and both the tools and their hands have helped them in these changes. However, with machines, there is a different case, because they require workers to serve them and put their bodies in tune with their cadence. The

tools are like servants to the human hands, whereas the electronic devices drive the body until they can fully supply it.

There is, therefore, a difference between machines and the body, which, with the contemporary digital age, has become invisible, as life, work, and the relationships between human beings become more and more adjusted to electronic devices and their applications. Soon, a reflection of an old dream of *homo faber* began to materialize by placing humanity and its existence within mechanical forms that can condition and predict human actions. A boldness that not even nature and its human lethal effects could promote.

The contemporary world, by choosing this digital model of consumption and disposable products, puts in jeopardy not only its permanence, but also that of all inhabitants of the planet. However, this does not mean, neither for Arendt nor for Jonas, that the destiny of humanity is traced and determined for a near end, even because the human being constantly changes its position, that is, its moral order of construction of values is continuously in transformation - this is the hope. "I do not believe, that we can stabilize the situation, which we have been in since the 17th century, in any irrevocable way". (ARENDR, 2012, p. 148).

Referências

AGUIAR, Odílio Alves. Condição humana e educação em Hannah Arendt. *Revista Educação e Filosofia*, Uberlândia, v. 2, n. 44, p.23-42, jul./dez. 2008. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14393/REVEDFIL.v22n44a2008-1965>.

ARENDR, Hannah. *Das Urteilen: Texte zu Kants Politischer Philosophie*. München: Piper Verlag, 1998.

ARENDR, Hannah. *A condição Humana*. Trad. Roberto Raposo. Revisão técnica Adriano Correia. 11. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 2011a.

ARENDT, Hannah. *Entre o passado e o futuro*. Trad. Mauro W. Barbosa; São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2011b.

BACH, Augusto. Hannah Arendt e a Conquista do Espaço. *Revista Educação e Filosofia*, Uberlândia, v. 32, n. 64, p. 265-286, jan./abr. 2018. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14393/REVEDFIL.issn.0102-6801.v32n64a2018-13>.

HEIDEGGER, Martin. *A questão da técnica*. Trad. Marco Aurélio Werle. *Scientiae Studia*, São Paulo, v. 5, n. 3, 2007. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1678-31662007000300006>.

JARDIM, Eduardo. *Homo Faber: o animal que tem mãos, na visão de Hannah Arendt*. In: PESSOA, Fernando; BARBOSA, Ronaldo (org.). *Mão de Obra: Homo Faber: o animal que tem mãos/ Seminários Internacionais Museu Vale*. Vila Velha, ES: Museu Vale, Fundação Vale, 2011.

JONAS, Hans. *O Princípio responsabilidade: uma ética para a civilização tecnológica*. Trad. Marijane Lisboa; Luiz Barros Montez. Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto, 2006.

KANT, Immanuel. *Fundamentação da Metafísica dos Costumes*. Tradução de Paulo Quintela. Lisboa: Edições 70, 2007.

KOHN, Jerome. *Liberdade: A prioridade da política*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

SANTOS, Robinson dos. *Ética para a civilização tecnológica: em diálogo com Hans Jonas*. Coordenadores Robinson dos Santos, Jelson Oliveira, Lourenço Zancanaro. São Paulo: Centro Universitário São Camilo, 2011.

Data de registro: 15/03/2022

Data de aceite: 26/10/2022