

Technology, Devices and Politics: The modus operandi of society in the XXI century based on electronic devices

Sonia Guggisberg

Doutoranda em Comunicação e Semiótica, pela PUC-SP
Programa de Estudos Pós –Graduados em Comunicação e Semiótica
Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo
São Paulo, Brasil

(Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa-FAPESP)

The twentieth century was marked by acute transformation of the social organization model, mainly due to the great development of technological communication objects. Driven by the war industry, much of the technological expertise was developed due to the pursuit of power and control of the masses. In addition to radio, film and television, home computers entered the market in the 1980s and in the 1990s, the popularization of mobile phones and web connections took over the contemporary scene.

With the emergence of new electronic devices, the cult of image was greatly stimulated and driven. The visual language began to be broadcast on a large scale to society and pulverized, reaching everyone. They began to be produced, not only for movies and TV, but also for the internet, mobile phones and tablets, expanding into different formats and adapting to the new devices. Although, with the expansion of small screens, the cinema has retreated in number of theaters, the image production "grew in its essence" (Lipovetsky, 2010), infiltrating all areas in a globalized manner. The expansion of the screens multiplied the existence of the image, setting a habit that has spread everywhere, among people and environments.

According to Lipovetsky (2010) it is important to emphasize that the immaterial and aesthetics production, through the image in movement has continued to emerge, it expanded and opened new frontiers. The cult of the visual and the spectacular, according to his words, "the spirit of cinema is what goes through, irrigates and feeds the other screens" (2010:23), it is as if the film industry was the matrix of this system.

This statement is due to the significant number of “screens scattered throughout all major cities of the world, permeating the culture, building a certain aesthetic, supporting or criticizing the politics, in the end, setting new standards of conduct for society as a whole.” Thus, “the spirit of the film industry accompanies globalization within society invaded by screens.” (Lipovetsky, 2010)

It becomes important to address the expansion of the use of the image in its context because it, as “matrix of this system,” drove toward the production of new electronic devices, built social habits, reconfiguring models and thoughts. One of the most significant and visible changes is the issue of physical displacement. There is no longer a need to travel to a society connected to the web as you can move everywhere on the globe without leaving your seat. Production increased, now reaching people individually on their computers and personal devices, and, the growing “image factory” throughout the world, began to determine, without much worry about the result, ethical and aesthetic, historical and social changes, reshaping society.

“The technique gave place to electronics and computing hypertechnology. The miniaturization of cameras, the appearance of cranes.. coming to change the very act of filming.” (Lipovetsky, 2010:48). These changes, which sought to explore new avenues of representation and creation, resulted in the change of “aesthetic of contemplation in benefit of a culture centered on sensation, simultaneity, immediacy and impact.” (2010:43).

The internet, the *largest media phenomenon of the 20th century, the only means of communication that in just four years would reach approximately 50 million people* (Wikipedia, 2012) brought the world into our homes, has opened a world of possibilities at work and in the personal life of every individual connected to the web. It changed our everyday life, also changing the relationship with oneself and the world. Thus *the Internet is, above all, a cultural creation.* (Manuel Castells, 2003).

Unfortunately sociocultural politics, coupled with the major technological breakthrough reinforced and endorsed the capitalist power structure, putting the production of profit and the accumulation of valuables as organizing principles of the 21st century. Capitalism has become more than a cultural regime and a mode of production. It transformed the life of society in a headlong rush for “success,” for the accumulation of wealth and for power. You could say that the information sent by the power of capitalism, pulverized by technological devices, and driven in all directions,

accelerated the pace of human life, so that society does not find more time to digest the rapidity of change. The time that counts is the real time, i.e. the time of the immediate and compulsive execution of communication via internet, the time of technology.

The speed of technology, far from the speed of human nature, is "embodied in the productive apparatus itself, in its internal dynamics, in its operational logic, in its infinite reproduction needs" (TRIVINHO, 2007: 91), enters the human life, violently, changing the sociocultural logic that governed until then. (TRIVINHO, 2007).

Society has adhered to this new speed of life, extending the human limit, to achieve the technological time. The motto is walk fast, finish soon, do more. Speed, being an invisible phenomenon, is not presented as a violence within the universe of the present time, there is no event, a real fact that can be documented, it is a continuous and daily violence, imposed by the accelerating pace of production, modifying the organizational logic of everyday life and the city. Speed has become a cultural process that drives itself, involves the entire contemporary civilization, moving everyone and everything, "it is what makes us act, makes us do, what makes us think" (BAUMAN, 2001: 95).

Technological development has brought enormous advances and improvements to contemporary society but also had consequences: it became a watershed. The dynamics in which human beings build the means and the means build the man is a two-way street, which practice brought gains and losses for society as a whole. The media, with full force to show and hide, to select, to increase or decrease the power of events, expanded by devices and became a great power mechanism in invisible space, probably the biggest. It built the current civilizational logic, pushed by the dispute at any cost, involved society in a process that made it see the world as the media universe wants it to be seen.

According to Baudrillard, "Nietzsche was right when he said that the human race, when turned over to its own projects, is capable of doubling its efforts, of doubling itself – or destroying itself." (2001:27)

The virtualization process of the means of communication through devices created more than an extension of the body, it created the extension in space, also becoming a tool of action. It can be said that the foundations of human coexistence in contemporary society, were remodeled in a path with no return. Today, the media

establishment of mass culture, the community and communicative means by which society is formed, obtains information and works, created a new logic of organization and has also become a mechanism for human modeling.

On the technological revolution, the changes and the new bases of human coexistence today, it is fit to include in this debate the colloquations of Mexican sociologist Pablo Gonzalez Casanova where he puts that intellectual workers, involved in the evolution of science, technology and knowledge, became great business strategists of power. And he says that this new way of life, guided by the means of communication through the web and devices, allowed a consensual way, virtually invisible, of domestication and human education. According to Casanova:

“the system of capitalist power, full of articulated structures in the contemporary world, was incremented by machines of communication, control, information, interacting directly with human behavior and linking, in a manner until then definite, the destiny of man and technological machines” (2004).

One consequence was the growth of invisible control, targeting the masses and the consequent weakening of the political power of society as a group. If a society is comprised of individuals who seek to understand what is happening in the world, in their country and in their city only through the means of mass communication, in fact they are molded, leveled by the information distributed by the devices. "These are the masses that do not gather anymore, effectively over time they tend to lose consciousness of their political power.” (Sloterdijk, 2000:22)

It is worth understood that, since society, as a group, lost its strength, individualized life gained space. With each passing day, more people are locked in their homes, their offices behind their computers working and communicating with the world, they do most of their day and your life, through the web.

According to Jean Baudrillard (2001) the conducted contemporary society becomes increasingly acquiescent and inert, in terms of group. "We are working on misinformation of our species through the nullification of the differences." And he puts that "through the school system, media, culture and mass information, unique beings become identical copies of each other. This is a type of cloning- social cloning, the industrial reproduction of things and people. "(2001:31) And he says," working up toward the mono thought.”

This process increases the social vulnerability offering favorable conditions for the

manipulative actions of the means of communication, politics and all the power that comes camouflaged in them. The violence of technological speed captures society, seeps and settles itself in everyday life, taming the senses, behavior and socialization. According to Paul Virilio (1996): “The violence of speed has become, simultaneously, the place and the law, the fate and destiny of the world”.

Seduced and moved, virtually convened, the community, without question, turns into a unified mass, both by the means and by the behavior and values of the new civilization logic.

The 21st century has brought many issues and many challenges at the same time. The instinct of insatiable property of capitalism and the technological speed made contemporary culture a production center of diversity, where the amount of daily information demands of society such a fast pace, that it does not find time to reflect on issues of their time. Progress has become faster than the ability of the population, in general, to adapt. The logic of accelerated production entered people's lives, was broadcast by the means of communication, invisibly, participating in the daily life of the population, but also in their free time, in their leisure time. In this fast movement, leisure time is no longer separated from work production and consumption time. The media world has reshaped the human being, space and time. And the speed in which we operate through virtual means of communication, today, without us travelling physically is the speed of light, i.e. 300,000 km/h and this is the speed that is required especially in big cities.

The tension between the new dynamics and issues such as free will, freedom and autonomy requires us to revise and transform our way of life. In this context, a constant review of concepts, gradually, is being translated and is sculpting the human of the 21st century in its new format. Integrated to smart devices, amplified in their body, in their work space and their time, the interfaces of technology, humans (in their nature) seek to grow in their physical and intellectual conditions, interfering and modifying all areas of society. They advance in strides to broaden their knowledge. With much dedication, imagination and enthusiasm, the human being engages and conforms to the new format of existence.

“The challenge for the 21st century is to rebalance the relationship between technology and society. We live in an age of technological overdevelopment and social and institutional overdevelopment. If we do not change as people and as a society, our extraordinary technological potential (possible source of unprecedented creativity) can become a source of self-destruction” (CASTELLS, 1999).

The challenge for the 21st century is to rebalance the relationship between technology and society. We live in an age of technological overdevelopment and social and institutional overdevelopment. If we do not change as people and as a society, our extraordinary technological potential (possible source of unprecedented creativity) can become a source of self-destruction” (2009:40) and he completes: “Today there is not a single moment in the lives of individuals that is not modeled, contaminated or controlled by some device.” (2009:42)

Within this process it is worth understanding the strong role of visible and invisible means of mass communication, in the construction of a collective thought and in its power to pulverize information to millions of people around the world simultaneously.

They are powerful devices, and with all their power of reach, could be used to summon the participation of society about changes or improvements of common interest. However, to bring about change and stimulate critical awareness it is necessary to develop intellectual quality, political will and social consciousness that is transmitted and taken to the population, it is necessary to value the production and pulverization of programs that value the differences, individualities, which create possibilities to include the excluded population in education, at work and in the development of critical thinking instead of stimulating blind and rampant consumption. Society grew and opened for technological breakthroughs in visual, sound, perceptual, scientific and communication fields, opening the door for a hybrid manner of creative and thought. Technology has spread to the trials going to explore atypical forms, new insights, revealing new horizons becoming also a way of thinking.

Bibliographic References

AGAMBEN, Giorgio. O que é contemporâneo? e outros ensaios. Trad. de Vinícius Nicastro Honesko. Chapecó: Argos, 2009.

AUGÉ, Marc. Não-lugares: introdução a uma antropologia da supermodernidade. São Paulo: Papyrus, 1994.

BAUDRILLARD, Jean. A ilusão vital. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2001.

BAUMAN, Zygmunt. Modernidade líquida. Trad.: Plínio Dentzien. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2001.

_____. O mal-estar da pós-modernidade. Trad.: Mauro Gama e Cláudia Martinelli Gama. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1998.

CASANOVA, Pablo Gonzalez. As novas ciências e as humanidades: da academia à política, 2004. Publicado no Brasil, em 2006, pela Boitempo Editorial.

CASTELLS, Manuel. O poder da identidade. A era da informação: economia, sociedade e cultura; v.2. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1999. Trad.: Klauss Brandini Gerhardt.

LIPOVETZKY, Gilles. O ecrã global. Lisboa: Edições 70, 2010. (Coleção Arte & Comunicação)

SANTOS, Boaventura de Souza; MENESES, Maria Paula (Org.). Epistemologias do Sul. São Paulo, Cortez, 2010.

SLOTERDIJK, Peter. No mesmo barco: ensaio sobre a hiperpolítica. Trad.: Cláudia Cavalcanti. São Paulo: Estação Liberdade, 1999.

_____. O desprezo das massas: ensaio sobre lutas culturais na sociedade moderna. Trad.: Cláudia Cavalcanti. São Paulo: Estação Liberdade, 2002.

TRIVINHO, Eugênio. A dromocracia cibercultural: lógica da vida humana na civilização mediática avançada. São Paulo: Paulus, 2007.