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RECTA RATIO AGIBILUM AS IMPERATIVE FOR ADVANCING HUMAN GOOD IN TECH AGE

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Abstract
Recta Ratio Agibilum (Right reason in action or right way of doing things) is a concept in Thomistic philosophy. It is an imperative for Advancing Human Good in Tech Age as it is clearly associated with the virtue of prudence and virtue ethics. It can therefore enhance an attempt to rationalize the deployment of technology in the pursuit of human good especially in this tech age. The pursuit of human good is a desideratum for the philosopher who must at all times engage his philosophical arsenal in defining, analyzing and redefining various human engagements and practices that affect the good of man. science and technology are in the forefront of affecting the destiny of man positively or negatively. In this tech age, emerging technologies are defining and redefining human life and its destiny in no small measure most times with a seeming unavoidable mixed feelings. Extant literatures have considered this problematic and have offered far reaching philosophical recommendations towards a solution by offering the principle of *recta ratio agibilum*. However, these literatures have missed the foundation that should ground the right and effective application of this principle which is the right conception of man. without the right conception of man, right production and consumption of technological goods will have no place – right conception leads to right action. Deploying the analytical and critical methods of philosophical investigation, I analyzed key concepts and critically engaged with certain arguments in relation to emerging technologies and their promises to deliver human goods. Thereafter, I argued and consequently recommended that right conception is part and parcel and in fact the foundation of the principle of *Recta Ratio Agibilum* that must effectively be engaged to pursue and secure human good in the tech age.

Keywords: Technology, Human Person, Human Dignity, Human Good, Rationality.

Introduction

As a meaning -making and meaning-giving being, man is constantly preoccupied with understanding his life, his environment, and nature so as to control it and advance his good. The first law of nature is self- preservation and man is living up to this calling. The business of understanding nature so as to subdue and control it for his good is after-all not a self-imposed project but a divine mandate. The book of Genesis chapter 1 verses 27-28 captures this mandate. It says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and

female created he them. And God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth". However, for man to subdue and have unfettered dominion, he has to understand nature. So, through science which is the systematic study of nature, man understands nature on one hand. On the other hand, through technology which is the application of science (or the knowledge of nature gained through science), man subdues and controls nature. Be that as it may, science and its application technology, as a human activity, has become both a blessing and a curse to man. Can man stop his curiosity to know? The answer may be a No. It is in the nature of man to want to know what he does not know. Pursuit of knowledge therefore is natural with man. But can and should man control the application of what he knows? The answer is Yes. But this is not always easy. His curiosity to know is also always extended to a curiosity to see the practical effect of his knowledge. Here, theory and praxis coalesce.

Man's good is a natural project that requires his uncompromised attention. Embedded in technology is the capacity to unleash both the physical and spiritual faculties of man for his integrated wellness. But man must see this inherent and intrinsic capacity and cautiously guide himself in the effort to harness it for his good. This is the ontic-ontological nexus in the techno culture. The good of man is the aim of technology. This good is both material and spiritual and not material alone. Attempt to define man's good from a material perspective alone perpetuates a truncated vision of man's good and does disservice to his dignity. Thus, the rationality of technology is the service of man's good both material and spiritual. Herein lies the good of technology. Thus, the good of technology is measured in and by the good of man. However, to what extent has emerging technologies conduced themselves to this rationality and destiny of man? No doubt, technology has made human life different in various ways and in many respects. It has genuinely transformed human life by giving us easy access to a world of possibilities, a wealth of "how-to" and "do-it-yourself" information in almost anything (O'Brien 33). We can therefore say that technology is a partner in progress in the project of humanizing. However, how successful is technology in this regard? The transformation it has given human life is both positive and negative. Advanced technology has the ontological potential to alter the definition of what it means to be a human life. In fact, there is no end to this as more advances in technology further brings about the definition and understanding of the human person that is farther distinct from the relatively stable conception of humanity that has held sway for many years. Consequently, the understanding of human dignity is also affected.

The good of technology must be appraised based on how it is both efficient and humanizing on one hand, and how it is effective and dignifying on the other hand (UNESCO 197-209). Man must be the focus of this appraisal, being both the producer and consumer of technology. To achieve the good of man in these respects, I engage with the principle of *Recta Ratio Agibilium*. *Recta ratio agibilium* is a Latin phrase that translates roughly to "the proper reason or principle of things that can be done" or "the correct principle of the things that are possible to be done". It is the correct or rational way to approach a task or to execute something. It is the rational or moral principle governing what is permissible or feasible to be carried out. I argue that this principle will only be effective in guiding the right production and consummation of technology if founded on or grounded by the right and adequate conception and understanding of the human person.

Understanding Technology

Technology is as old as the human race. It has been with us since life began for people have had needs and always have devised means of meeting their needs. In the Stone Age, people made tools out of stone, wood, bone etc. In the Bronze Age, bronze was made by man out of copper and tin. While in the Iron Age, man -made mine and used iron. These helped people to farm the land and provided food for themselves. So, technology is not to be understood only in terms of modern technology i.e the age of computers, complex machines, space shuttles, AI and Automation. Technology is the way people use resources to meet their wants and needs. For example people have invented beds to meet their need for comfortable sleep. They have invented refrigerators and stoves to meet their needs for storing and cooking food. They have invented cars, buses, trains and Air Planes to meet their need to move from one place to another (Fales et al 20).

If science is an attempt by man to understand the physical world, technology then, is an attempt by him to control the world (Obioha, *Ethics of Science and Technology* 62). T.M Smith conceives technology as "embracing a variety of practical activities that provide goods and services for man's use, enjoyment and welfare. Manufacturing, transportation, communication, the raising and processing of foods and the conversion of energy into usable forms are typical 20th century technological activities especially as they involve the application of scientific understanding of natural phenomena and are complex, highly skilled and technical in operation (967). If culture is the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempt to meet the challenges of living in their environment, technology therefore, is an integral part of the contents of the culture of people for we cannot talk of technology without making mention of culture. To this end, Fadahunsi adumbrates that technology derives from the non -material content and is built up as a people put together their knowledge, compare it and profit from one another's experience and interpretation (19). In the same vein, Walter Brugger defines technology as "the methodical utilization resources and forces to take care of man's needs" (411). Brugger is not alone in this, Kranzberg maintains that technology refers to all the ways man uses his inventions and discoveries to satisfy his needs and desires (58). The above definitions show that the knowledge acquired from science and technology is directed at solving human problem. However, George McLlean asserts that:

> The blossom of modern technology has generated with its habitual reaction of contrasting the spiritual with the material , technology then assumes the place of applied materialism but although, technology appears representative of the purely material, there is a general recognition of the fact that it is man who through his spiritual and intellectual power creates technology (McLean 11).

Be that as it may, technology does not and should not stand aloof of man. it should not be the judge of its own. Its rationality is inclusive and not exclusive of man's well-being and progress (Obioha, *Ethics of Science and Technology* 62). This goes to confirm Nwoko's argument that "technology has rationality, which is not only of its meaning but also is the goal of its progress. The rationality must have its basis on the rationality which defines man himself and the rationality which defines the mode of his action or activity" (Nwoko 107).

Understanding the Human Person

Is human person a being with intrinsic dignity or a mere machine? Yes, the human person is a being with intrinsic dignity. He is an individual with a unique sense of self, feelings and experiences, and who is considered a moral subject. The human person emphasizes the individual's inherent value and dignity. The human dignity tradition believes that humans, by their very nature, are valuable in ways that are both quantitatively and qualitatively different

from other creatures (O'Brien 34; Johnson 23-37). This conception of the human person is the basis for the idea of fundamental human rights principles, social justice and all other democratic principles and structures to the effect that all humans share a dignity that is equal and inviolable. A recognition of this intrinsic worth of man saves him from a life that is solitary, brutish, nasty, short and poor. Western conception of human dignity has its theological root in the creation stories of Genesis. Account of creation in Genesis presents man as the climax of God's creative activities. Genesis affirms that man is created to resemble God. Genesis 1:26-28 has it thus: "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping things that creeps upon the earth; so God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. God blessed them and said unto them, be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth and subdue it ; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth".

The potential for dominion inherent in man's being is also manifested in man's power to make choice. The power to make choice comes with the potential for evil. With man, evil enters the world and he stands the danger of being gravely punished. Giving the dignity of man and how important he is to God, Jesus Christ was sent by God to redeem man from eternal damnation. Furthermore, the dignity of man is reflected in Mathew 6:25-34 in which Jesus reminds his followers that every hair on their heads is counted and known by God and that God cares for humans more than he cares for other creatures. O'Brien captures this line of thought when he stated that "Jesus reinforces the notion of human dignity by taking a special interest in the poor and explicitly choosing to live, preach and minister to the poor rather than associate with social peers and the upper class". According to O'Brien, "Jesus' preferential association with the poor highlights the truth that it is human nature and not wealth or social status that gives humans value in the eyes of God" (35). Apart from theological rendition of human dignity, philosophers across ages and traditions, have conceived man as having inherent dignity and worth. Gabriel Marcel alludes to this in his existential thought on "being and Having" that our being is much more important than what we have because we first exist before we have. He therefore, advises that man should be treated for who he is than for what he has (233). Immanuel Kant in his "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals" advanced a theory of human dignity. This is expressed in his categorical imperatives. For Kant, the ethical foundation of all actions lies in whether such action could be tolerated by other rational creatures in all other conceivable settings. This is the principle of universalizability as a yardstick for judging an action moral or not. In his second formulation of the categorical imperative, known as the formula of Humanity, he advised: Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means", Kant advances the intrinsic worth/dignity of the human person and counsels that people should be respected for their own sake, not just what they can provide. For Kant, it is wrong to use people solely for personal gain without considering their autonomy and dignity. Kant's message is that every human person has an inherent worth from the very fact that they are rational creatures.

African humanism locates the dignity of the human person in the fact that the human soul is a spark of the divine. African humanism constitutes all human beings into one universal family of humankind having the same father God. This idea is expressed by an Akan maxim: "All human beings are children of God; no one is a child of the earth" (Gyekye 155). This claim is based on the belief that there must be something intrinsically valuable in God: the human being considered a child of God, presumably by reason of having been created by God and having in his or her nature some aspect of God, ought also to be held as of intrinsic value, worthy of

dignity and respect (Obioha & Okaneme 46). However, this is not all there is in the understanding of the human person. Other conceptions contrary to the above sentiments have been made especially by science. Science provides a different account of the human person. Fortunately, the scientific method of viewing-in-detatchment has been acclaimed as the antidote to entrenched prejudice and myopia – the only way to "see things as they really are" (Mackay 19) neally all the views offered by the scientific mirror seem to lose sight of the human person as it ignores or is completely oblivious of the inherent dignity definitive of the human person. At one level of analysis, we see only a mass of molecules in wild confusion. At another, we are shown a tangle of self-regulating biochemical mechanisms, controlling such things as the levels of sugar or oxygen in the blood stream. At yet another, we catch glimpses of a community of millions of microcomputers, each constructed of a network of nerve cells and the whole more complex in its structure than the total pattern of communication links between all the people alive on the earth. From a biological angle, what we see is an organism built on very similar lines to others, using similar components and showing signs of similar ancestry. From an ethological angle, we observe an animal whose social behaviour pattern show many resemblances to those of apes, hunting dogs, or humble farmyard fowls. Even in psychological terms, the picture we have is festooned with causal links between entities bearing such outlandish labels as "drives" or "contingencies of reinforcement", living little or nothing recognizable at first glance as characteristically human. Finally, in the cosmological mirror even the earth itself dwindles to an invincible speck in the chillinhg vastness of intergalactic space (Mackay 79 quoted in Obioha, *The Dignity of the Human Person* 144).

On the constituents of the human person, Akintona writes that, "human beings are super complex beings different from all other species of being, particularly, if we have to consider their power of intellection and creativity. But, break human anatomy down to the minutest particles what we have is nothing but bundles of non-living properties like that of electrons and electromagnetic waves" (201). Be that as it may, is this scientific account of the human person true when it renders invisible the things we know most surely and value most dearly about ourselves as human beings? This presentation of the human person is deeply materialistic and physicalistic and consequently holds dangerous implications to the dignity of the human person. Any conception of the human person that does not recognize the "inner aspects" of man is grossly inadequate and by implication dehumanizing. This is what emerging technologies have done with attendant consequences on the dignity of the human person and his holistic good.

Emerging Technologies and the Question of Human Dignity

Futurists who have utmost faith in technology believe in "technological utopianism". The world of technology is an eldorado of goodness with no pain at all. Is this true of technology? Is technology full of prospects and promises without pain? Certainly technologies have humanizing capacities but this is not the whole truth. There are emerging technologies that are like two-edged sword – they can defend and as well kill the defended. These technologies affect the dignity of the human person. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation has greatly enhanced human well-being. But at the same time has brought bias, discrimination, job loss and attendant dehumanization. The use of AI can reinforce racial, gender or economic biases that make people feel unfairly treated. For instance, Jeffrey Dastin reported that Amazon developed an AI- hiring tool that has been found to discriminate against women by favoring male candidates for tech jobs. This is unfair treatment based on gender bias as it deprives qualified candidates opportunity to be employed (https://www.reuters.com/art). Today, it is common knowledge that there is massive job loss in Automated and AI driven organizations. For instance,

as reported by BBC News on 25th May, 2016, companies such as Tesla and Foxconn have replaced thousands of human workers with robots. As a result of job loss, many low-skilled workers today are struggling to find dignity in work.

Some Surveillance technologies (such as Social Credit System – SCS) are known to be affecting human dignity. These technologies bring about loss of privacy of individuals in that governments and corporations use facial recognition, biometric tacking and data collection to monitor people without their consent. In fact, in extreme cases, Surveillance technologies are used to control people, limit freedom and suppress dissent. For instance, Chinese government, through the use of Social Credit System (SCS) monitors citizens by using facial recognition and AI to track behaviours. People with low scores (for criticizing the government) lose access to jobs, schools and travel. Governments have used Pegasus Spyware to secretly hack into journalists' and activists' phones, monitoring their conversations. This violates human dignity by stripping away privacy and silencing dissents. This has dehumanizing effects on individuals by reducing them to mere data points rather than respecting their freedom and dignity. The individuality and autonomy of the human person must at all times be respected and protected. Boethius' definition of the human person as an individual substance of a rational nature and Kant's recognition of autonomy as an ontological characteristics of the human person have become ethical foundation for advancing human good.

It is no gainsaying the fact that recent breakthroughs in Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering have been a blessing to humanity. Today, hitherto barren couples can have children of their own. Recent trends in Biotechnology boasts of the capacity to alter quality of life through genetic manipulations and to create new life forms (McDougall 259). Be that as it may, grave concerns have been raised on the impact of these technologies on human dignity. These technological trajectories confront ethicists and question their hitherto conception and understanding of human nature. In this way, applying human dignity theory to the latest Biotechnological advances becomes problematic. The paradigms of our traditional understanding of human nature and human dignity is shifting but unfortunately at the expense of human dignity. Corroborating this, Ann Pederson states that, "At both the beginning and end of life, new technologies are changing the way we define life and death (801). For Frida Simonstein, artificial womb technologies, among many other advances in neonatal care, preserve the lives of children who, not so long ago, would have certainly died or become disabled due to premature birth (365). Even though the preservation of life seems morally unproblematic, the application of these technologies has raised many unanticipated issues. For instance, although these technologies have helped to save the life of a child born to a drug addicted mother, who subsequently abandons the child, the rationale of the application of the technology becomes questionable (O'Brien 42; Simostein 365).

Although In Vitro technologies have helped barren women to overcome their childlessness. However, the dilemma created by the excess embryos produced when infertile couples use this technology creates another problem. Even though there is a promise of life to a hitherto barren woman, embryos produced by this method is most likely stored in freezer until they become unviable. Benagiano and Mori (162-168) have questioned the status of these lives and the moral value of a procedure that produces so much of this kind of waste. For O'Brien, if the end result is death after a decade in the deep freezer, then is it ethically acceptable to use these embryos in scientific experiments or to harvest stem cells from these otherwise doomed embryos? Emphatically, O'Brien decried that these cases present an affront to human dignity no matter what course of action is taken, whether it consists of indefinite storage, destruction, or experimentation (O'Brien 43).

The issue of designer babies, a product of recent breakthroughs in Biotechnology, raises serious ethical concerns today. A scientist named, He Jiankul, genetically modified twin babies in order to resist HIV. This raised a concern of inequality and class division since it is only the rich that can afford this kind of genetic enhancement. Creating superhumans through genetic engineering could reduce the dignity of others in that they feel inferior towards the "superhumans". In the same vein, developing countries do witness cases of desperate individuals selling their kidneys illegally to rich buyers. This is a clear case of treating one's body as a commodity. Recent breakthroughs in AI and robotics hold grave consequences for humanity. Military robots are deployed in war to kill. Example Russia's Uran-9 Robot Tank. This Robot can identify and attack targets without human input. Should machines decide who lives or dies? Human moral judgment is required to execute just wars. Some human enhancements in robotic technologies hold grave implications for human dignity. Cyborg employees in Sweden have their hands implanted with microchips for ease of access into their offices. Although this may appear convenient, it however reduces people to machines giving employers undue influence over their workers' bodies (en.wikipedia.org).

In the face of technological advancements, what should be our attitude towards technological breakthrough? To what extent does technology humanize so as to attract all time applause and untampered patronage? Bill Joy in his article, "Why the Future Doesn't Need us" doubted the humanizing possibility of emerging technologies. According to him, "emerging technologies present humankind with a pandora's box brimming with temptations that could lead to dire consequences in spite of the best intentions". Joy advanced an ethic of relinquishment which for him, must be adopted by technologists and businesses that produce cutting-edge products. The ethic of relinquishment suggests and advises that certain line of inquiry that has the potential to inflict enormous harm on humanity should not be pursued. Joy's "new luddite" is itself a critique of futurists who imagine only utopian results from ongoing breakthroughs of certain powerful technologies. Rather, these technologies are capable of leading to a dystopian or even disastrous future (Joy 2000).

However, Joy's relinquishment ethic has been criticized for going against man's natural drive of curiosity – that is, human nature compels man to be curious to seek for knowledge and investigate reality. Therefore, any moral or philosophical perspective that attempts to repress this impulse is a flawed ethic or philosophy and must be sidestepped. For the critics, the idea of relinquishment must not be allowed in that it casts serious doubt on the responsibility of human agency in the project of bettering the world. Be that as it may, Joy's thesis must be seriously considered. Indeed, there are dangerous technologies that have the potential to destroy and even obliterate the world. Some technologies have the tendency to eclipse existing notions of the uniqueness of man and his dignity even when they do no physical harm to man. For instance, the moment man is equated with the machine, in all respects, man loses his uniqueness and the place of pride as the measure of all things. Man is a meaning-giving being; he is value-laden and thus value-determining being. The moment these truisms are obliterated from the being of man, his uniqueness and dignity are gone and he becomes an endangered species.

Although man is naturally wired to be curious such that curiosity is a natural drive in man, however, drives can be controlled if not they can lead to man's destruction. For instance, the drive for food is natural with man, but there are times man is advised to let go of food for health and or spiritual reasons. Sleep is a natural drive in man but needs be controlled in certain circumstances (e.g when a man is on the wheels) for man's safety. Sex is a natural drive in man but needs be controlled if not a man can be jailed for life for rape (which occurs as a result of man's irresponsibility or inability or refusal to control his libido. Therefore, man's curiosity must

be a guided curiosity, guided by the vision of man's good – which is beyond the fleeting satisfaction of wealth and blissful life promised by technology. The good life consists in a happy life found in a life well lived which often have more to do with establishing and nurturing right relationships than access to wealth or technology (O'Brien 41). Technology no doubt has an important role to play but not a solitary, or singularly deterministic one in the way human society shapes its future.

Concerning the question of human agency and the possibility of the destruction of his world, man is responsible both for the prosperity and destruction of his world environment. Joy's advocacy for the ethic of relinquishment suggests that humans cannot be trusted at all times to behave in ways that will lead to human flourishing. Is Joy wrong and alone in this pessimism? This is a rational and reasonable pessimism. Hobbes earlier alluded to the possibility of the extinction of life in the state of nature brought about by man's inhumanity to man which made life solitary, brutish, nasty, poor and short. The first and second World Wars is a testament of man's insensitivity and ability to orchestrate even his own destruction. Therefore, Joy is not wrong. There are clearly certain technological inquiries that are not worth pursuing for the sake of humanity. If technological curiosity and inquiry is a calling that must be answered, the pursuit of human good – the Summum Bonnum, is a higher calling that supersedes that of technological curiosity. The onus is on the scientist cum technologist to guide his curiosity and inquiry for the good of humanity. The good of humanity is the rationality of technology.

The Rationality of Technology

The rationality of a reality is the judgment of the meaning of that reality with respect to the good of man (Obioha, *Controlling Technology* 45). The rationality of a reality involves the determination of the reason for its being, herein lies its meaning. Whatever be the reason of being of that reality, it must conduce to the good of man. the question however, is does technology have any reason for its being? If it does, is its rationality being achieved in its progress today? Yes, technology has rationality and its rationality is not only of its meaning but also is the goal of its progress. Nevertheless, in its progress today, this rationality is not being achieved. Technology should aim at the achievement of man's good. Technology cannot achieve this on its own, rather man should in choosing and deploying technology. Technology is a product of human activity. This is where the idea of *Recta Ratio Agibilum* comes to the fore. It bespeaks of prudence in dealing with technology. While Matthew Nwoko in his celebrated work, "Philosophy of Technology and Nigeria" advocated for *recta ratio agibilum* is dealing with technology on two prongs – in production and in consummation, I argue that these two as important as they are, must be seen to stand on a foundation for its meaningfulness and workability, otherwise production and consummation of technological products can be open ended. I will return to this proposition.

In other to achieve the rationality of technology, there is need for the adoption of right appetite for technology as a viable option. This cuts across every user of technology both directly and indirectly. Man's active involvement in the contemporary technological culture makes him either a producer or and a consumer. What he produces or and what he consumes is a product of his appetite. However, the problem of man's life as a consumer of technological product in relationship to his destiny as a person is the question of the ethics of right appetite which is linked with right reason of man. Right appetite is the conformity of man's desires to his rational nature. The genuineness of human choice is judged based on its conformity with right appetite (Nwoko 112; Obioha, *Controlling Technology* 52). Reason should therefore legislate and guide human appetite to make it conduce to human well-being. The role of reason is to rule over

the passions and guide the lower appetite to achieve right end. In other to achieve his rational end, man must cultivate the right appetite for technological products. He must be selective, guided by reason, of what he consumes in the techno culture.

But right appetite is not limited to what he consumes as a technological product, but also extends to what he produces as a technological producer. Although the vocation of the scientist is to lay bare the richness of nature, the curiosity of the scientist should be a guided curiosity, as I have stated above in corroboration to Joy's sentiment, tempered with the advancement of man's good. The scientist or the technologist should not be a "mere robot" of researches and experiments irresistibly tearing nature open out of curiosity without a plan of employing it to the good of man. In fact, where the good of man and the interest of the technologist clashes, the later should give way to the former. This is to say, there is an important ethical dimension in scientific inquiry grounded on humanism. A genuine scientist and technologist is the one who starts his pursuit as a humanist. He must at all times, before and after, challenge his research and experiments to an imperative of universal rationality and morality. To cultivate the right appetite in production and consummation, our scientist cum technologist need be guided by the ideal of *recta ratio agibilum*. Carl Grindel calls it, "the virtue that assures that man will easily select the right means in order to perform acts that will lead to his end as man" (64).

Within the context of this work, *Recta Ratio Agibilum* is used to describe the rational foundation for the utilization or deployment of technology in the service of man. In relation to technology, man will be doing himself a lot of good if he employs this principle (*Recta Ratio Agibilium*) to control his desire for technological goods and services in accordance with right reason and order the satisfaction of needs to conduce to his rational end. Matthew Nwoko had earlier rationalized this principle in relation to man's technological culture. However, Nwoko limited the application of this principle only to the kind of technology that man produces and consumes. As much as Nwoko is right in arguing for the need for man to apply prudence (right reason) in what he produces and consumes, I argue that Nwoko misses the foundation that makes the cultivation and application of prudence effective. That foundation is the right conception (adequate understanding) which leads to right action. There is a connection between understanding and action. Right understanding leads to right action. On the other hand, wrong conception or understanding leads to bad action.

I therefore add the foundation which I consider the first that grounds the other two. That foundation is (right) conception – the right and adequate conception/understanding of the human person. In the whole idea of technology, man is the subject – the producer and consumer of technology. If man is understood as a machine- as matter pure and simple, just as the scientific understanding of man which we presented above, then what he produces and consumes will be tailored to meet his needs as a material being or entity. The dehumanization of the human person is taken for granted with a materialistic conception of man. The moment the "inner aspects" of man are denied; at all times when the autonomy and the moral status of the human person are sacrificed on the alter of materialism, then the dehumanization of his personality is inevitable. A pure materialistic understanding and description of the human person (which is reductionistic as if that is all there is about him) makes possible technological production and consumption that is antithetical to his all-round wellbeing as a material cum spiritual entity.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Emerging technologies are products of man's curiosity to understand nature and manipulate nature in the production of artifacts for man's good. However, as much as curiosity is a natural drive in man as a homo sapient, curiosity needs to be a guided curiosity otherwise it will lead to the destruction of her good. Consequently, the right production and consumption of technology is a testament of a guided curiosity made possible by the right/adequate conception or understanding of the human person as a material/immaterial, physical/spiritual being with inherent dignity that must be seen, acknowledged and protected at all times for the realization of her all-round wellbeing.

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