**Marcuse’s goals in Reason and Revolution are the following**;

1. He is trying to establish reason (negative and dialectical) as the primary category of social theory.

2. He is trying to establish that praxis, social theory (dialectical) and practice, must be the primary dynamic of revolution.

3. He is trying to reestablish the connection between Hegel’s thought and revolutionary praxis.

Why does Marcuse believe that this is important?

1. He believes that modern “man” is in danger of losing the “mental faculty” of critical thinking, or critical rationality.

2. He believes that modern western society is a society of total domination (see One Dimensional Man)

3. The idea of man being able to subject the world to his rational will (positive reason and individual human agency) and creating a society defined by the Enlightenment narrative given WWII, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Holocaust seems at best questionable.

4. The problem of positivism in sociology, positive reason and the scientific world view is ideological and supports the given order.

5. Hegel has been misinterpreted and in the misinterpretation his concept of critical rationality has been lost.

**Social and Philosophical Background**

1. German Idealism expressed philosophically the ideas of the French Revolution: Reason and its corollary freedom claimed the right to organize reality.

2. As a response to rationalism, the empiricists (Hume) restricted human truth to the “given,’ experience and custom eliminated all opposing truth. Ideas are only abstracted from the particular.

3. Kant attempted to rescue reason. For Kant everything starts from experience but “intuition” (space and time) and “categories” give shape a priori to reality. Reality itself the *ding an sich* remains unknowable.\*

4. Hegel felt this was not a complete rescuing of reason, it left reason a mere subjective principle with no power over the objective structure of reality.

5. For Hegel, the problem above is not just a philosophical/epistemological problem, but a concrete historical one.

a. Hegel’s concept of reason is negative, critical and dialectical.

b. For Hegel, reason establishes itself in opposition to objective reality and to common sense which are in totality negative

c. The process of negation (the dialectical process) allows objective reality to be recovered in “truth”,

d. only when the natural world and social world are subjected to reason, as critical rationality do they become true.

6. Hegel’s statement, “The rational is the real,’ does not mean the real does not exist as objective reality, but that it exists only as “determinate” reality, not as “essential reality.” That is it doesn’t exist as truth until it has been subjected to critical reason.

**Hegel’s Argument and the transition from philosophy to social theory**

1. According to Marcuse, the most important concepts in Hegel’s thought are objectification and alienation.

a. Objectification is the process by which human reason (German Idealism) manifests itself as reality

b. The consequences of objectification is alienation. Man does not recognize that the material, social, and cultural objects of the world are his own creation (reification Lukacs)

c. Human history is the process whereby man recovers the truth of objective reality that it is his creation

2. This is the Hegelian dialectic and its main category is reason—critical and negative-and its revolutionary character. For Hegel reason leads beyond brute fact to what ought to be. “Everything that is given has to be justified before reason.

**Marcuse's Critique of Hegel's Philosophical Concept of Reason**

1.Marcuse argues that in Hegel’s earlier writings, Hegel understood that there was a contradiction between and the contradiction prevented the realization of those values.

a. the ideals of the “revolution” as they found expression in philosophical thought

and

b. the historical-social reality of the time.

2. According to Hegel, philosophy’s task is to demonstrate the principle that would restore the missing unity-existence and essence, truth and fact.

3. According to Marcuse, Hegel tried to do this with his concept of reason.

In doing this, according to Marcuse, Hegel placed what had been primarily a philosophical debate into an historical context. “Man’s knowledge, hope, and activity were referred in the direction of establishing a rational society." .

4. Hegel had demonstrated that the material and intellectual powers of humanity had developed far enough to call upon man’s social and political practice to realize reason, and because of the dialectical method move beyond the present political social order.

5. Therefore, true to the dialectic, the truth of philosophy was its negation and its task devolved to social theory and practice

**Marx and dialectical reason**

1. According to Marcuse in Reason and Revolution, Marx is the true heir to Hegel.

2. Marx’s thought emerges in a critique of Hegel, he finds the truth in Hegel’s thought in its negation.

3. The weakness of Hegel’s position was that he concluded that the historical contradictions had been overcome in his lifetime by the German Nation State. Marx argues that the existence of the proletariat in capitalism are an example that the contradiction has not been overcome.

4. Marx retains Hegel's dialectical method and retains the concepts of alienation, objectification, reification and labor, and accepts the claims that these concepts reveal the historical contradiction as Marx understands it.

Marx’s critique of capitalism is a critique in the sense that all of his concepts are an indictment of the totality of reified reality, capitalism. This is the movement from philosophy to social theory and practices.

1. For Marx, man has created an objective reality through his labor, rather than his ideas and in creating that reality has created himself, what it means to be human.

2. In capitalism, man has created “this’ world as a result of alienated labor (man is alienated from the object of production, from himself, from his labor, from his fellow man, form the essence of his species being.

3. The result of the above is that man has created a world where dead matter rules.

4. The economic realm is, therefore, not just the realm of economic relations, for Marx, it is the existential realm, it is the realm in which man, in capitalism society, creates himself and his world.

(In The foundations of Dialectical Materialism, Marcuse argues that Marx negates political economy, it no longer a separate science having to do with the economy. It is the study of the totality of man’s reified existence under capitalism)

5. The truth revealed in the dialectical critique is that this “world” will self-destruct through the internal contradictions which drive it. However, in this collapse the truth will be revealed.

6. The truth following capitalism is not the end of history but what Marx calls history. Material conditions will not rule man but be subject to human needs which be rationally conceived.

7. The need for rational and free individuals will precede as well as be a consequence of the negation of class society. And will create a social world tha is hum-that realizes reason and freedom.

Weber argues that the dominate characteristic of western society and culture is the process of secular rationalization. Weber's concept of rationalization is best understood as the reduction of human social action and the human social world to the instrumentality of means-ends. That is, reason as a technical rationality pervades all social life-economic, political and cultural. No longer in modern western society is human social action mediated by anything mysterious-magic, miracle, or wonder. Weber calls this the "disenchantment of the world." **It means that in modern western society there are no longer any incalculable forces that come into play, “but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation."** Capitalism, bureaucratization, the modern nation state, industrialization and science/technology are each concrete manifestations of the pervasive rationalization of western society and culture. And they are interrelated in complex reciprocal ways-they each complement each other and provide a circumstance, or circumstances, necessary for the manifestations of the other. The system, western society and culture, has become what Weber calls an “iron cage.”

The starting point for understanding the process of rationalization is, ironically, with religion, Protestantism. Weber the emergence of modern rational capitalism in western society is unique, and cannot be explained in terms of economic factors present in western society. *Weber's say that looking for the answer in material conditions, or solely in material conditions, as Marx does, would not help us answer the question because the historical development of the capitalist ethos was frequently not related to the relative material economic development of different societies.*

Weber argues that the “spirit of capitalism” is an ethos that emerged in western society and the central focus of the ethos is that making money becomes the ultimate purpose of an individual's life. The question Weber then asks is "how could activity, which was at best ethically tolerated, turn into a calling?" Contrary to Marx, Weber was asking "what was the background of ideas which could account for the sort of activity apparently directed toward profit alone as a calling toward which the individual feels himself to have an ethical obligation?"

The idea that the essence of capitalism is a moral calling is a consequence of the Protestant Reformation, specifically Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism and Puritanism. These religious movements provided valuation to the idea that the fulfillment of duty in worldly affairs was the highest form of moral activity- everyday activity becomes religious.

Calvin's concept of predestination was central to the development of this ethos. The concept of predestination left man alone in the world; it completed the disenchantment of the world. Man's salvation was no longer assured through God's grace and redemption and the priest no longer mediated god's forgiveness. The question Weber says the Protestant was left with was how could he know that he was saved, and the answer was that he didn't. The other significant aspect of Calvin's doctrine that was important for the development of the capitalist ethos was another question how can one glorify god's creation through one's actions in the world.

The consequences of Calvin's doctrine-how can I be sure of my salvation and how can I glorify God's creation-is that it is one's duty to consider oneself one of the elect, and to attain the necessary self-confidence for this, it is one's duty to enter into intense worldly activity Weber characterized this as a life of good works combined in unified system. "This powerful valuation to this restless, continuous, systematic work in the form of a worldly calling allows for the development of rational bourgeois economic life . . . rational organization of the economic world." The Puritan ethic, then, conceived as a rational way of life based on the idea of its being a moral calling is one of the constitutive elements of the modern capitalist spirit and the pervasive rationalization of modern culture.

Modern capitalism, though, now is an ethos itself-it no longer needs a religious justification and legitimation. In fact, one of the ironies of modern capitalism is that it can and does turn against religion. The "disenchantment of the world," therefore, it de-mystification, is the necessary ideological pre-condition to the rationalization of the economic world. But in itself is not sufficient cause for the pervasive rationalization of economic life. Modern capitalism, the modern nation state, bureaucratization, industrialization, science and technology are additional and reciprocal causes and concrete manifestations of the rationalization of western culture.

Modern capitalism (rationalized capitalism) is dependent on predictability, order and efficiency which the rise of the modern nation state provides: mass labor force, markets with few restrictions, subsidies, etc. Likewise, the modern nation state, especially liberal democracy because of its complex legal and administrative functions is dependent upon the possibility of rationalizing those functions. Bureaucratization is the perfect complement to the modern nation state and modern capitalism-it is efficient, predictable and based on general norms and the impersonal implementation of them. It eliminates the human element, the capricious, the haphazard, the unique, and the empathetic. Bureaucratization is the concrete manifestation of administrative function.

Bureaucracy is also complementary to the rise of rational-legal authority which is the basis of authority for the modern nation state, because it is also based on general rules and the office rather that the person and his will. Industrialization is the culmination of the merging. Industrialization is the culmination of the merging of science and technology--the instrumentalizing of the natural world--that is becomes a resource for modern capitalism. And science with its emphasis on objective knowledge and impersonal truth provides the epistemological and methodological legitimation to the rationalization of western culture.

Weber also argues that without the rise of rationalized accounting capitalism would be inconceivable. Weber pursues in analysis of the rationalization into the aesthetic, what he calls the "purely human" realm. He wrote on rationalization of music, and its instruments.