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Marcuse's Theory of Scientific and Technological Alienation and its Contemporary Reflections

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Abstract

The status of science and technology in the process of human social development has been increasing, which has promoted the continuous progress of modern industrial society, and at the same time, a series of negative effects brought about by science and technology have gradually emerged. Alienation is an important concept of Marx's philosophy, and Marcuse absorbed Marx's idea of alienation and put forward the theory of technological alienation under new conditions. This technical rationality constantly satisfies people's false needs, so that people's negative sexual dimension and critical dimension are constantly lost, which eventually leads to the formation of one-dimensional and one-dimensional society. The development of science and technology in the new era of our country should firmly establish a reasonable concept of scientific and technological development, adhere to the people-oriented thinking, and strengthen the regulations of morality and law on the development and utilization of science and technology, so as to overcome the alienation of science and technology and promote the healthy development of society.

Keywords

Labor Alienation; Marcuse; Scientific and Technological Development; People-oriented.

1. Introduction the Main Content of Marcuse's Theory of Scientific and Technological Alienation

In the 1844 Manuscript of Economic Philosophy, Marx expounded in detail the theory of labor alienation, and clearly put forward four provisions of alienated labor, namely: the alienation between the laborer and the product of labor, the alienation between the laborer and the labor itself, the alienation between the human nature and the alienation between the human class, "the more wealth a worker produces, the greater the influence and scale of his production, and the poorer he is", "the relationship between the worker and the product of his labor is an alienation relationship with an alien object. ” [1] In the study of Marx's idea of alienation, Marcuse absorbed Marx's idea of alienation and proposed the theory of scientific and technological alienation under new conditions. Marcuse also inherited Horkheimer's ideas on science and technology and combined Marx's theory of labor alienation with Horkheimer's theory of technological alienation. Marcuse believed that science and technology itself were not necessarily related to the alienation of science and technology, but that there was a problem with the way social labor was organized. Marcuse further elaborates on the assertion that the root cause of technological alienation is the instrumentalization of reason, arguing that science and technology, based on formal logical ways of thinking, lead to one-dimensional societies and one-dimensional people. [2] Marcuse argued that the development of technology had gone beyond people's expectations, and that technological rationality had dominated and dominated people in the political, economic, and ideological spheres, becoming an ideology. He expounded the relationship between man and the product of labor and due to the alienation of science and technology, in the system of developed industrial society, people under the rule of science and

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technology are still in the process of alienated labor, the capitalists force workers to consume labor products, workers lose their free choice consciousness and critical thinking, become slaves to consumer products, and lose the emancipation potential that labor should have. In the face of the vast variety of consumer goods created by technology, the real needs are ignored. The technology created by human beings, in turn, dominates and dominates human beings, becoming alienating forces opposed to man himself. On the one hand, technological progress has promoted the liberation of productive forces and the rapid development of the economy, on the other hand, it has also caused the emergence of a new totalitarian feature in contemporary developed industrial society, the critical and negative dimensions of people's hearts have been suppressed. [3] Marcuse elaborated on his ideas of technological alienation in many ways.

1.1. One-Dimensional People

Marcuse believes that the essence of the phenomenon of alienation is the alienation of people, the practical application of science and technology has changed the original intention of developing science and technology, people are gradually controlled by machines, and more seriously, this control has gone from the body to the brain and even the soul. He believes that the advanced industrial society has successfully used technology to suppress opposition and opposing opinions, and to suppress the dimension of denial, criticism and transcendence in people's hearts. Marcuse believes that in this capitalist society with a very high level of development, with the improvement of people's living conditions, the gradual increase of consumer goods, the level of production, science and technology and way of life are becoming more and more advanced, the material materials are abundant, society can meet the needs of citizens, and people are more and more adapted to this capitalist society, not considering and reflecting on other ways of life. In the face of the vast variety of consumer goods created by technology, the real needs are ignored. As a result, individual people lose their subject status and independent decision-making, resulting in the alienation of people's consumption behavior, and at the same time, through the "invisible hand" of the media, society imposes "false needs" on people themselves, so that people are completely restrained and manipulated by society.

1.2. One-Dimensional Society

Marcuse believed that instrumental rationality was alienated in the modern industrialization society, that instrumental rationality had been derived as a new tool for social domination, and that the rationality of the use of technology by developed industrial societies had contributed to the rationality of domination and gradually tended to totalitarianism. Marcuse argues that developed industrial society has the characteristics of one-dimensional and totalitarian nature for the following reasons: from the political sphere, it has succeeded in realizing the integration of political opposites, the political needs of society have become the needs and aspirations of individuals, the ruling class has successfully used technology to subdue those "centrifugal" social forces in developed industrial societies, and the development of science and technology has achieved the consistency of opposing factions, thus controlling the factors that cause social turmoil; From the perspective of the field of life, technology has made developed industrial societies richer and richer, more and more people live more comfortably, and eventually assimilated people's lifestyles; From the perspective of the cultural field, it is this same tendency of social reality and high-level culture that makes the antagonistic and negative characteristics of high-level culture gradually disappear, becoming a single-dimensional culture, or that the ideal has been transcended and identified by reality; From the field of thought, Marcuse argues that the popularity of analytics and positivism itself implies the triumph of one-dimensional philosophy and thought. Positivism attaches importance to the experience of facts and the certainty and accuracy of science from the very beginning, so the higher the degree to which the established reality is scientifically understood and transformed,

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the higher the degree of development of industrial society and technological society, and the higher the degree of unity between theory and practice discovered by positivism in developed industrial societies. Under the influence of this idea, the original dialectical philosophical theory has become a positive theory that focuses only on the verification of reality, and the loss of the critical dimension of reality can only stop at the existing social composition [4]

2. The Current Phenomenon of Scientific and Technological Alienation and Reflection

Marcuse regarded the developed industrial society as a "rich" and "sick" society, technology is both an important force for achieving social "prosperity" and a key force in causing social "pathology", and science and technology show a state of alienation. Reflecting on the phenomenon of technological alienation in China from the perspective of Marcuse's theory of technological alienation, it has to be said that contemporary Chinese society and Chinese also have a certain "one-dimensional" trend. [5] process of economic globalization and the increasingly close ties between countries, the phenomenon of scientific and technological alienation has also appeared in the underdeveloped countries of science and technology. Today, with the continuous development of science and technology, the speed of information circulation is accelerating, and people are becoming more and more in a position dominated by science and technology, and they are lost in the ethereal and complex information technology.

2.1. Network Alienation

As one of the technical alienations, network alienation is manifested in the creation and use of network technology by people, on top of which, due to the interference of certain factors, its or iginal meaning is gradually lost and the subject-guest is inverted. Here the network plays an ex ternal alien force that in turn becomes the power to manipulate and determine people. The su pport of technology has ensured the rapid development of the network, expanded the breadth and breadth of human thinking, and brought great convenience to people, but in this develop ment, human beings have gradually become the object of enslavement by technology from the tool users of technology. [6] The social root is the objective cause of network alienation. Peopl e's irrational application of the network leads to a decline in their sense of identification with r eality, following the guidance of network public opinion, losing the ability to think and judge t hemselves, rational cognition and practice are becoming less and less, and it is impossible to o bjectively understand and grasp the world, resulting in rational instrumentalization, people be coming machines, and losing the ability that people should have to be different from others, w hich will inevitably lead to the gradual loss of individual rationality. The Internet is an open sp ace, all kinds of information is uneven, and the increase of communication channels, coupled w ith people's judgment, self-control degree of variety, can easily lead to individual value orienta tion disorder, moral judgment decrease. Marcuse believed that "with the advancement of tech nology as a means, man is attached to the machine in the sense of unfreedom ... It has been con solidated and strengthened", people's autonomy and physiological ability will gradually be we akened, and the situation of people's social roles being replaced by artificial intelligence may e ventually appear.

2.2. The Communalization of Private Life

There are two main ways to publicize private life, one is to be exposed by the media, websites or others, and the other is to expose it voluntarily. This has led to an increasingly blurring of public-private boundaries and a one-dimensional trend towards human living space. The way of life in the era of science and technology is quietly changing, and the widespread use of apps such as WeChat and Douyin has also quietly changed people's ideological awareness. Some netizens are keen to "sunbathe" their private lives in the circle of friends and vibrato. In this

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process, downloading an APP at will on the mobile phone requires granting permissions such as reading albums, opening the camera, and obtaining geographical locations, and if you do not grant permissions, it will affect the normal use of the APP. Such a seemingly ordinary and "reasonable" move inadvertently treats personal privacy publicly. Private information inadvertently becomes someone else's commodity, traded and bought and sold on unknown platforms and places, causing trouble to people's lives and even endangering the safety of people's lives and property. The express delivery slip information attached to the express delivery packaging that is usually not noticed is also used by people with hearts to become a way and tool to endanger personal privacy. Human society is also a society with an increasing degree of civilization, and civilized society requires everyone to maintain a certain private living space. If we expose our personal life too much on the network platform, we cannot guarantee that we will not be interfered with by the outside world, and sometimes personal information will even be collected and used by people with ulterior motives, becoming a "hidden danger" that endangers ourselves. The openness of private life not only blurs the boundaries between private life and public life, but more importantly, it has a major impact on people's ideological consciousness. In the process of exposing one's private life and exploring the private lives of others, people are obtaining to cookie-cutter information that has been deliberately processed or screened for no meaning and has no characteristics. In contemporary society, technology has pervaded all spheres of human private and public life, "thus integrating all true opposites and assimilating all different choices." [2].

2.3. Involuntary Values

The diversification of values is an important feature of today's era, and different value standards and pursuits can be accommodated by society. The pluralism of values is in line with the pluralistic characteristics of today's society, which highlights the progressive side of society It represents the freedom of individuality and the liberation of human nature. However, the continuous progress of science and technology has also brought a kind of convergent development to people's value judgments, and in some aspects, it has caused the singleness and one-sidedness of people's thinking. Nowadays, smart phones have become a necessity for human life, almost everyone has a hand, at the same time, WeChat, Taobao, Douyin and other APP has become an essential software on everyone's mobile phone, becoming an indispensable part of everyone's life, and even occupies most of the time, when browsing these APP, not only will waste a lot of time, but also cause certain damage to people's bodies, the proportion of teenagers myopia is getting larger and larger, and wearing glasses is getting younger and younger. For some "eye-catching" social hot spots and focus events, people always easily follow the trend and "brush the screen", and are unwilling to spend time to further understand the truth of the matter or further think about the "accuracy" of the news seems to be controlled by an inexplicable "network force", always keen to "follow the trend" and "follow the trend", and sometimes even because of the "overzealousness" of the people, resulting in the occurrence of online violence. Harvard University professor Keith Sunstein proposed the concept of an "information cocoon" through an examination of the Internet. He believes that in information dissemination, because the public's own information needs are not all-round, the public only pays attention to the things they choose and the areas that make them happy, and over time, they will shackle themselves into a "cocoon" like a cocoon. Once the "information cocoon" is formed, people's individual thoughts and cognition are closed and rigid, and they will lose their complete and correct judgment of external things. The more technology participates too much in human life, the more it will cause people to lose their direction and lose their judgment, "negativity or criticality is not a simple complaint and destruction, but an ability to think, a dialectical way of thinking based on a clear understanding of reality. ”[8]

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3. The Contemporary Value of Marcuse's Theory of Scientific and Technological Alienation

3.1. Limitations

Marcuse's theory of scientific and technological alienation provides a new ideological dimension for how we use science and technology today, how to coordinate the relationship between people and science and technology, and between people and society, but Marcuse's theory of scientific and technological alienation also has certain limitations, Marcuse does not see the essence of modern capitalist society and the real cause of the ills of capitalism is the institutional problem of capitalism, he only uses the means of cultural criticism and ideological criticism, Marcuse's theory of scientific and technological alienation for human thought, Civilization and society and other aspects have left valuable wealth, but due to the problems of Marcuse's theory of scientific and technological alienation itself, and his lack of real grasp of the essence of Marx's theory and the true meaning of the philosophical revolution, his ideas have limitations and sophism rather than exposing the essence of modern capitalist society and using the means of political economy to criticize like Marx. Marcuse was aware of the impact of technology on people's mental state, but he did not see that people have the ability to create their own when faced with the choice of cultural products. It cannot be regarded as a one-sided view that the proletariat in developed industrial societies has been transformed into a one-sided person with only a positive dimension, thereby weakening or even denying the position of the working class and treating the working class as a mere force for maintaining social stability and conservatism. Marcuse did not analyze from the basic contradictions of society, and thus could not find a deep basis for alienation.

3.2. Contemporary Revelations

First, to understand the development of science and technology dialectically. As an important symbol of advanced productive forces, science and technology play an important role in promoting social development and human development. Science and technology make a double-edged sword, the high development of science and technology brought about by the various negative problems is also undeniable, Marcuse's criticism of science and technology in the developed industrial society in the West is enough to make us sound the alarm bell, the innovative development of science and technology for our country to achieve the "two hundred years" goal, to achieve the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has an extremely important role, so how to make science and technology develop steadily and healthily, benefit mankind, Avoiding the technological alienation that Marcuse criticized becomes a problem that we must be aware of.

Second, establish a reasonable concept of scientific and technological development. Science and technology are created by people, the purpose of human development of science and technology is to make science and technology become an effective means to help human freedom and all-round development, to help the harmonious and sustainable development of human society, in essence, the question we want to explore is not whether to develop science and technology, but to deeply study and explore how to develop science and technology. Establishing a reasonable concept of scientific and technological development is the most basic problem that needs to be solved urgently. The more important reason for the phenomenon of technological alienation is the improper use of technology by those who master and manipulate technology. According to the enlightenment of Marcuse's theory of technological alienation, we cannot willingly live a "one-dimensional" life because we rely too much on the comfort and convenience of a techno-technological lifestyle.

Third, people-oriented. The development of science and technology should be for the sake of people, taking people's survival as the fundamental, and meeting people's needs as the starting

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point. In the past, the development of science and technology served more in production and economic benefits, ignoring or ignoring the damage to the interests of the human subject, and today, China implements the scientific development concept of "people-oriented", but the idea of "people-oriented" in the development of science and technology is not thorough enough, and it is still in the process of transition and transformation. The real needs of human beings are the free and comprehensive development of human beings themselves, and only when they can truly meet the needs of human freedom and comprehensive development can science and technology complete its "people-oriented" function. To implement the concept of "people-oriented" into the development of science and technology, it is required that the development of science and technology not only pay attention to the richness of the material world, but also pay more attention to and guide the enrichment of the human spiritual world and the improvement of inner cultivation and quality, and help human beings get rid of the shackles of "material desires" and obtain real freedom. Marcuse's assertion that the human spiritual suffering is entirely attributable to the great abundance of material wealth and the high development of productive forces is absolute and one-sided, but he also stressed the need to pay attention to the survival and development of man himself while proposing the high development of things, so as not to cause people to pursue the imbalance of material abundance and spiritual pain in material life.

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