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A Study of Unidirectionality under the Marsecu Theory of Technical Dissimilarity

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| ABSTRACT

Technological alienation is a prominent manifestation of modern society. Marcuse, a representative of the Frankfurt School, profoundly exposed and criticized the spiritual deprivation of a materially rich and developed industrial society. With the continuous progress of science and technology, social pluralism has been increasingly eroded, gradually moving towards a "one-way" state of existence, the root of which lies in the fact that the subject is a "one-way" human being. In this society, not only are politics, economics and culture 'one-dimensional' but even the instinctive needs of human beings are suppressed. This article seeks to examine how to avoid becoming a 'one-dimensional person' in the light of Marcuse's critical theory of technological alienation.

1. Introduction

Hebert Marcuse, one of the leading figures of the Frankfurt School, argued that the rapid development of the European capitalist economy in the twentieth century, with the rapid development of the scientific and technological revolution, had resulted in a "one-way man". In 1964, he published The One-Way Man: A Study of the Ideology of Developed Industrial Societies, a masterpiece of his social-critical theory, which profoundly criticised and exposed the alienation of contemporary developed industrial societies. By analysing and critiquing the suppression of critical, negative and transcendental tendencies within people in the political, intellectual and cultural spheres, Marcuse points out that the so-called developed industrial society is only a "one-way" society. It is also a totalitarian society in which people are "one-dimensional" people who have lost their "inner freedom". Contemporary science and technology are essentially new forms of control. The more technology is developed, the more controlling the ideology of developed industrial societies becomes. It is typical of such societies that "technology, rather than terror, is used to subdue the centrifugal forces of society, based on the twin foundations of an overwhelming efficiency and rising standards of living"[Herbert, 2008].

1.1 The meaning of integration
1.1.1 An integrated society

Marcuse argues that contemporary industrial society is a new type of totalitarian society in which every aspect is 'one-dimensional', in which society as a whole has lost its negativity and criticality, in which there is no opposition, and in which people are 'one-dimensional people' who have lost their negativity, criticality and transcendence The society is a society without opposition, where people are "one-way people" who have lost their negativity, criticality and transcendence. Marcuse's reference to the 'integration' of contemporary developed industrial societies refers primarily to the integration of the individual with society as a whole in three ways.

Firstly, there is the integration of demand. Developed industrial societies pursued a policy of high production and high consumption. Technological progress increased the efficiency of labour production in society, and the phenomenon of overproduction emerged. In order to keep the social system going, it is necessary to consume the products produced as quickly as possible, so it imposes them on individuals, creating "false demand" and completing the pre-determined "compulsive consumption". "False needs" are "those needs that are imposed on individuals from the outside for a specific social benefit, needs that perpetuate hardship, aggression, suffering and injustice"[2]6. Developed industrial societies use the tools of mass communication to sell the interests of individuals as the interests of all normal people; they constantly produce new products and use all means to induce people to buy them and convince them that they need them. On this basis, developed industrial societies have succeeded in turning their own needs into the needs of society at large.

Secondly, it is about achieving integration of the common good. "The individual makes the needs of society his own, which necessarily links his own interests and destiny to those of society as a whole"[3]. In this sense, this form of society is a new, totalitarian one, and the root cause of its totalitarian nature is the progress of technology. In essence, this developed industrial society based on technological progress is an illiberal society. In the context of technological progress, this unfree society is a society of leisure and affluence, which creates the illusion that the ruling class serves to safeguard the interests of the people as a whole, thus compromising the individual to the lifestyle imposed on him by society. It is this new form of control that the ruling class uses to mobilise society at large to serve its interests. Once again, it is the integration of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie

Developed industrial societies use technology to squeeze those social forces that are centrifugal; technological progress extends to the whole social system and reconciles the opposing forces that are opposed to this system; it eliminates the other opposing political factions that threaten its existence and succeeds in integrating the political opposites. In general, technological rationality becomes an instrument of more effective domination, "the impact of progress subjugates reason to the realities of life, to the powerful forces that produce more and greater realities of its kind"[4]11, it eliminates the opposition between the individual and society, and social needs replace individual ones. Domination under the guise of material affluence extends to all areas of society, all real antagonisms are integrated, and society becomes a 'one-way' society.

1.2 Integration of ideas and culture
Contemporary developed industrial societies are a new type of totalitarian society, which is reflected not only in the social sphere but also in the integration of the cultural sphere. This integration has three main forms of expression.

1.2.1 Everyday popular culture becomes the dominant form of social culture
In the past, high culture was always in contradiction with social reality and was enjoyed only by a privileged few, while the general public had difficulty appreciating it. However, with the advent of technology, culture has increasingly become a tool for making money, and capitalists must find a consumer base in order to maximise the profitability of cultural products, so the masses have become consumers of cultural products. Driven by profit, culture in developed industrial societies has become increasingly commercialised, popular and popularised. "High culture loses its legitimacy"[5]52 and has to be left out in the cold.

1.2.2 Cultural production presents a monopoly and control
Technological advances have created new forms of cultural communication, and the mass media, such as the press, television, and advertising, have seamlessly mixed artistic works and cultural forms, political tendencies and philosophical ideas with commerce through modern technology, making the cultural sphere more characteristic of the sale of goods in an industrial market economy. When cultural products become commodities that bring economic benefits, the trend towards monopoly and concentration in the cultural sector becomes inevitable. Ideological control in the industrial age became more refined, and the marriage of capital and politics became more pronounced.

1.2.3 Culture in reality shows identification with and attachment to the status quo
In developed industrial societies, culture is highly commodified and becomes a mere consumer good. The "high culture" that was once the expression of people's ideals is rejected by reality and seems to lose its legitimacy, being dissolved and consumed in the components of material culture. Popular culture acts as an ideology on the psyche of the masses and thus manipulates their behaviour in reality. The satisfaction that popular culture provides to people is essentially false, while control is real. By satisfying people's false needs, popular culture weakens the power of human instincts, thus weakening the power of popular resistance.

1.3 Man is a "free" man who has lost himself
"Freedom from want is the concrete substance of all freedom." [6]3 In today's developed societies, technological progress has led to increasing mechanisation and automation in modernisation. However, "when a society, according to its own way of organising itself, seems increasingly to satisfy the needs of the individual, the essential critical functions of independent thought, freedom of will and the right to political opposition are gradually denied"[7]6. Firstly, science and technology conquer nature at the cost of

violating man himself. Marcuse argues that environmental pollution, noise and the encroachment of industry and commerce on natural space have become a great material force for the enslavement and oppression of human beings. Secondly, the development of science and technology has led to increasing mechanisation and automation of labour, which has left workers physically damaged and mentally devastated. Finally, man's instinctive desires were suppressed, and love was downgraded to mere sexual desire. "Libido is limited and constrained, and the desire for love is degraded towards sexual experience and sexual satisfaction."[8]68

2. The meaning of "One Direction People

The developed industrial society formed under the monopoly of science and technology is an "affluent society", but it cannot be a normal society, let alone a healthy one, but a "sick society" incompatible with human nature. Marcuse argues that science and technology are a priori "original sins" in the sense of enslavement, control and alienation and that the unidirectional, instrumental and utilitarian nature of scientific and technological rationality, as well as its submissiveness to reality and its certainty, make it a tool of the rulers. The purposive and utilitarian nature of science and technology also deprives people of the universal validity of truth, goodness and beauty, depriving them of the ability to judge the world around them and leaving them only with obedience. All this has led to the destruction of the human personality, to the loss of criticality and negativity, and to the loss of the desire and possibility to know oneself and to transcend reality, thus becoming a "one-dimensional person".

3. The theoretical significance of the "one-way man

In One Direction Man, Marcuse focuses his analysis on modern industrial society. He keenly reveals the new trends and characteristics of modern industrial society, pointing out the new changes in the contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat under the new historical conditions. Marcuse's cultural critique of today's advanced capitalist society is very sharp and reveals the reality that material abundance does not necessarily bring happiness, which has implications for our understanding of the negative effects of technological civilisation in capitalist society and the role of mass culture for the masses, which is a reasonable and positive aspect of Marcuse's theory of cultural critique.

4. The relevance of "One Direction People

In fact, mankind is aware of the negative value of science and technology and does not want to become a "one-dimensional human being", nor does he want the natural environment in which he lives to deteriorate further. Therefore, the solution to today's realities should start with the people themselves, who use science and technology to create society and culture. Marcuse's boldness in exposing the irrational factors behind the apparent prosperity of capitalist society and his sharp criticism of them, as well as his insightful ideas, are invaluable. Today, as Marcuse pointed out, a society in which people's attention is limited to the pursuit of material pleasures means a "sick society" and an "alienated society" that is in decline and decay; for the individual, it means becoming a deformed and dehumanised person. Today, it still serves as a warning that while developing the economy, we should not neglect the building of spiritual civilisation and should focus on the overall healthy and harmonious development of society. This has a very far-reaching theoretical and practical significance for the current economic and social development of China.

5. How to refuse to be one-dimensional
5.1To learn for what you love, not to show

With the rapid development of modern civilisation, we who live under this high level of civilisation are invariably affected by this society. With this comes the inflation of qualifications and the irrational distribution of educational resources. In this educational context, there are all sorts of competition, tangible and intangible, within society. From childhood onwards, most people live their lives surrounded by a myriad of homework and tutorials. Many parents believe that without a good kindergarten, there is no good primary school; without a good primary school, there is no good secondary school; without a good secondary school, there is no good university; without a good university, there is no good job, and without a good job there is no success. And what determines all this is the marks. And the university, once an ivory tower, is no longer a tranquil place of learning. Teachers are so keen to apply for projects and funding that they do not pay much attention to teaching, which is their main job, and others go so far as to treat students as their own cheap quality labour - is this not a living example of 'egoism' for students? When they go out into society, they will face the reality that it is better to fight for their abilities than for their connections and that it is better to fight for oneself than for one's father, and will this not deepen their identification with "egoism"? The result of education is a group of refined egoists who lack basic humanistic concerns and are only interested in profit and nothing else. What we need to do is to change this perception, whether it be parents, teachers or society, to create an atmosphere in which life is more than marks, to respect students' interests and their choices, and in which they learn to think and learn for what they love, not for show.

5.2 To establish the right values

Modern society is full of all sorts of temptations, whether it be money, power or other things, and some people lose their minds in them, either trying to get something for nothing, trying to take shortcuts, or fawning over the rich and powerful, and get lost in them. What we need to do is to learn to reject these temptations and establish the right values so that we do not go astray. We

need to establish the value of work as the most rewarding. Only with our own hard work can we reach the shore of success, and only with such values will we understand the meaning of perseverance and reap the rewards of having persevered to get what we want. The mountain does not let the soil, so it can become big; the river and the sea do not choose a small stream, so it can be on its deep. The development of anything is a process from quantitative change to qualitative change; the only way to harvest success is to persevere. We need to establish the value of dedication to others, and we need to realise our value in the process of contributing to society. I remember the "Reader", a collection of thirteen old academicians of Tsinghua University, reading the "Letter to the People". It is difficult to cool the hot blood after ten years of drinking ice. We must know the pains of being responsible before we can know the joys of doing our duty. The sky is pale; the earth is yellow; there are a thousand years of history, and there are eight wildernesses; the future is like an ocean, and the future is long. Study for the rise of China!

5.3 To focus on building your spiritual world
In the world we live in today, internet technology is developing at a rapid pace and communication between people is becoming increasingly close and fast. Once upon a time, letters were slow, carriages and horses were far away, and there was only one person to love in a lifetime. Nowadays, information floods our lives all the time, and we have not only mobile phones but also computers, tablets, Kindles, etc. We also have all sorts of dating software, such as the Internet. We also have all kinds of dating software, such as QQ, WeChat, Weibo, Jitterbug, etc. We are in this addicted to it, allowing these high-tech products to dominate our lives. We use these electronic products all the time, either for chatting, browsing news, or shopping; they are present in all our lives. It is in this environment that we need to focus on building our spiritual world and not let them dominate our lives. We can pick up old books, enjoy the quietness and beauty of reading on a warm afternoon, wander in the world of books, eat fruitful spiritual food, talk to the characters in the books, and roam in another world. With a rich spiritual world, you will not be too obsessed with any one thing, nor will you be arrogant enough to think that you are on top of the world just because you have been satisfied with any one thing, and by looking back from time to time and not forgetting the beginning, you will not be easily lost, and you will always be able to remind yourself of your humility. When life has more than one outlet, life slowly becomes full and colourful. It is in this full spiritual world that we can be at ease in our lives.

5.4 To have an awareness of problems
With the development of the world we live in, technology is changing rapidly, and information is exploding, yet it is in the midst of this development that more and more people are becoming solidified in their thinking, becoming human and even losing the ability to question. They always obediently accept the information fed to them from the outside world and then accept it all without asking questions about the origin or the cause and effect. Some are either afraid to ask questions, fearing that they will make mistakes that will lead to criticism, so they simply don't ask questions. Or some decide to keep their mouths shut because they fear that their questions will offend others and lead to their own misfortune. Yet it is this failure to ask questions that inevitably lead to the loss of innovation and the stagnation of human development. It is because of this kind of questioning that there is a clash of ideas and a spark of thought, and because of this kind of naive questioning, mankind is moving forward in its development. The world is constantly evolving, and development is the process by which things move forward, from small to large, from simple to complex, from low to high, and from old to new matter. Change The process. It is because of the internal contradictions of things that the world can develop and move forward and because of development that mankind can flourish and pass on from generation to generation.

5.5 To learn to think critically and independently
The wheel of history rolls forward, the world is constantly in the midst of development, the world situation is complicated, the impact of the new technological revolution is deepening, economic informatization is accelerating, national economies are developing in the direction of marketization, the world economy is developing unevenly, countries around the world are constantly adjusting their economic structures, and the role of multinational corporations is becoming more and more prominent. How do we face it? How do we learn to find the essence of things in such a complex world, to see the clouds and the fog, and to see the village in the dark? This is why we need to learn to think critically, to look at things critically so that we can see things for what they are and live with ease. To learn to be critical means that we should not only see the bad side of things but also the good side of things so that we can take the best of them and the worst of them, and only in this way can we make progress. At the same time, we have to learn to think independently. Questioning is the beginning of independent thinking as if we go from being used to hearing what others say and jumping out to thinking for ourselves. And after that, we have to learn to use questioning to think about processing after we have jumped out of our past habitual patterns, to think about what are the arguments and positions behind this information and advice that support it. Quit thinking that existence is reasonable and that existence is not necessarily reasonable. After thinking on our own, we find that if existence is not reasonable, we will have a new entry point to do things and think of angles to solve problems that others can't think of; if it is reasonable, we will also have a deeper understanding of why the matter is like this, so we can naturally get to the point when we do things, and over time we will become people who learn to think critically and independently.

5.6 To create, not to be a willing recipient

We sometimes accept our circumstances passively, without ever thinking of changing them and making them work for us. Some people, when they encounter setbacks, do not think about how to overcome them but only complain about the bad environment or the injustice of fate, and at the same time, envy the success of others or even become jealous, but we must recognise clearly that behind everyone's success are countless sweat and efforts. The only way to reap success is to work hard and persistently. On the other hand, not being willing to be a taker also means that we have to dare to innovate and breakthrough. Only by forging ahead will we be able to make new things happen every day. Only by being constantly progressive can we be constantly innovative. It is important to know that learning to innovate is the only way to be invincible in the world. Following the rules, staying the same and being bound by all kinds of cages will only narrow your horizons. We need to learn to respect the rules left behind by our predecessors, but that doesn't mean we can't question them and improve them. The world is a vast place, and innovation is the only way to make China stand out in the world and the only way to achieve China's leap forward.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.
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