

Research on Habermas and Foucault's Social Diagnosis

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Abstract

Habermas and Foucault were both important thinkers in the middle and late 20th century. In the society at that time, they had a heated debate about rationality and irrationality. Habermas, based on the reconstruction of rationality, believed that rationality could be returned to a reasonable state through the communication of rational social paradigm, and the equal and harmonious communication between people could be realized in an environment without oppression, Not only in language, but also in action. Foucault, on the other hand, stood at the edge of rationality and believed that rational cognition in the traditional sense was limited and incomplete, and the real rational spirit had not been developed. Therefore, he focused his research on those groups that were not rational in our view, such as mental patients, prisons and prisoners, and pointed out that we should recognize the minimum of human truth, so that we can better understand human beings, truth and rationality. Therefore, this article will deepen the understanding of the ideological connotation of Habermas and Foucault through their attitude and analysis of rationality.

Keywords

Habermas; Foucault; Rationality; Irrational.

1. Introduction

As important thinkers of the same era, Habermas and Foucault have much to compare in terms of personal experience, ideological tradition, theoretical construction and core ideas. Especially under the theoretical background of the fierce struggle between rationality and irrationality in the 20th century, these oppositions and differences were amplified and brought out to stimulate more discussions about rationality and irrationality. Therefore, this debate has played a more connecting role in the western academic circles, and many new topics and arguments have come from the collision of ideas.

2. Habermas' Analysis of Society

Habermas' diagnosis of society is mainly from the perspective of rationality, which is also based on his theory of communicative behavior. Through his understanding of Habermas, he realized the crisis in society through the discussion of rationality, which is mainly caused by the excessive expansion of instrumental rationality. He also criticized instrumental rationality, but he did not deny rationality, because he thinks: "The rationality of words and deeds has always been the subject of philosophical discussion. We can even say that philosophical thinking itself is born from the reflection on the rationality embodied in knowledge, speech and behavior. The fundamental problem of philosophy is rationality. Since its birth, philosophy has always used the principles contained in rationality to explain the overall world and the unity embodied in the diversity of phenomena... If there is anything in common among various philosophies, it is common Use rational experience to think about the unity of existence or the world. [1]" Therefore, he believed that the leading value of rationality should not be completely denied, and rationality should be reconstructed to solve the consequences of the excessive expansion

of instrumental rationality. Habermas put forward the theory of communicative behavior. He firmly believes that only communicative rationality can cure the world and break through the cage of instrumental rationality, so Habermas's communicative behavior theory is mainly to correct the alienation of rationality through rationalization of communication, and to understand the internal action and meaning of subject and object through language dialogue. This form of communication transcends the traditional philosophy of consciousness. The traditional philosophy of consciousness advocates the dual structure of separation of subject and object, which leads to the inequality of social communication and further aggravates the consequences of instrumental rationality. The theory of communication behavior put forward by Habermas makes the subject and object merge with each other, pointing out that the subject is the object and the object is the subject, thus effectively making up for the oppression and imbalance of both sides of communication, It can effectively promote both parties to truly express their opinions and achieve consistency in form and content. This kind of communicative rationality not only transcends the subjectivity - centered rationality, but also can get rid of the paradox and mediocrity of the self - related rational criticism. That is to say, communicative rationality breaks through the limitation of critical rationality of philosophy of consciousness, and transforms the "isolated" subject in the past into "interactive subject"[2]. Communicative behavior is not a tool rational behavior, but a language understanding behavior. "What appears in the concept of communicative behavior is another language medium premise, which reflects the relationship between the actor and the world." It follows the principles of language communication, namely authenticity Correctness and sincerity.

In addition to these three principles, people involved in communication should have the ability to communicate. The speaker and the listener should not only be able to express effectively, but also correct each other through dialogue until they reach a consensus understanding and consensus. In addition, Habermas also put forward four types of behavior in the theory of communicative behavior. The first is purposeful behavior, that is, to carry out a certain thing or achieve a certain purpose with the help of human's own rationality in a planned and purposeful way. It is a "teleological action" under the instrumental rationality guided by technical norms, and labor is considered at this level only to represent the transformation relationship between human beings and nature, which is based on this behavior, Habermas distinguishes between labor in the sense of instrumental rationality and interaction in the sense of communicative rationality. The second is normative regulation. Normative regulation refers to a certain social norm established by the social community, which reflects the common wishes and expectations of the social community and is extremely binding on individual behavior. This binding force generally includes the constraint of moral expectations and the constraint of compulsory legislation on some intolerable or prohibited behaviors. The third is the dramatic act, which refers to the action that the actor consciously expresses his intention and feelings in front of the audience or the society. The last one is communication behavior. The connotation of communication behavior is a kind of communication behavior with language as the medium. Through the use of language form and content as tools, the members of communication can understand their own internal behavior purposes and ways. Communication behavior focuses on the mutual understanding between subjects, in which language is at the core of communication behavior. At the same time, what is more important for Habermas is that the theory of communicative behavior implies the connotation of "understanding", and regards it as an understandable activity. The key point of his theory of communicative behavior is to hope that the subject and the object should understand and tolerate each other, so as to make up for the consequences of the split of reason. So, for Habermas, he is a strong supporter of rationality. He has been trying to rebuild a new kind of rationality that can reflect people's understanding and behavior, and this kind of rationality is communicative rationality. Moreover, for Habermas, it is his ideal to build a society full of rationalization norms. He hopes to reconstruct the

legitimacy of rationality in this way. His purpose is to achieve the self-transcendence of rationality in this way. Rationalization of rationality is Habermas' ultimate goal. Therefore, through the analysis of Habermas' relevant theories, we can see that he diagnoses society from the perspective of rationality.

3. Foucault's Analysis of Society

Foucault analyzed society from the perspective of power. In *Discipline and Punishment*, he revealed the essence of modern discipline society through in-depth study of seemingly marginal issues such as prison, body, punishment, truth and knowledge. In the modern disciplining society, the ruling class uses the disciplining power to monitor and discipline the body, and the micro-physics of the body penetrates into all fields of social life. He made a unique analysis of power through the key word "discipline". He described the operation and development of society as a basic thing. He emphasized that power is the decisive factor of social institutions and social order, and the change of power will cause social changes.

By analyzing the book *Discipline and Punishment*, we can see that Foucault analyzed power mainly through its relationship with body and knowledge. The first is the relationship between power and body. He focuses on the discipline of the body and the system of punishment. In the modern discipline society, although the torture of the body has been abolished, it has been systematically disciplined, and the activities of the body have been carefully arranged by the ruling class in advance. The rulers of all dynasties know that only by controlling the body of the ruled can they further exercise comprehensive rule and control over them. In order to prevent the ruled from rebelling, they must try to control their body. So the relationship between power and body has gone through a relatively long evolution process. Before the 19th century, the control and punishment of power on the body was manifested as naked and brutal torture. Since the 19th century, it has gradually changed into a complex and sophisticated system of body discipline. This discipline system is relatively hidden, civilized and humane compared with torture, but the ruler's discipline on the body but the control is stricter. For example, in the book, Foucault described a soldier who was physically disciplined: "By the end of the 18th century, soldiers had become something that could be created. With a pile of shapeless mud and an unqualified human body, the machine needed could be built. The posture could be gradually corrected. A carefully calculated force slowly controlled the human body through all parts of the human body, making it flexible and agile. This force unknowingly became a habitual action. In short, people 'transformed farmers', making it has military style '. " It can be seen that soldiers are all like this, and other people must also be like this, that is, their bodies are manipulated, shaped and disciplined. For the ruling class, no matter what method they adopt, there is only one purpose, that is, to tame their bodies through the discipline of the body of the ruled class. The discipline of the body is like the process of domestication of wild animals, and the body of the ruled class becomes a plaything of power. Then the technology used by the ruling class to discipline the body became more and more sophisticated. The book introduced the "panoramic open-view prison"[3]. Foucault described the prison as "at the edge of the ring, people are completely watched, but can't watch; at the center of the watchtower, people can see everything, but can't be seen." [4] This shows that the panoramic open-view prison is a perfect discipline institution, where prisoners can be seen everywhere, but the monitor is hidden. Just as in the modern disciplined society, almost everyone cannot escape from the "cage" of such discipline, this is a prison society, and the control of the ruling class has penetrated into all fields of the whole society and filled into the capillaries of society. Then there is the relationship between power and knowledge. In the modern disciplined society, power has penetrated into the capillaries of social life. It is not oppressive, but productive. Power productive discourse, knowledge discourse and moral discourse. Through the production of

these words, the ruling class ideologically tames and enslaves the ruled class. Foucault's power theory closely links power with knowledge and truth. Foucault believed that in the past, people always opposed knowledge and power. It seems that knowledge and power are incompatible. With power, there is no longer knowledge. Power will pollute knowledge, and power will make people lose their sense. Once knowledge and truth are linked with power, they will lose objectivity and neutrality, and become accomplices of power. But in the modern discipline society, power, knowledge and truth have already become an inseparable whole. Power and knowledge have reached a conspiracy. They collude and use each other. The ruling class relies on power to produce all kinds of knowledge discourse, which has become the ideological and theoretical tool to maintain the political rule of the ruling class, and even science and technology have increasingly implemented the function of ideology. This has also created a huge army of professional and technical personnel. They have become the vassals of power. Many of them have also become the technocrats in the modern bureaucracy. They hold various kinds of power and control and monopolize the production of knowledge. Like the aforementioned "full view open prison", which is designed by architects, designers and other intellectuals, has become a tool to monitor society. Foucault further pointed out: "Is it surprising that prisons and factories, schools, barracks and hospitals are similar to each other?" In Foucault's view, the modern discipline society is a big prison, which consists of hospitals, factories, schools and other types of "prisons" to form a "prison island". Everyone is under the close supervision of the ruler's power eyes and has no escape, forming a kind of power repression. So from the above content, we can see that Foucault analyzed the society from the perspective of power, and pointed out that people are in a disciplined society.

4. Comparative Analysis and Conclusion of Habermas and Foucault's Study of Society

From the above analysis, it can be seen that whether Habermas made a diagnosis of the society from the perspective of rationality or Foucault placed himself in a dangerous zone beyond the reach of rationality, there is a certain reason. Habermas aims to save rationality and rebuild rationality, while Foucault questioned and criticized rationality from the edge of rationality. The two people have different perspectives, methods and theories in the study of rationality. Therefore, their views on rationality are different, and they are even divided into different camps. Specifically, Habermas believes that the social crisis is due to the excessive development of instrumental rationality within rationality, the split of rationality, the differentiation and even conflict of the internal principles and norms of rationality in various fields, and the separation of practical rationality, which is closely related to society and human life, from modern life. However, Habermas believes that rationality can solve problems by itself, so Habermas uses the way of reconstruction and self-awakening, starting from the idea of reconstructing rationality, he firmly believes that rationality can solve its own problems. Although he criticized instrumental rationality and believed that instrumental rationality has been distorted and thus has become an arbitrary rule over social life, this does not mean that rationality can be completely denied. On the contrary, it is necessary to correct the distorted state of rationality. As Habermas said: "If we only use the very radical category provided by the philosophy of consciousness to investigate the basic process of conscious life, then what we insist on is only instrumental rationality." [5] He believed that we must start from rationality itself to find a solution, so we can see that Habermas started from the reconstruction of rationality. Foucault believes that reason itself is limited, and human beings are subject to the factors of being the other. The development of instrumental rationality often leads to the results that are contrary to expectations and makes human beings not free. Therefore, his resistance to reason is mainly based on madness. He believes that we should respect madness, because we should recognize

the minimum level of human truth, so that we can better understand human beings, truth and reason, So because Foucault's research object is those groups that are not rational in our view, such as mental patients, prisons, prisoners, homosexuals, and so on. At the same time, his discussion of rationality and irrationality is mainly focused on these fields. It is true that he has overemphasized the oppressive aspect of rationality, while ignoring the constructive and progressive aspects of rationality, so he is considered to be standing in a dangerous zone that cannot be touched by rationality. At the same time, it can also be seen that Foucault is to fundamentally jump out of reason, look for a way out of solving practical problems from the outside of reason and from its opposition, namely, irrationality. Although Habermas and Foucault have different research perspectives, they also expressed dissatisfaction with rationality, but Foucault is committed to exposing the oppression and arbitrariness of rationality, expressing his disappointment at the dominant rationality. Habermas, on the other hand, wants to rebuild rationality, and advocates replacing the instrumental rationality that has been ruined by etiquette and music with communicative rationality. In short, Habermas is based on the reconstruction of rationality. He believes that rationality can be returned to a reasonable state through the communication of rational social paradigm, and the equal and harmonious communication between people can be realized in an environment without oppression, not only in terms of language, but also in terms of internal actions, Foucault believed that the reason that constantly seeks space expansion based on power will inevitably bring endless struggle, so we must jump out of the reason itself and liberate people from the edge and imprisonment. Therefore, for me, Habermas and Foucault's diagnosis of society is reasonable. They only have different research perspectives, methods and theories, but they both made judgments based on the situation at that time, and based on their own actual needs, which have had a certain impact on the society at that time.

5. Conclusion

Reviewing the whole history of western philosophy, rationalism and irrationalism are one-sided, that is, they both emphasize one aspect of human thinking. In fact, man is neither pure rational existence nor pure irrational existence. Without rational irrationality, it is blind, and without irrational rationality, it is empty. Without reason, people's irrational will lose its direction, while without irrational, people's rationality will become pale and lose momentum. Therefore, it is incorrect to highlight human's rational factors or irrational factors unilaterally. Man is the subject of knowledge, the unity of knowledge, emotion and intention, and the unity of rationality and irrationality. Who wants to live completely according to reason is only a fantasy, which can only exist in the field of spirit. Of course, if we live in a completely irrational way, it is also just an illusion, and will suffer setbacks. Human cognition is neither the result of the action of irrational factors as advocated by rationalism, nor the process of wandering reflection that disintegrates all factors, but the process of mutual unity and struggle between rationality and irrationality under the guidance of rationalism. Marxist philosophy believes that rational factors play a leading role, irrational factors are restricted by admissibility factors, and irrational factors should play a positive role under the guidance of rational factors.

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