

Lukacs's Reification Theory: Theoretical Basis, Main Performance and Realistic Care

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Abstract: The phenomenon of reification is common in the capitalist social structure. From the actual situation, in-depth analysis of the two sides of the problem. This paper adopts the method of dialectical analysis. By systematically expounding Lukacs's reification theory and its main manifestations, this paper explores the critical examination of Lukacs's reification theory on contemporary social reality, and provides theoretical support for solving the problems of development and promoting the overall progress of society.

Keywords: Lukacs; Reification Phenomenon; Reification Theory.

1. The Theoretical Basis of Lukacs's Reification Theory

Influenced and inspired by Max Weber's social rationalization thought, Hegel's dialectics thought, Simmel's monetary philosophy thought and Marx's commodity fetishism thought, Lukacs systematically studied, carefully analyzed, deeply understood and critically reflected on it, and constructed his own unique materialized theoretical system [1][3].

1.1. Marx Weber's Rationalization Thought

The critical theory of rationalization is expounded in the works of Protestant ethics and capitalist spirit [4]. As a student of Weber, Lukacs was deeply inspired by it. With the evolution of modern society, social activities and behaviors gradually tend to rational planning and clear goals, which is Weber's concept of rationalization. This process replaces the traditional irrational behavior pattern and can greatly improve the efficiency and order of social operation. The three levels of society, culture and personality are rationally subdivided by Weber. At the same time, the rationality of purpose and the rationality of value are distinguished by Weber. The former focuses on the effectiveness of means and the achievement of goals, and increasingly occupies a central position in capitalist society; the latter, based on the pure identification of unconditional values such as faith, ethics, aesthetics or religion, dominated cultural, social and individual thinking before the rise of capitalism [5]. The rationalization process of capitalist society was deeply analyzed by Weber, which prompted Lukacs to think deeply about how the phenomenon of "reification" was no longer limited to the living conditions of industrial workers, but became a universal law throughout the capitalist world.

In constructing his own reification theory, Lukacs skillfully absorbed criticism and examined Weber's rationalization principle. By exploring the scope of abstract labor, Weber's rationalization concept is internalized as part of his analytical framework, and at the same time, he puts forward a unique critical opinion on this principle itself. Lukacs believes that in the capitalist commodity economy system, the phenomenon of reification is the alienation of the relationship between goods and labor, and it is also a profound reshaping of social

structure and way of thinking. As the fundamental principle of capitalist society, permeates and affects every individual extensively, forming a deep bondage to human nature and freedom [6]. Therefore, Lukacs's reification theory inherits and develops Weber's rationalization thought, and it is also a profound revelation and criticism of the essence of capitalist society.

1.2. Hegel's Thought of Dialectics

Hegel's dialectics is the cornerstone of his philosophical system, and Lukacs's analysis of the phenomenon of reification is deeply influenced by it. Hegel believes that the evolution of the world and history is a complex and dynamic process, the core of which lies in the internal unity and continuous solution of opposition and contradiction. He pointed out that all things are composed of interdependent and conflicting forces. The interaction of these forces not only reveals the essence of the existence of things, but also the inexhaustible driving force for the development of things. Hegel emphasizes that contradiction is not a simple opposition, but the development potential contained in things. Through the struggle and integration of contradictions, things can transcend themselves and even reach a new realm. Lukacs was deeply inspired by Hegel's thought, and his understanding of the theory of rationality achieved a qualitative leap. He broke through the narrow framework that traditionally regarded instrumental rationality and value rationality as binary opposition, and sought the internal connection and harmonious coexistence between them [7].

Through the in-depth study and creative transformation of Hegel's dialectics, Lukacs has constructed a unique philosophical system and analytical tools, which has injected new vitality into the development of modern philosophy. After turning to economic and political research, Lukacs focused more on the dialectics of totality in Hegel's philosophy as a sharp weapon to criticize the Second International Revisionism for its intuitive understanding of reality and facts. He emphasized that in order to truly understand and eliminate the phenomenon of reification, we must abandon the one-sided and isolated perspective and adopt the overall dialectical method. This method requires people to go deep into its internal contradictions and grasp the overall trend and law of its development. As a unique product

of capitalist society, the phenomenon of reification makes the relationship between people obscured by the relationship between things, which leads to the alienation of people and the division of society. However, as the creator and defender of reification, the bourgeoisie cannot spontaneously solve this problem. Therefore, we call on the proletariat to use the dialectical method of totality to see the essence through the phenomenon, reveal the real root of reification, and finally explore a way to get rid of reification and realize human liberation. This process is not only a practical application of Hegel's dialectics, but also a philosophical response to the profound changes in modern society.

1.3. Simmel's Monetary Philosophy Thought

On the basis of Simmel's monetary philosophy, Lukacs formed a special reification theory. In "monetary philosophy," Simmel emphasized the symbolic nature of money. Money is not only the medium of exchange, but also the embodiment of social relations. Lukacs was inspired by this view. Therefore, when analyzing the phenomenon of reification, he found the social relations hidden behind money. Lukacs believes that in capitalist society, the development of commodity production has led to the intensification of reification. However, as the medium of commodity exchange, money reflects the social relations between commodity producers. In addition, Simmel explores the nature of currency exchange as a reflection of social relations and the distribution of power [8].

Based on this, Lukacs analyzed the currency exchange in the process of reification. It is found that in capitalist society, workers obtain money by selling their own labor force, and then buy living materials. This is the exchange process of labor and currency, reflecting the complex relationship between workers and means of production and production relations. Lukacs believes that this exchange relationship leads to the reification of workers. Simmel believes that money has timeliness, which can transcend the limitations of time and space and become an eternal value symbol. Lukacs also noticed the importance of time factor in the analysis of reification. He believes that with the development of capitalism, the phenomenon of reification has gradually penetrated into all areas of social life. It is manifested in the exchange of goods and currency circulation in the economic field, and widely exists in various fields such as politics, culture and ideology. As a common social psychological phenomenon, the consciousness of reification makes people unconsciously identify with the external reification phenomenon and structure, and regard it as the external law and the original destiny of human beings. The formation of materialized consciousness is closely related to the timeliness of money, because money, as a means of value storage, makes people pay more attention to the immediate interests and ignore the long-term development.

1.4. Marx's Commodity Fetishism Thought

In 'capitalism', the main connotation of commodity fetishism is expounded by Marx. In the commodity economy based on private ownership, the relationship between people is obscured by the relationship between things, so that the commodity has a mysterious attribute, which makes it seem to have the mysterious power to determine the fate of commodity producers. In the 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844', 'Fetishism' was first cited, and the famous labor alienation theory was put forward in the book,

pointing out that the labor alienation under the private ownership production relationship led to a serious reversal of the relationship between workers and labor products. In the 'Economic Manuscripts of 1857-1858', the discussion system of commodity fetishism was initially formed. Capitalism points out that in capitalist production relations, private ownership of means of production and socialized mass production are a basic contradiction, which determines the fate of labor producers and leads to the alienation of the relationship between people into the relationship between things under certain conditions. As the main body of practice to promote social development and progress, people should be the dominators of commodity production and circulation, rather than being dominated by the commodity economy. However, in real life, people are dominated by a wide variety of commodities, and even become slaves of material products [9].

Lukacs's reification theory inherits the idea of "commodity fetishism," and on this basis, puts forward the concept of "reification." At the beginning of 'History and Class Consciousness', the structure of commodity fetishism is described. This clearly shows that Lukacs's reification theory inherits Marx's thinking and puts his own unique reification theory in the context of commodity fetishism. Through the citation status of 'history and class consciousness', Lukacs cited more texts of Marx's mature period, mainly focusing on 'Critique of Political Economy' and 'Capitalism' (Volume I). Although the 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844' was published later than 'History and Class Consciousness', Lukacs's conception and formation of reification theory were deeply influenced by Marx's research from the perspective of text and logical structure of discourse.

2. The Main Performance of Lukacs's Reification Theory

2.1. The Field of Economy

reification means that in capitalist society, the relationship between people is covered and replaced by the relationship between things, thus presenting a non-human, objective and independent state controlled by human power. In the economic field, this reification phenomenon is particularly prominent. The activities of labourers, the products of labour and the whole process of production are regarded as commodities, which follows the natural law of the market. In capitalist society, commodity relations become common social relations. At the same time, the labor force has also become a commodity, which is used to sell in exchange for living materials. This commodity relationship simplifies the relationship between people into the relationship between things, that is, the relationship between commodities.

In addition, the labor process of workers is also materialized as a commodity production process, which leads to the suppression of workers' personality and creativity, making labor mechanized and monotonous. At this time, the laborer is no longer the subject of the production process, but the object controlled and dominated by the production process. The relationship between capitalists and workers in capitalist production relations is also materialized as a commodity exchange relationship. Capitalists exploit the surplus value of workers, and workers rely on the sale of labor to maintain their livelihoods. In the process of buying and selling labor, the exploitation and oppression of workers by capitalists is obscured by this materialized relationship. In the market

economy, the market rules become the power to rule everything. Market factors such as commodity prices, supply and demand determine the behavior and decision-making of producers, while people's subjective will and needs are placed in a secondary position, which leads to more serious reification in the economic field.

2.2. The Field of Politics

Lukacs has a profound insight that the social structure is extremely complex, so it is one-sided to analyze only the reification phenomenon in the field of production. He extended the study of reification theory to the political field and revealed an intricate phenomenon of reification. In the political field, Marxist historical materialism and Weber's rationalization theory are skillfully integrated by Lukacs. Based on Marxist historical materialism as a theory, the root of the phenomenon of reification in the political field has been traced by Lukacs to the economic foundation and class relations of capitalist society. Through the internal logic and dynamic mechanism, the commercialization of political power and the bureaucratization of the bureaucratic system have been formed, which is the inevitable product of contradictions and conflicts in capitalist society. At the same time, with the help of Weber's rationalization theory, the highly rational and systematic operation of the materialized political organization is meticulously depicted by Lukacs. In capitalist society, the rationalization of enterprises' pursuit of economic efficiency is extended to state organs, which is manifested in centralized tax mechanism, unified command of military power, monopoly use of law and violence, and management mode with bureaucratic system as the core. These "reasonable behaviors" seem to be efficient and orderly, but in fact, they aggravate the reification trend of society. Therefore, the political organization itself becomes the carrier of the reification phenomenon.

It is worth noting that the phenomenon of human reification in the political field has been particularly emphasized by Lukacs, especially the typical representative of the capitalist bureaucracy. After professional training, these bureaucrats have superb management skills and professional knowledge, but they have gradually lost their individual independent consciousness and critical spirit, and then become a screw in the huge bureaucratic machine. As a highly materialized system, the bureaucratic system limits the exertion of personal potential and the publicity of personality, and dispels people's yearning and pursuit for a better life. Compared with the reification of workers on the production line, the suppression and distortion of human nature by the bureaucratic system is more profound and hidden. Through a comprehensive analysis of the reification of the political field, Lukacs revealed the internal contradictions and conflicts of the capitalist social structure. In the context of capitalism, the reification process in the political field is related to the change of organizational form. This touches on the profound changes in the state of individual existence and reminds relevant scholars to reflect and seek a path beyond reification.

2.3. The Field of Consciousness

In Lukacs's view, reification is not only an objective social phenomenon, but also gradually internalized into people's consciousness structure. In the field of consciousness, the consciousness of reification is mainly manifested in the prevalence of commodity fetishism, the reification of thinking mode and the manipulation of cultural industry. The

prevalence of commodity fetishism refers to the mysterious power of commodities. In the process of blind worship and pursuit of commodities, the relationship between people behind commodities will be ignored. This commodity fetishism thought has led to a profound impact on people's values and behavior. The reification of the way of thinking refers to the fact that people are accustomed to looking at the world and others with a materialized perspective, and quantifying everything as a computable and measurable standard.

In this way of thinking, the nature and internal relations of things will be ignored, which makes it difficult for people to grasp and understand the world as a whole. The manipulation of cultural industry means that with the development of capitalist cultural industry, cultural products are produced and copied in large quantities to meet people's consumption needs. However, these cultural products are often infiltrated and manipulated by materialized consciousness and become a tool to maintain the order of capitalist rule. Under the influence of these cultural products, critical consciousness and independent thinking ability are gradually losing.

3. The Realistic Core of Lukacs's Reification Theory

The reification phenomenon widely existing in the early Western capitalist society was profoundly revealed by Lukacs's reification theory. This theory not only focuses on the economic field, but also deeply analyzes the reification phenomenon and its harm at the political and ideological levels. Although Lukacs's analysis has the background of capitalism in a specific historical period, his views still have strong penetration and vitality today, especially in the context of the continuous development of capitalist countries and the ever-changing global landscape. In the process of rapid development and transformation of the global economy, China is also facing various emerging challenges and contradictions, and there are inevitably signs of reification in some areas. In this context, it is of inestimable value and practical significance for China to re-examine Lukacs's theory of reification and to prevent and resolve the negative impact of reification [10].

3.1. Perfection of Market Economy System

The economic reification theory in Lukacs's reification theory reveals the reification phenomenon and its adverse effects in the economic field of capitalist society. In the capitalist relations of production, workers have lost their subjectivity and become links and tools on the production line, which has led to more division and inequality in society, accelerated the alienation of social relations, and promoted the increasing prevalence of consumerism and the increasingly distorted values. Under the socialist market economic system with Chinese characteristics, although it is essentially different from the capitalist economy, it also faces similar materialized phenomena and challenges in the process of pursuing material wealth and productivity development. Therefore, by drawing on the wisdom of Lukacs's reification theory, it is conducive to better improving China's market economic system.

Due to the spontaneity and blindness of the market itself, the government needs to play a guiding role to strengthen macro-control. By formulating reasonable economic policies and laws and regulations, we should standardize market order

and economic behavior, so as to prevent people from losing themselves due to the pursuit of interests, and even make behaviors that are contrary to morality and norms. By advocating a healthy and civilized consumption concept, people are encouraged to make reasonable consumption based on actual needs. Avoid excessive consumption and waste of resources, in order to reduce the material pursuit of people's spiritual life of extrusion and erosion. In addition, while pursuing economic growth, we should pay attention to the quality and efficiency of economic development. By promoting the optimization and upgrading of industrial structure, strengthening scientific and technological innovation and personnel training, the endogenous power and sustainability of economic development have been significantly improved.

3.2. The Advocacy of People-Oriented Social Development Concept

In capitalist commodity production, the social nature of people's labor is covered by the form of goods. This reification phenomenon widely exists in economic, political, ideological and other social fields. The reification makes people's behavior gradually become estranged from themselves, and people's subjectivity and creativity are weakened, and even alienated into passive objects. Therefore, in order to overcome the negative impact of reification and realize the free and comprehensive development of human beings, we must adhere to the people-oriented social development concept. Paying attention to the subjectivity of human beings and respecting the dignity and value of each person, it is necessary to avoid seeing people as tools or means of economic development, and encourage individuals to be autonomous and creative in labor, learning and creation. In addition, by strengthening social construction, improving the social security system, promoting social fairness and justice and other measures to build a harmonious interpersonal relationship, and enhance social cohesion and centripetal force, which will allow people to feel warmth and care in society. Most importantly, adhere to the people-oriented concept of social development, the key is to strengthen the system construction, improve laws and regulations, protect the rights and interests of the people.

3.3. Rational View of the Dual Role of Science and Technology

With the rapid development of science and technology, human beings in modern society are facing the profound influence and challenge of machines, artificial intelligence and rules. In the wave of science and technology economy of digital industrialization and industrial digitization, the subjectivity and creativity of workers have been continuously weakened, and eventually become a part of the production line. This reification phenomenon is particularly significant in the industrialization process of capitalist countries. China's current intelligent manufacturing, import and export trade, transportation, energy security and other fields all highlight the power of cutting-edge technology represented by big data and artificial intelligence. Although the prosperity of social economy has been greatly promoted by science and technology, the double-edged sword characteristics of science and technology cannot be ignored. While bringing hope and

convenience, it has also caused many problems such as environmental degradation, ethical conflicts, and security risks. The abuse of genetic technology, the threat of nuclear weapons, network information security and other issues, but also the negative effects of science and technology to the public view. The alienation of science and technology warns people that we must face up to its potential risks and seek a balance.

Therefore, we should hold a dialectical attitude towards the rapid progress of science and technology. We should not only make full use of its positive role in promoting social progress and liberating productive forces, but also be vigilant and guard against its possible negative effects. In the face of the double-edged sword characteristics of scientific and technological development, we should adhere to proceed from reality, deeply analyze the two sides of the problem, and strive to minimize its adverse effects while promoting scientific and technological progress. Every major breakthrough in science and technology is a powerful driving force for innovation and development. In the face of the challenges brought by the technological revolution, we should actively respond to them and adhere to the use of scientific decision-making to meet the practical difficulties, so as to realize the harmonious development of science and technology, society and environment. Only in this way can we move forward steadily in the wave of science and technology and move towards a better future.

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