

Discussion on the Six problems about Information in the Philosophical Viewpoint

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Abstract: *From the philosophical angle, discussed the six problems about information: first, discussion on the concept of social information based on the theory of ontology, Second, the creation of information and the social information communication , Third, the practice and the reality of the social information, Fourth, on the truth information, Fifth, virtualization and the truth information, Sixth, on the “social information” consumption, etc.*

Key words: *information, Philosophy, problems*

1 Approach to the Philosophical Research on Information

Along with the development of modern science and technology, the science research is constantly strengthening its internal integration ,interaction and innovation among the specific subjects of the science .The philosophical research on information is very important for the integration of modern science and contemporary culture and philosophy. The approach to the philosophical research on information is the generalization of the branch of the various specific information sciences, especially the social information sciences.In china, the scholars had a lot of original research on “social information science”.However, in “social information science”field,the research on the field of the basic theory is very weak, and its basic theoretical part of concepts, theories, the systems and the methods have never been constructed.

In my opinion ,the philosophical studies on information must realize the ontological conversion. The category of information is a multi-dimensional concept, and the connotation of the concept of information not only has the natural characteristics, but there are distinct anthropological characteristics, and the latter is even more meaningful.therefore, the main idea of the philosophical research on information should be based on the general definition, the general understanding of the social nature of information, with a whole view to strengthen the integration and the conceptual innovation of the various fundamental subjects of information, and realize the meaning and the value of the social existence of information.As the cross-sectional and comprehensive studies, the philosophical research on information is to provide the basic theories and disciplines on the methodology for each specific social information science,and it can be used as the link to the unity between the social sciences and the natural sciences for their continuously strengthening the internal integration and innovation, which help to construct the relationship between the basic theories of the domain, ideas and theories of modern sciences .

2 On Social Information :in the Ontological Viewpoint

In the process of the movement and the development of information itself, in the ontological sense,there are three forms of information,that is,“information-in-itself,information-for-itself and the regenerative information.”¹

“Information-in-itself” is essentially the natural information form, and from the analysis of the relationship with people, it is the statement that has not been being understood and grasped by human beings. When intuitively grasped by people, it is another form called “information -for-itself”, The third form of information is the “regenerative information” produced in human’s thinking process,which is a new information form that distinguished human beings from animals, and is a creative form of information in the process of people’s information activity.The social creation of information ,as the activity of the creation of the truth world and the significance ,is undoubtedly surmounted firstly the form of “information -in-itself”. In the ontological view , the “ information -in-itself “ always has the possibility to transform itself into the form of “information -for-itself ”and the form of the “regenerative information”,and it is a leap from nature to the society.In the process , the “ information -in-itself ”has its realistic meaning and form in society. Because “ thing –for –itself” still does not rely on people's consciousness and activities,obviously, this process contained some kind of the

1 WuKun. The philosophy of Information. The commercial press, 2005, pp. 47-55.

naturalness.

In the general practice, the “information” has the construction of its external social formation, that is, the social information still has its inevitable part of “information-in-itself”. But fundamentally, as the information activity of the subject, “being-in-itself” is the ontological premise, and this fact decided at the same time that human beings could never be away from the nature when he stepped into the society. It actually provided that the continuity between the “three forms of information” of “information-in-itself, information-for-itself and the regenerative information”.

Therefore, the “social information”, according to its original nature, just as professor WuKun said, it is not an independent form of information, but the unity of the three forms of information existed in social practice.²

3 On the Social Creation and Communication of Information

The concept of creation, in modern Chinese context, the meaning is “the act of starting something for the first time; introducing something new”.

Therefore, the social information creation is the construction by the information in human’s memory and perception, and producing the social information that not yet existed from the information that have been existed. The creation process, to a certain extent, is the unity of the “three forms of information” and the “three types of information in quality”.

In the philosophical classification of information, professor WuKun pointed out that the existence of information has three types (stages) in quality.³ Because any object, firstly, has its internal structure being as the material existence existed directly by itself, and the contents in the information field produced by the object itself must take its direct existence as the first type (stage). However, any object is being as a kind of information, and when the structure and status of the object itself showed in the information field, their information existence is also displayed. And this part of information is the contents of the second type (stage) of information in quality shown in the information field. When we considering the nature of the information in the information relationship not by objective but by subjective, and by the active role in human consciousness, the existence of the information is the third type (stage) of quality. The activities of the creation of the social information, as a process conducted by human’s own will and by the multi-level intermediaries realized the unity of the “three types (stages) information in quality.” Of course, essentially, it shall be deemed to be a process of thinking. The reason is that the new information distinguished from “information-in-itself” and “information-for-itself” produced by the process of human thinking, such as the third type (stage) of information in quality. Obviously, only the human thinking activity can really fit the nature of the creation of the social information. The social ecology and the tool’s system restrict greatly the activity of the creation of the social information, and there are different forms and nature of social information in different stages of the society.

In the paper, *Multi-dimensional Thinking on the Communication of Social Information*, I thought that the social communication of information which has the relative character of speciality and independence should not be analyzed with the nature communication and other human instinct activities. The sociality, time-spirits, scientificness, practice and openness are the basic nature of the social information communication activities. And the technical factors and the non-technical factors both affect the communication of social information. The reformation of the human society and the production mode have the consistency with the creation, the communication and the realization of the social information, etc. In the information age, the “equality” and “indirect” factors in the research on the model of the tendency of the social information communication should play a more prominent role. The relationship of the character of the “direct” and “indirect” are dialectical in social information communication. The communication model of the “mass experts mass” in which the reappearing of the role of the “experts” who would be an equal element in the process of the communication of social information has been taking shape. “people-oriented” idea in the social information communication requests the “communicators” to be responsible for their communication activities. No doubt, the Network communication has the nature of non-authority and interactivity, and the disappearing of the Mass and the authority is the important essential character in network communication.⁴

4 On Practice and the Social Realization of Information

² WuKun. The philosophy of Information. The commercial press, 2005, pp. 61-64.

³ WuKun. The philosophy of Information. The commercial press, 2005, pp. 61-64.

⁴ Cai Dongwei, Multi-dimensional thinking on the communication of social information, Journal of Huazhong University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition), no. 5(2009), pp. 88-91.

On the dimension of the humanization of the nature or the interaction of the subject and the object, the original form of human activity is practice, because the world would not actively ease the people, nor spontaneously satisfy the people's needs, and practice is the direct intermediary in the relation between human and nature. It should be mentioned, not all the information created by human can be realized objectively, and only when it is not only consistent with the nature and the law of the movement and the development of things, but also has the possibility to be the reality, it could be transformed into the objective reality. If we say that the "information-for-itself" is congruently patterned with the intuitive understanding of the object, however, the activity of the social realization of information has transcended the intuitive correspondence with the concrete object directly.

Easy to see, the social realization of the information in fact is the activities of the information got its reality, or the humanization of nature in society ("thing-in-itself" being the object for human beings) which displayed the process of the people's essential existence by the subjective objectification and also changed the mode of the existence of the unique object, and obtained the reality by forming the essential contact with the existence of people.

The social realization of information is not a process of pure material. Actually, the realization happened in the "society", namely, with the existence of the type of the "social information", it showed the character of the unity of "truth", "goodness" and "beauty", because of the consistency of the confirmation to the existence of "truth" with the changing of "thing-in-itself" (the material and the information) by people. In fact, the point of the essence of the changing from "thing-in-itself" to the existence of the humanization is that the world meets people's needs. When the naturalness meets the needs of people by the interaction with people, just as Yang said, it also presented the value of "good", and the meaning of beauty is still relative to human beings. Just in the aesthetic activities and the aesthetic consciousness, beauty got the significance.⁵ Therefore, by the connotation of the relationship of the people with the world of "truth", "goodness" and "beauty", the "information" got its social meaning. Then, through the recognition and evaluation activities in the conscious level, and the external existence being a kind of "social information" based on the general practice, the world showed its reality of truth and significance, and at the same time, the "information" realized the deep connotation.

5 the Truth of Information

The truth of information is the guarantee to realize the information in society. In the perspective of information epistemology, "the object itself is whatever impossible to enter the body of its cognizant subject, what can merely enter into the subjective consciousness is the information of the object that has already changed in many intermediaries and in several transformations, and by the selection, construction of the subject."⁶ Namely, the interaction between the subject and the object, or the grasp to the truth of the object is by the multilevel information intermediaries. Undoubtedly, the object of the truth is a kind of social information. The reasonable understanding of the correspondence theory of truth is the realization of the unification of the contradiction between the subjective information and the objective information in human society, we also can say, which is the unity in practice. Because the consistency of the practice with knowledge is in the information activities that we put as a complete process of human's understanding, the essence of seeking truth is the regeneration by theories of discovering the true information of the object. Therefore, it needs to point out that "the reality", "the real information" and "the truth" should not be considered as the same concept. Generally speaking, the cognitive process of people must be a kind of process of value, and the truth is a special kind of valuable information, because "any kind of knowledge is the result of the effect of the interaction of the object information and the people's cognitive information structure, and it is a kind of process of the producing of value".⁷

6 Virtualization and the Truth Information

In some sense, the people's essential strength firstly take the ability of information activities as their expression. The practical relations of people with the world are always in different models which corresponded to different information activities. Therefore, the ability of the information activities or informatization level formed and restricted the internal conditions of human's truth world.

⁵ Yang Guorong, Meaning and Real, Journal of Social Sciences. no. 4(2008), pp. 126-127.

⁶ WuKun. The philosophy of Information. The commercial press, 2005, pp. 168.

⁷ WuKun. The philosophy of Information. The commercial press, 2005, pp. 360.

The information age has given rise to the virtual community and the virtual practice. No doubt, as a kind of virtualization of the performance of informatization, it has important significance about the existence and the evolution of truth. Firstly, it will bring a new character for the creation of the truth information, and among them, the most outstanding character is the creation activity of the truth information is more and more indirect. The reason is that the process of the information creation activity increasingly is relying on the evolution of the external physical tools and intermediaries. For example, in the perspective of human's "social information" system development, the electronic media to certain extent bring a big leap to the creation of the truth information in the efficiency and quality.

Prompted the evolution of the video and audio information systems of people, also, every major technical innovation and invention of tools have made a revolution of the pattern of the creation of the social information. And according to the continuous development of the information sciences and technology, the virtual practice has been playing the dominant role in human's practice. Optimistically, we can see, it has brought a lot of new opportunities for the evolution of the truth world.

In my opinion, besides the admission that the material practice is the sole criterion for testing truth, along with the complexity of human knowledge and the increasing enhancement of the virtualization, the gain of truth information has more and more depended on the logic and thinking, or the truth, as a special kind of "social information", also generated by the virtual practice activities. Because, in essence, the virtual practice is a virtual "social information" activity. If we regarded the "virtual information" which created by virtual practice and has truth nature as the "virtual truth", the "virtual truth" is the reflection of the truth of the social information, taking the "true" as its quality, and realized the mutual "consistent" and "correspondence" of the information of the subject and the object.

7 the Consumption of the "Social Information"

The outstanding performance of the ability of people in the information activities is that we both as the consumers, the producers and the carriers of information. In the narrow sense, the information consumption is the "social information" consumption, is a kind of information consumption in human society. Then, the information consumption is the activities consuming the products and services of the information directly or indirectly. The "social information" consumption is restricted by various factors, and the core factor is the social conditions which have both the spatial dimension and the time dimension. In different stages of the society, the "social information" consumption has different properties, mode and means. In the "social information" consumption activities, one has a character of dual existence of being the consumer and the producer.

Usually, the resource of the "social information" in consumption is regarded as pollution-free, ecological, however, the "social information" products and informational symbols and symbolic material products must have their material support. Therefore, the "social information" consumption is not absolutely no loss, renewable, and it also could lead to the natural material consumption, and produce the environmental pressure, in the end, affect the person's healthy development.

On the road for people to realize their essence and the all-round development, the consumption of the "social information" like a "double-edged sword", and there exists a tendency of alienation in the consumption ecology. The tendency reflected essentially the contradiction among the relation of human and nature, supply and demand, and also reflected the contradiction in humanized nature. It should be said that we need to pay more special attention to the problems of the ecology of the consumption of the "social information".

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