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Campus Public Art and Latent Moral Education

Based on the Theoretical Perspective of Educational Ecology*

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Abstract—The education ecology emphasizes the organic connection between ecological environment of education and the various elements of education, and pays attention to the ecological balance of the education process. The campus public art creates "environment" from "art", and generates "the emotion" from "environment". And then, it would enter the "heart" from "the emotion". Its unique process perception, the non-mandatory nature of educators and educatees, and the transcendence of educational content and form make it be innovation carrier for university moral education. It also corroborates the dynamic equilibrium relationship between moral education and ecological environment elements in the education system.

Keywords——education ecology; laten moral education; public art; dynamic balance

I. Introduction

Education ecology is a discipline that studies the interaction and mechanism between education and its surrounding environment. According to the education ecology theory of American educationist Lawrence Cremin, education should be based on ecological principles and be dedicated to solving the contradiction between the internal environment and the external environment of education. Through the mutual adjustment and transcendence of the internal and external environment, it would achieve harmonious development and virtuous cycle of education. And then, it can promote the continuous progress of society. At present, the perspective of "education ecology" is imperative. Since the birth of higher education in China, it has had a strong one-way management model. With the advent of reform and opening up and the era of market economy, higher education has transformed from elite education to mass education. It has many problems such as the contradiction between scale expansion and quality assurance, the contradiction between the independence of school running and the state administrative management, and the balance between market demand and the main development goal. All of these made higher education face internal and external difficulties. And it is urgent to break through. In a word, the external relation between higher education, market and government, as well as the internal governance of higher education, has prompted the dynamic

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changes in the concept and methods of higher education. "Latent moral education" refers to the dynamic adjustment made by higher education in accordance with changes in the background and situation of the times on campus moral education. It originates from the traditional characteristics of "rearing morality with aesthetic education". It has changed "instillation". It emphasizes the "latency". Many colleges and universities have made useful explorations in this concept. History and reality have proved it. "In the new historical period, implicit education is a special and most effective form of ideological and political education. [1]

II. THE COMMONNESS OF EDUCATIONAL ECOLOGY AND LATENT MORAL EDUCATION

Since the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States period, Lao Tzu has proposed the concept of "teaching without words". And Confucius has proposed the concept of "transferring social atmosphere and changing people's customs, there is nothing better than music." Plato and Aristotle have emphasized that art education is the best form of moral education. In fact, the idea of latent moral education in the form and content has begun to brewing and taking root. Until today, Chinese and Western education circles have obtained "natural education" from "activities" and "feelings" advocated by Rousseau. Lu Jie has put forward the idea of "morality coming from life". Ye Lan think that life is the origin of pedagogic thinking. All of these have become the basis for the theory of "latent moral education." Thousands of years of theoretical evolution have been consistent. That is to say, nature and society, learning and life constitute a complete system of moral education field. People can always learn from the nourishment of moral education. In terms of practice, information explosion and multiculturalism have influenced the thought and inner heart of people, especially young students. It should effectively guide young college students to establish correct outlook on life, world outlook and values, and achieve the purpose of moral education become the focus of colleges and universities and the entire society. Obviously, college students gradually can't accept explicit and straightforward indoctrinate moral education in the new era. And it has continued to raise the recognition of implicit, latent, and unconscious moral education. "School education or explicit education decides a moment, and social education or latent education decides the life." [2] This point



of view more clearly shows the necessity and importance of latent moral education.

As far as educational ecology is concerned, Cremin extends "research on all the organizations, ideas, results, and individuals that make up the educational experience of the United States [3]". Also, he extends the scope on nature and society, learning and life. We can discuss the commonality of Cremin's educational ecology and latent moral education from at least three aspects. First is Cremin's new definition of education. "I regard education as a prudent and systematic process that needs continuous efforts to arouse the knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and emotions." Education is no longer just a synonym for school education. It includes education and growth that are conscious and intergenerational. It also contains more diverse educational institutions or educational elements for infiltration education. They together constitute systematic field. With mutual influence and containment, it is consistent with the field constituted by moral education. Second, Cremin believes that families, churches, museums, scientific societies, schools and other educational institutions in the educational structures will interact with each other. "It may be complementary or independent. It may be harmonious. It may also be a conflict." [5] This is also true in latent moral education. Because of its different standpoints and perspectives, the institutions or elements of the moral education system sometimes have their own circumstances. And sometimes, they agree on methods and goals. Third, Cremin proposed three ways of thinking: comprehensive thinking, connected thinking, and public thinking. These three ways of thinking are applicable to latent moral education. The first explicit or latent moral education is a systematic project. When formulating public policies, we must inspect and pay attention to them as a whole. We should try our best to involve the entire society in its educational situation. Secondly, the morality can't be separated from the education. It must construct the connection between on-campus and offcampus, the connection between family and society, the connection between universities and primary and secondary schools, the connection between schools and all kinds of social institutions, the connection among all kinds of educational elements in schools such as teaching and practice, classroom education and environment, etc. Third, in the era of pursuing individuality and pluralism, explicit and preaching moral education has been unable to satisfy reality. And on the premise of mutual respect and understanding, the public will has been released. And then, it will imperceptibly achieve the latent moral education of common values. It is more appropriate to the characteristics of the times. And the content and teaching methods of moral education are updated according to the changes of the times and the characteristics of groups. These are typical features of pursuing dynamic balance in ecology.

III. CAMPUS PUBLIC ART FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATION ECOLOGY

Why does campus public art become an educational method or educational content? This is an innate function of campus public art as an "art". The art creates "environment"

from "art", and generates "the emotion" from "environment". And then, it would enter the "heart" from "the emotion". It would achieve the effect of education. This has been confirmed by ancient and modern Chinese and foreign scholars. As a public art of educational methods and content, the basic criterion is usually described as the following. The works are created for the widest audience. And they are placed somewhere to attract people's attention. It aims to provide an inspiring, memorable or entertaining aesthetic experience. The information it conveys is easy to understand for the general public. [6] This narrative is profoundly intrinsic. It conveys three characteristics of public art: artistry, publicity, and culture. These three characteristics make campus public art be a miniature template for educational ecosystems. First of all, the public art of the campus has become one of the best forms of regulating the educational ecosystem with the function of art. Secondly, the public art of campus and the educational ecosystem have homogeneity in their operation rules. Campus public art uses diverse external aesthetic forms to create works to attract audiences. Its "artistry" corresponds to the "diversity" of the educational ecosystem. Public art works are in the "public field" and face the "public", expressing or embodying "public awareness". This "publicity" corresponds to the "openness" of the educational ecosystem. Public art works are a cultural and social symbol. It carries certain social spirit. And its goal is to unify the external form of the work with the inner spirit. And it should make the work be consistent with its geographical environment and social environment. Thereby, it would highlight its social spirit. This harmony of "internal and external form" is the systematic principle or goal of educational ecology. Therefore, campus public art is like a miniature version of the educational ecosystem. The works or the relationship between people and the environment follows the laws of ecology.

Taking the principle of harmony in education ecology as an example, its connotation of harmony emphasizes the coordination between education and its surrounding ecological environment, the coordination of various elements of education, and the coordination between the environment and the main element of people. The campus public art pays more attention to "harmony between man and nature". The works should interact with the natural environment, campus humanities, regional culture, the psychology of the educatee (ie, human factors), and educational goals. Ultimately, it would achieve the goal of harmony. "The harmonious beauty of campus public art in colleges and universities has rich aesthetic connotation. That is to say, it comprehensively implies the elements of publicity, integration of nature and man, campus culture, imprints of times, and humane care. [7] "The Sacred Wood" was used as the prototype of university campus that ancient Greek would carry out public activities such as music, theatre performances, poetry recitations and speeches. In the design, they often use large forest lands to set off the temple to create a sacred atmosphere and a good natural atmosphere. For example, Academy, which is called the first university in Europe, is located on the beautiful River Safisias. The forests on both sides are lush and graceful. The buildings and sculptures of the school are hidden in the depths of a cluster of greenery. Plato would



take the branches as the pen and the land as paper. They would draw a geometric map to spread knowledge. [8] On the one hand, learning in such a beautiful environment can make people's minds quiet and enjoyable. On the other hand, they can stimulate thinking and lead people to think deeply. The public art in the modern university campus emphasizes the harmony and interaction of landscape architecture and people's ideological behavior. Stanford University was described as one of the most beautiful universities in the world. The first president of the university made an opening message. "Long corridors and solemn columns will also be part of student education... Every stone in the Quadrangle can teach people to know decency and honest." [9] "The moonlight in the lotus pond" wrote by Zhu Ziqing of Tsinghua University and the unnamed lakefronts of Peking University have been cultural holy places for Chinese and even world students to be inspired. It is the harmony of public art landscapes, natural environments, cultural carrier and the needs of the audience.

The open connotation of educational ecology refers to the openness of education to the overall ecological environment (social, spiritual, and natural). On the other hand, it refers to the fact that the various elements within education are also mutually open and interact with each other. Thus, they would constitute a cyclical, dynamic and balanced system. In fact, the diversity of educational ecology is also related to this. With diverse element content and elemental forms, it constitutes a complex educational ecosystem. Campus public art is a tiny but necessary element and factor in the university education system. It forms a complete education system together with other elements. And it forms and affects the ecological environment of education. It affects the ecological environment of education with the "publicity" attached to the body. First of all, this is reflected in the public spaces in the university campus where public art is set up, such as libraries, gymnasiums, and big lawns. The teachers and students are free to enter in these places. The teachers and students can freely enter in virtual public spaces such as Campus BBS, Renren, etc. Public art works can enter these public spaces in the form of video and audio, VR and other forms. Secondly, the "public field" refers to the "public awareness" of teachers and students reflected in the public art of the university campus. That is the right of teachers and students to participate in the public art of the campus and the right to evaluate the public art. In the "Research on Contemporary Public Art", Zhao Zhihong stated: "The 'publicity' of public art refers to the public of the place where the works of art are located. People can freely enter and leave such places. And they can get close to and learn about the works of art. At the same time, public art also indicates its source of value and goal. That is, the 'public' of public art is a public issue presented in an artistic way. It has common interests. And people need to think and answer such questions." [10] Therefore, Zhao Zhihong's "publicity" has raised public art to a kind of "public responsibility" of people's imitativeness or passiveness. Regardless of whether people express themselves or not, it is an attitude for the "public art work.

With the advent of the mass era, public art on campus is increasingly focusing on the expression of "public

awareness". However, whether this "public awareness" can connect with creators, audiences, and the environment is a difficult problem at present. "Once public art is presented in a public space, the intention of the work, the taste of the public, the interpretation of the scholars, and the power of the media often make the functions of public art cover up its inherent characteristics as an art. And then, it would become the tools for the community to express its political and cultural ideals or certain rights and interests." [10] At the same time, when public art talks with the public, the complexity of the public, the appreciation of art, and the difference in understanding will all lead to completely different consequences. For this reason, the place or effective role of campus public art in the educational ecosystem is full of games and hardships. How do university presidents who are the administrators of education represent the university spirit through the public art of the school? How do teachers and scholars as educators participate in constructing and evaluating campus public art? How does public art on campus reflect the "public consciousness" of the educatee? Under the situation of university education, how will the public participate in the public art on campus? Will history repeat the "Tilted Arc" incident? This series of questions has become the proper thinking for conducting latent moral education from the perspective of education ecology.

IV. THE IMPLEMENTATION PATH OF CAMPUS PUBLIC ART AS A CARRIER OF LATENT MORAL EDUCATION

Universities and urban civilizations accompany each other. University campuses have become a symbol of urban image, especially cultural image. For example, Oxford University is in London. Harvard University is in Boston. Fudan University is in Shanghai. And Tsinghua University and Peking University are in Beijing. It is necessary to bear the historical accumulation and cultural characteristics of a city. It is also necessary to demonstrate the cultural spirit and historical heritage of the university. It is also necessary to consider the public awareness of teachers and students in the school with the changes of times. From ancient times to the present, from the inside outside, the campus public art cannot break away from the category and laws of educational ecology. In this context, the construction of campus public art as the carrier of latent moral education should pay attention to the following three issues.

A. The Aesthetic Regression of Materialized Form of Campus Public Art

In ancient China, it believes the aesthetic consciousness of the unity of "beauty" and "virtue". Plato believed that beauty was a kind of idea in the West. Hegel thought that aesthetics was a kind of spiritual creation in which people's subjective spirit actively participates in. Sukhomlinskii said that the beauty was a powerful source of moral purity, spiritual enrichment and physical integrity. Schiller believed that the moral state only developed from the aesthetic state and cannot develop from the natural state. The beauty has always had an inseparable relationship with virtue. Gadamer proposed that "aesthetic education" had a tremendous effect on moral and political freedom. The concept of "rearing



morality with aesthetic education" has never left the field in both Chinese and Western history and reality. However, since China's reform and opening up, the social transformation, the multiple appeals, the impact of the globalization, and the impact of cultural conflicts have plunged society into the dilemma of diversification of moral values and aesthetics of daily life. Restrained by cultural attainment and aesthetic attainment, people are chasing large amounts of artistic works that focus on form and ignore content, focus on busyness and ignore promotion, focus on catering and ignore guidance, and focus on entertainment and ignore education. Their focus is away from people's livelihood and humanity. [11] This is especially true of campus public art. We can see the art works that are full of political preaching and concept. The far-fetched moral education function surpasses or completely replaces the aesthetics of the original materialized form, resulting in the deviation of the essence and artistic effect of campus public art. As a result, the disruption of the school's gardening environment and the breaks in cultural heritage made the university lose its original ecological and spiritual qualities.

"Public art would satisfy the rich needs of people's thoughts, feelings, spirit and senses through the form of visual aesthetics." [12] Now, we can return to the most original concept of "art". "Visual aesthetics" is the origin of everything. Therefore, public artwork on campus should first have a visual sense of beauty, harmony with campus architecture, and appropriate expression of campus culture. It requires the aesthetic and innovation of campus public art activities in the form of expression and creation style, as well as the continuity with campus history, city image and regional culture. For example, Donald Fountain in Harvard University consists of 159 natural stones. It is a circle. The middle recession is the hole of a fountain. Stones are irregularly scattered around the surrounding grass. The water mist of the fountain shrouds the stones. Especially in winter, the thermal system provides constant source of heat for fountains. It is dreamlike. Teachers and students and tourists from all over the world will be attracted by this slightly mysterious landscape. It is in harmony with Harvard's classical architectural style, which makes people indulge in the enjoyment of the beauty. In such a situation, people feel nobility from the inside out. And the conversation would become polite. For example, during the 2008 Beijing Olympics Games, Peking University held a Tai Chi sculpture exhibition entitled "Olympics in Peking University, Watching Taiji in Jing Garden". At the time, there are four 4.1 meters tall, single-style and large-scale Tai Chi Chuan sculptures and 666 sculptures of various forms. The sculptures are vivid, majestic, quiet, elegant and exquisite. They would complement each other and integrate with the ethos and cultural connotation of Peking University. When teachers, students and visitors of Peking University get the enjoyment of beauty, they get the appreciation of Chinese traditional culture and spiritual sublimation.

B. The Shaping of the Public Spirit of Campus Public Art

What is the public spirit? Western scholar Robert Patnan pointed out: "Public spirit is a value orientation based on

citizenship and society that is rooted in the deepest basic moral and political values in the public society. It contains democracy, equality, freedom, order, and basic value propositions such as public interest and responsibility." [13] Because of the differences of democratization process, scholars usually define the public spirit under the premise of the general respect for individual will in China. In the public life of modern civil society, the individual and the community should have rational styles and beautiful styles of rationality, fairness, tolerance, understanding, sympathy, justice, responsibility, participation, and dedication". [14] For college students, the public spirit should be embodied in the conscious maintenance of public interests and public values in the ideological realm and behavioral attitudes. And they should have the qualities of subjective self-discipline, responsibility, participation, self-education and perfection. Public art is the artistic form that can convey and influence the public spirit. Its material representation and spiritual indigenousness should express the campus public spirit.

Stanford University is regarded as one of the most beautiful universities in the United States, and the public spirit of campus public art is also commendable. Its campus reflects Stanford's belief in advancement and religion. The plan of the teaching building further reinforces this design concept. Multiple square layouts can be arranged along the main axis, symbolizing "infinite expansion" of ideas and knowledge in Stanford University... The neat layout of square structures can also bring order and civilization to the surrounding wilderness... The granaries, the kindergarten and racecourse of lab are also square, symbolizing the conquest of nature. Stanford University hopes that male and female students can be able to... recognize the potential of humanity through school education. And graduate students more or less become missionaries of spreading civilization. "Stanford University also adopted the style of church architecture in California. It strengthens the connection between campus architecture and educational philosophy." [15] The physical appearance of campus architecture design of Stanford University interprets the transformation concept of "academy-technologyproduction", and highlights the public spirit of "decency". "honesty", "responsibility", and so on. The public spirit includes ethics and social core values. It is evident that the educational value and effect for teachers and students are significant. Therefore, university campus landscapes often use celebrity sculptures such as educators, cultural landscapes embodying the spirit of sports and friendship, classical garden layouts embodying the spirit of "the unity of Heaven and Man", cherry blossom trees commemorating Chinese and foreign friendship or alumni friendship, and active and progressive public art activities of spiritual quality, etc. The teachers and students would be naturally nurtured in it. And then, it would achieve the unity of ideals and beliefs and action consciousness.

C. The Infiltration of Cultural Qualities of Campus Public Art

The university's cultural character is the cultural character and style of the university with its modern style



and distinctive features formed through long-term cultural accumulation. It is the integration of the university's spiritual factors such as the pursuit of freedom, advocacy for science, democracy and criticism. The inherent values and spiritual will be reflected by cultural construction. [16] It is both related and different from the public spirit. The public spirit emphasizes participation, commonality, foundationalism, and generality. The cultural character emphasizes on subject exploration, conscious inheritance, and academic and management personality. The public art is often used as a representation to display individuality and demonstrate the inheritance of cultural characters in different schools in the same city, one city and one school, country and one school.

Peking University used to be Imperial University of Peking. And it would lead the political, economic, ideological and cultural development of China. Regardless of Mr. Lu Xun's opinion, "Peking University is always a pioneer in new and improved movements. It must go the road to be better." Mr. Cai Yuanpei said: "The freedom of thought is compatible." Education should guide society instead of chasing society. Peking University reflects this maverick culture character everywhere in campus public art works, activities and education. For example, since the campus art gallery activities started in 2012, representative works of art are often selected for exhibition in the teaching space. And public spaces are used for artistic creation and planning. "The teaching field and the art field will be mutually mingled with each other." And "the artist took the work into the space of the academic elite." "And it is a new attempt for the artist." This activity fits the historical tradition of Peking University. In Cai Yuanpei's period, he proposed the educational concept of "representing religion through aesthetic education". In the history of Peking University, artistic masters emerged in an endless stream. The campus art gallery activities are the inheritance and continuation of cultural characters of the aesthetic education of Peking University and the freedom of thought and democracy. Another example is Yuelu Academy of Hunan University. As an unique educational organization for Chinese traditional society, its integration of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism is consistent throughout its academic thought. Therefore, the continuation of this cultural character is fully taken into account in the architectural design of the Academy. "The spirit of the mountain was introduced into the academy, and 'gas' accumulated in the pond through the flow of the stream." This auspicious atmosphere makes the continuously updated Neo-Confucian thought emerge from the philosophical memory contained in the academy. Thus, the flowing water in the garden also inherits the changes and continuation of Taoism and Confucianism. [17]

V. CONCLUSION

The aesthetic materialized form, the public spirit, and the cultural character are the three levels that gradually progress from the shallow to the deep. The appearance of the beauty of the surface layer leads to the resonance among joyful feelings, excitement, morality, responsibility, and obligations. Over the time, it would form a charismatic but far-reaching cultural character. This process is in line with the mechanism

by which education ecology interacts with each other to form an organic uniform dynamic balance. Therefore, it is a useful attempt under the new normal education to explore the laws and methods of the campus public art as the carriers of the undergraduates' latent moral education from the perspective of educational ecology.

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