

From "Possession" to "Symbiosis": Realistic Concern and Value Turn of College Students' Individual Development

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Abstract—As the value orientation and existence mode of college students' individual development, "Possession" or "symbiosis" affects college students' emotional tendency, thinking mode and behavioral mode, and infiltrates into the whole educational ecology. Under the tendency of "possession", the development of college students encounters the real dilemma, becoming a lonely individual in collective life, an illusory individual in the network world, and an abstract individual under the instrumental rationality. Adhering to the concept of "symbiosis", college students can be guided to become the individual of public life, the practice individual of real life, the individual of life under the value rationality, constantly surpass themselves and work together to create a shared civilized society.

Keywords—*possession; possessive individualism; symbiosis; public life*

I. INTRODUCTION

Fromm believes that human beings have two tendencies: one is the tendency to possess, and its power stems from the biological factor that people desire to survive. The other is the tendency to exist. Its power stems from people's desire to overcome the inner needs of their loneliness through the union with others. The existence is sharing, dedication, which implies the symbiosis of people. "Occupy" and "symbiosis" are the desires of each person to have two contradictions, and also the value choice of individual development of college students. Which kind of tendency predominates depends on the social structure, educational environment, and the changing times of values. This is an era of respect for self-worth, and the pursuit of individual interests can be fully respected and recognized. This is also a symbiotic era, complex and diverse, ever-changing social environment. Sharing, win-win, and co-existence are not only a state of existence, but also a value choice for individual development. "Possession" or "symbiosis" is the value choice and survival mode of college students' individual development, which affects college students' emotional tendency, thinking mode and behavioral mode, and penetrates into the whole educational ecology.

II. "POSSESS" OR "SYMBIOSIS": THE VALUE CHOICE OF INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

A. Possession and Possessive Individualism

What is possession? From the history of etymology, there is no such word in the early language. For example, in Hebrew, "I have something" is expressed in the form of indirect "this thing belongs to me". With the development of private ownership, "this thing belongs to me" has evolved into "I have something", which highlights the relationship between the subject "I" and the object. From the perspective of social psychology, "possession" as a personality structure is a tendency towards the self and the world, which determines a person's thoughts, feelings and behaviors. The disadvantage of possession does not lie in who owns the possession in the end, but in the attitude of possession is a kind of mentality that is a love of me. The basic position of possessive individualism is: "An individual is essentially the owner of his or her body and things. He owns these without any owing to society. An individual is not considered to be a moral whole or an integral part of society, but is regarded an owner of himself." In the "possession" mode of survival, the individual's development is one-dimensional, atomic and exclusive. The relationship between individuals is characterized by competition, confrontation, and instrumentality, following the logic of zero-sum game and the law of survival. It leads to the rigid relationship between subject and object, subject and subject, rather than the relationship of vitality and creativity.

"Possessive individualism" is reflected in the individual development of current college students is "exquisite egoist", just as the Peking University's scholar Qian Liqun's saying of "absolute and refined egoist". Self-interest has become the only, absolute, direct driving force for their words and deeds. For others, all are an investment. Coincidentally, Yale University professor William Dreisevic also deeply analyzed the strengthening of individual interests and the lack of social care in Western elite education in "Excellent Mianyang" and "Inferiority of Elite Education". "Absolute, exquisite, self-interested" is the representation of the "possession" values of college students. The maximization of individual interests is the core, the pros and cons of actions are weighed by instrumental rationality, and the relationship between people is

interpreted by market relationship. Under the guidance of “possession”, even if college students can immerse themselves in campus life, navigate themselves in the information age, and devote themselves to social practice, but they cannot get rid of the narrowness of “little self” and become “lonely individuals” in collective life, “illusory individuals” in the Internet world and “abstract individuals” under instrumental rationality.

B. *Symbiosis and the Value Implication of Symbiosis*

“Symbiosis” has two meanings. One refers to the “commensalism” of ecology. According to the strong correlation between various elements, it forms a cooperative relationship and maintains the balance of self completion. It is the “harmony and unification of various forms of ecology.” Second, the combination of people with different goals, ideals and cultural backgrounds, who appreciate each other’s differences, inspire each other, and communicate with each other on the basis of certain behavioral norms is “the miscellaneous vitality of various forms of survival”. In the “symbiotic” mode of existence, the individual’s independence and inherent value are respected. The individual acts as a concrete and rich life individual to talk with others, actively participate in the practice of public life, and jointly create a dynamic and sustainable relationship. Compared with the “possession” of zero-sum game thinking, the deep meaning and purpose of “symbiosis” is “coexistence, co-construction, sharing, and win-win”. In the symbiotic era, the individual’s vitality and creativity can be fully developed and presented.

College students take “symbiosis” as the value guide of their individual development to realize individual development and transcendence. They agree with “symbiosis” and realize the uniqueness of individuals and the limitations of individual development. By confronting or copying others, they cannot achieve long-term development. Sticking to the “possession” mentality will only introduce themselves into the abyss of stress and loneliness. Only by abandoning the closed self, by actively acting to integrate into the practice of public life, and realizing freedom in dealing with others, can we confirm ourselves. “Symbiosis” enables college students to get rid of the emptiness of value and loss of meaning caused by self-obsession, and leads to the care and action for others and the society. Put yourself in the relationship of others around you, and put them in the background of the times and society to obtain the full development of individual personality. Under the guidance of “symbiosis” value, college students are “communicative individuals” in public life, “practical individuals” in real society, and “living individuals” in value rationality.

III. FROM “LONELY INDIVIDUALS” IN COLLECTIVE LIFE TO “SOCIAL INDIVIDUALS” IN PUBLIC LIFE

A. *Under the Tendency of “Possession”, the Collective Shelters the Individual, and the Individual Alienates the Collective*

Mars once pointed out: “Only in the collective, individuals can achieve all-round development. Only in the collective can there be individual freedom.” The collective here is a collective that can raise individuality and provide a soil for the

growth of personality. If you leave this group, you cannot become a real person, let alone the development of personality. For a long time, influenced by Soviet model, collective education has misunderstandings and practical deviations. The “collective” alienation is the existence of opposition to individuals. The “collective” will obscure the individual consciousness, and the heterogeneity is engulfed by homogeneity. The logic behind it is that the “possessive” thinking expands into the collective, materializes and personifies the collective, and the collective and the individual become the subject-object relationship, and the individual becomes the tool of the “collective” development.

In the present, colleges and universities are faced with another situation of collective alienation. The collective is only a transparent floor or an inauthentic background for college students to study and live. “Possession” strengthens the existence of college students as the subject of thinking, strengthens cognitive education, and adheres to text acquisition. Although cooperative learning and practical learning are long-term appeals and explorations, the practice in the collective is such that college students cannot get rid of the lonely learning state. “Possession” guides the materialization and homogenization of college students’ value pursuit. Materialization transforms all meanings and values into exchange value. Homogenization is the inevitable result of materialization logic. Individuals consciously find a convergence in the collective, urgently hope to blur the boundaries with others in order to seek a sense of security and to be convinced of their existence. And this just leads to the loss of human self and brings greater loneliness. The collective life under “possessiveness” is constantly expanding in terms of private domain, the individual’s private interests and subjective experience are increasingly strengthened, the public interest or public life is gradually blurred, the public living space is locked and the public value is declining. College students form a “visitor” mentality to external things. They seem to be free, but they are lonely. They live in a narrow “ego” space and lose the sense of the wholeness of the world. Their subject consciousness is closed and monologue.

B. *Communication and Dialogue in a “Symbiotic” Public Life*

Under the value pursuit and survival mode of “symbiosis”, the collective publicity is actually present. The value of the collective is that it contains the quality of public life, and the characteristics of the real collective should be presented by public life. Open the school education space with public life, highlighting that colleges and universities are not the instrumental field where college students realize their private desires, but a communication field where to promote the growth of students and learn to understand people and society. In the information age, the characteristics and value of campus is that it is a realistic public living space, and its correlation, richness, sharing, and interactivity are inherent. Public life makes the factuality of the world real and reliable. The world is viewed and heard by everyone from different perspectives. If the growth of knowledge is more of a kind of individual activity, then the experience and recognition of value is more public, and the experience and identity of value are formed in

the interaction. Teachers guide students to find themselves in public life, so that students can truly enter the field of public life. In public life, college students get rid of lonely individuals and gain personal integrity and comprehensive development in their interactions.

The core of the interaction activities in campus public life is reflected in the dialogue between teachers and students. The teacher-student dialogue reflects that teacher-student interaction is a kind of spiritual communication, generative communication, and reflective communication. Dialogue is like a kind of impact that motivates students' potential. It is productive, creative, and constructive, not a replicative, mechanically repetitive process. The dialogue shows that education is an ethical "I-you" world, not an instrumental "I-it" world. The true dialogue is open, non-terminal, never ending, and there is no final conclusion. Dialogue recognizes the incompleteness of individual life, and never simply labels and draws conclusions for individual college students. Dialogue abandons the role of the traditional subject-object opposition, teachers and students become a learning community, interacting with each other, and constructing the cognition of the world.

IV. FROM THE "ILLUSIVE INDIVIDUAL" OF THE INTERNET WORLD TO THE "PRACTICAL INDIVIDUAL" IN THE REAL SPACE

A. *The Illusion of Individual Development Under the Marriage of Information Technology and Possessiveness*

The development of the Internet to this day is no longer simply considered to be only a virtual world, but an important component of real life. In particular, the rapid development of virtual reality technology in recent years has created an environment system in which people can fully immerse themselves and interact with each other, and it begins to form a new civilization. However, when the online world and possessiveness are combined, people tend to form a belief that information technology can create the world and shape ourselves in the way we require, ignoring the immersion and reaction of people as the subject. The existence of the Internet as a dissident is opposite to the main body, making humanity a slave to the information age. Excessive information consumption is often a symbol of deep psychological accumulation and social disasters, as Michael Heim said, "Information erodes our capacity for meaning, and the strings of thinking are stretched behind information, thus our notes of attention are short, and the broken pieces we collect are bitty. We are gradually accustomed to cling to the fragments of knowledge and losing the sense of wisdom behind knowledge. If college students are immersed in the cyberspace of separation of mind and body for a long time, their cognitive experience of people and the world will be weakened into network information acquisition, and the emotional communication between people will be simplified into online interaction, which will form the illusion of cognition and strengthen possessive psychological tendency and survival mode.

Possession of psychological tendencies is closely related to online consumption, information fragmentation, discourse hegemony, and network bubble. The network consumption

model strengthens the sense of gain of timely "possession". With one click of the phone, you can get "quick, convenient, thoughtful and meticulous" service, Crazy online shopping makes it easy for college students to indulge in the consumption state and acquire a sense of satisfaction in time. This subtly affects the cultivation of college students' minds, ways of thinking and behavior patterns. Second, information fragmentation strengthens the individual's "possession" learning style. Possessive learning favors fragmented information because it significantly reduces the cognitive cost, simplifies complex things, and it is easy for learners to acquire. When college students accept fragmented information for a long time, their ability of analyzing and criticizing complex things will be weakened. Third, the Internet bubble distorts college students' perceptions of value and meaning. The word "bubble" is mainly used to describe things that are developing too fast, too magical, too irritating, and too imaginary. In the Internet age, there is a flood of debris, concept hype, and subject-driven. Some scholars have summarized their specific models as crazy wasting money, crazy financing, and crazy imitating. The Internet bubble thinking model permeates into many aspects of society, culture and education, forming individual cognitive biases and strengthening individual possessive tendencies. Some college students simplify their understanding of the Internet and entrepreneurship. They believe that personal value and wealth accumulation can be realized quickly through the Internet and financial investment, and they are restless in the illusory bubble of network manufacturing.

B. *Developing Practicality in the Real Life of "Symbiosis"*

College students encounter the confusion of individual development in virtual space. The reason is not only that network information needs to be perfected, but also that college students equate network information with real life, equating network cognitive activities with practical activities, and obscuring the fundamental characteristics of college students as the practical subjects. Corresponding to the rapid and flat Internet world, the real life is slow and three-dimensional, which provides more time and space for individual practice to perceive, understand, and create the world. Compared with the Internet world showing individual freedom, in real life, individuals' freedom coexists with responsibility, and individuals are closely related to others and society, demonstrating the value of symbiosis. Turning the perspective from the online world to the real space highlights the practical subject consciousness of college students as real life.

The realistic space is the basic environment for the development of practice subjectivity of college students. The real space determines the scope, limits, trends, dynamics, and external conditions of individual development. The active and realistic activities of human beings are the first basic starting point for observing, understanding and gasping the "human world" and the real life of human beings. People are the ones that realize their own essence, create history and culture, create their own, and have no objectification in social practice activities. At present, college students' practice includes three aspects: first, classroom practice which is question-oriented

and takes the form of teacher-student interaction and dialogue; second, the campus activities which take the multi-level and rich campus cultural life as the carrier; third, the social life which takes the form of social investigation and voluntary service as the carrier. By actively integrating into real life, we can get rid of the single role of college students as cognitive subjects, and confirm the existence of college students as comprehensive, integrated and realistic in practice.

V. FROM THE "ABSTRACT INDIVIDUAL" UNDER THE TOOL RATIONALITY TO THE "LIFE INDIVIDUAL" UNDER THE VALUE RATIONALITY

A. The Abstraction of Individual College Students Under the Tool Rationality

Instrumental rationality is a kind of rationality that takes modern technology as the tool and means to achieve the purpose most effectively by means of accurate calculation of utility, and pursues the utility and efficiency in practical actions. Instrumental rationality is an important representation of the modernity of human society since the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, the value of progress is unquestionable. But with the rapid expansion of instrumental rationality, rationality has been transformed from the original liberation tool into a hegemonic tool that rules nature and human beings. All values and meanings are reverted to "price and exchange value", which also caters to people's possessive tendencies, and the values of tool worship and capital appreciation as survival goals are deeply supported. Individual behavior must follow a rationality of technology, that is, the logic of external "material" (technology) is transformed into the logic of its own (ontology), the concreteness and richness of human beings as the subject of life are lost, and individuals are subject to abstraction.

Instrumental rationality infiltrates into the education process, which can reflect fairness, efficiency and economic rationality in the management mode. When it breaks through the instrumental rationality as an external management method, and then reverses the position of the host and the guest, it evolves into a kind of indiscriminate aggression and ruthless erosion on the internal concept and humanistic spirit of university management. It strengthens the explicit and short-term benefits of education, highlights the sense of competition and test-taking methods, neglects the individual existence and aesthetic experience in the process of education, obliterates the materiality, richness and diversity of individual students, and makes students become abstract people. In order to ensure the computability and efficiency of the educational process, cognitive education is simplified as the transmission of "instrumental knowledge", ignoring the value orientation and emotional experience of students, and the emotional ethics of college students appear empty. College students are addicted to secular pursuit, consumer culture and entertainment life, this kind of perceptual culture based on the enhancement of people's physiological instinct has a great dissolving effect on rationality and value, which aggravates people's possessive tendencies.

B. Realizing Individual Life Under the Value Rationality of "Symbiosis"

Corresponding to the "instrumental rationality" under possessiveness is the "value rationality" under symbiosis. Max Weber saw the alienation of rationality under modernity and proposed the value rationality to make up for the extremity of rationality. Value rationality is the self-consciousness of value and pursuit formed by the subject in practice, and it is the conscious understanding and grasp of value and value pursuit on the basis of rational cognition. It is the self-consciousness of people to recognize, worry, care, look forward to, construct and pursue of their own value and significance of existence. The intercommunity of "symbiosis" and value rationality lies in the common pointing to the age life. We should cherish the existence of human beings as individuals. Human being is a subject with life and dignity. Human being itself is the purpose, it should be abandoned that regards people as an instrument of the community, of things and of history. As Max said, "The society that has already come into being creates people with all the richness of human nature, creating people with rich, comprehensive, and profound feelings".

As life individuals, college students cannot copy others to develop themselves, cannot close their lives to settle themselves, and cannot rely on cognition to improve themselves. The practicality and richness of college students' life individuals are rooted in the fact that life individuals have generative nature. Generative nature means that positive freedom is not given by others, but is created by individuals in historical practice. When confronted with a highly autonomous and diversified life, immersed in the original thinking framework and values, abandoning the independence and transcendence of self, relying on possessive knowledge and opinions, it is hard to understand the self-reliance of life individual. This also indicates that education should avoid the formation of industrialization models, cybernetic thinking, and homogenization goals. The foundation and mission of education is to take life activities as the origin and to develop life as the purport. To promote college students to develop a broad and profound vision in practice, a life standpoint full of rationality and wisdom without losing humanistic emotion, and a clear understanding of self-responsibility and life care that can be extended to others.

VI. CONCLUSION

Only by adhering to the value of "symbiosis", weakening the individual's possessive tendency and actively participating in public life, can college students get rid of the dilemma of individual development falling into loneliness, illusion and abstraction. College students are the communicative individuals in public life, the practical individuals in real life, and the life individuals under the value rationality, to create a symbiotic and shared campus life and a civilized society.

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