

Viewing the "Normalization" of Art Education in Middle School from Foucault's Disciplinary Theory

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Abstract—In middle school art education, the standardization caused by disciplinary education makes the art education associated with emotions become a tool for skill learning, and the result of normalization leads to the materialization of people. The reconstruction of educational value is to return the art education under the tool rational expansion to its original subject standard. Only art education can rise from technical learning to life education, can change the living condition of students and establish the life value of students and the meaning of life in education.

Keywords—arts education; discipline; normalization

I. INTRODUCTION

The term "discipline" is a new term coined by the French postmodernist thinker Michal Foucault (1926-1984) in his book "Discipline and Punishment". Various explanations such as education, correction, discipline, and disciplinary are used to summarize a new management power in modern times. Discipline is embodied in a productive right, which is achieved through accurate calculation and control to achieve human production and organization. Foucault analyzed the phenomenon of "discipline" in school education in "Discipline and Punishment". The original education is to enhance people's free mind and cultivate people's inner quality. However, under the supervision of the school, educational activities become manufacturing process. The disciplined secondary school art education emphasizes the art discipline characteristics of individual labor. In order to be included in the orderly education management, it must accept the productive requirements of discipline education, and adjust the art teaching based on perceptual thinking to "normalize" so that it can make Arts a formal subject that can be taught and learned and exist in school education. School education is marked by production activities, and its core "education" mechanism will be replaced by "manufacturing" activities, leading to the "technicalization" of training methods, the "normalization" of creative works, and the main body of creation — "human". The materialization of humanity, the loss of human education is the concern for human life.

II. "NORMALIZATION" CHARACTERISTICS OF ART EDUCATION IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

As an art discipline of visual art, the way to fall into school education is to weaken the original attributes of the humanities and rationalize it. However, no matter how the art education realizes the "scientific transformation", the presentation of its works still emphasizes the difference. The "normalization" of secondary art education refers to the discipline or passiveness of the art discipline itself in order to meet the management requirements of secondary education simplify. From the perspective of Foucault's disciplinary education, this "normalization" shows the following characteristics to a certain extent:

A. "Static Division" of the Content of the Textbook

In the middle school art education, whether it is the national textbook (PFAP Edition, PEP Edition), the provincial textbook or the school-based textbook, the course content should be classified into four major areas of study, namely "styling: performance", "design: application", "appreciation: review", and "comprehensive: exploration". Before the introduction of the new curriculum standards, the middle school art syllabus stipulated that the learning content of the art curriculum was "painting", "craft" and "appreciation". Since 2011, the new curriculum standards for art have refined the previous syllabus, and the content involved in art learning has been divided into fields. When the teacher teaches the course, each class will complete the task according to the classification requirements. Taking the "Colorful Landscape Painting" in the ninth grade textbook of the People's Fine Arts Publishing House as an example, this course belongs to the field of "styling and performance", so the operation requirements are:

- By imagination, students need to expand and portray a part of the landscape picture as a complete landscape.
- When referring to the landscape picture, change the color relationship or form of the original painting to perform creative performance.
- Students can determine a tone for the picture, or change the tone and form of the original picture.

- Students need to be able to express their creativity with your own unique ideas and techniques."¹ This class belongs to the practical creation course, which is mainly based on the painting operation.

The art history knowledge involved in the course is placed in the "appreciation: review" field to explain the corresponding courses. In this way, the art discipline knowledge is statically divided according to the field, and the combination of the four fields of teaching forms a complete art teaching content.

B. "Technology" Proceduralization of Teaching Methods

In order to highlight the theoretical value of the tools in education, the operability is emphasized as much as possible in the implementation of teaching methods and means, so as to maximize the learning efficiency in a limited teaching time. It is needed to strive to add timeliness to each lesson, with the school year as the basic unit to let students achieve the improvement of art learning from "incapable" to "capable". Therefore, in the teaching process, it is needed to strive to turn the complicated learning process into a classroom-friendly textbook program into the textbook, and recommend it to the teacher as a learning method or learning suggestion. The teacher implements the teaching content specified in the textbook according to the requirements of the textbook. Taking the lesson of "Ceramic Art Production" in the 16th volume of the 8th grade of the People's Fine Arts Publishing House, the development of ceramics in China has a history of 7000 years. The production process is complicated, but according to the basic production methods, the textbooks are extracted three types, namely mud pad forming method, mud strip forming method, and draw forming method. In the study suggestion, because the high-strength equipment such as the turntable is required for the blanking method, it is difficult for the middle school classroom to meet the production conditions. Therefore, it is recommended to use mud pad and mud strip to form a unique and interesting ceramic art work, and choose one of the examples provided in this lesson to explain its artistic features. In the teaching process, through the technical aspects of cutting, rolling, affixing and surrounding of the mud board, a complete art work is produced. In the skill learning, the students acquire the technical operation procedure and the technical development consciousness. This skill learning is realized in the three progressive processes of the cognitive orientation phase, the mutual connection phase and the automation phase, and the initial simulation learning gradually realizes the transition from skills to abilities.

C. "Panoramic Open-view" of Classroom Organization

"Panoramaism" is a brand new vocabulary created by Michal Foucault. "Bentham's panopticon is an architectural image of this composition."² Foucault cited a form of

¹ Arts, Compulsory Education Curriculum Standard Experiment Textbook (Ninth Grade), People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 2005. 12. 11.

² (France) Michal Foucault. *Discipline and Punishment* [M] Liu Beicheng, Yang Yuaning trans. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2007: 224.

architecture that interprets a transformation of human behavior and thought through a paradigm of power theory. The principle of this panoramic view is like a closed space with a watchtower in the center and a ring-shaped building. The ring building consists of several small cells, which can be: patients, criminals, workers or students. The watchtower can observe the figure of the prisoner through the backlight effect. This "panoramic view" forms an effective self-monitoring and supervision of the other through mutual restraint, monitoring and commenting between people. On the basis of the "retreat" of the power implementation subject, the maximization of the power effect is manifested. In the art teaching of middle school, the implementation process of the single class is basically composed of four parts: introduction before class, teaching new course, student operation and ending comment. The teaching of the teacher is not only the process of knowledge transfer, but also the process of making the rules of the operation for the next step. From the point of view of the appearance, art teaching does not seek the only answer as the teaching goal, respecting the individual's differences, emphasizing creativity, and teaching in a relatively loose environment. However, from the common methods of "discipline education", most of the classroom organization methods of art teachers reflect the characteristics of "level monitoring, standard ruling and inspection" of disciplinary methods. This "monitoring" activity is carried out by the teacher with individual tutoring during the student's operation. At the same time, it can also be achieved through the cooperation of student groups and through the constraints of students. In the final review of the final art works, the "standardized ruling" method is used to focus on the work, revealing the advantages and disadvantages of the students' creation, and distinguishing the winners and losers among the disciplines, so as to warn the followers to improve their learning state and keeping up with the pace of learning of the winners. The teacher uses the "discipline" method to carry out the manipulative behavior of the disciplined object, so as to achieve the teaching purpose that the education administrator expects.

D. "Experience Simplification" of Teaching Evaluation

Every art teacher is a learner of art before he teaches. On the one hand, art learning is a learning of the experience of predecessors; on the other hand, it is also the creator of the new visual form language. Each art learner is a successor or innovator of a certain artistic style. The combination and the transformation of different artistic styles form the horizontal and vertical features of art history. In the middle school art teaching, each art teacher should give lectures to a number of class units. In the classroom teaching evaluation, based on the artistic experience of the individual teachers, the evaluation criteria of the teaching are interfered to some extent. When the "expressive" creative teacher and the "reproducing" creative orientation judge the quality of the painting, the criteria for judging will be quite different. When encountering similar problems in higher art education, it will usually be solved by the "learning by class" or "collective rating", which is attended by all the staff of the teaching and research section, or by the way of teaching the "studio". The classification of the students will be done by

the students. However, in the art education of middle school, based on the characteristics of their own education mode, it is possible to prepare for the class and it is difficult to achieve collective scoring. In the evaluation process, the intervention of the teacher's individual art concept on the evaluation criteria will often filter out the students with different styles. At the same time, in order to achieve better results, the students' art creation will also actively approach the teacher's style characteristics and evaluation system. The evaluation process relies on the experience of teachers to present a singular character, which is also a manifestation of the "normalization" of secondary school art education.

III. REFLECTION ON THE "NORMALIZATION" OF ART EDUCATION IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

A. *Changing the "Classical Thinking" and Returning to the Integrity of the Art Discipline*

In 1687, Newton's "Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy" was born. This classic in the history of science uses mathematical methods to reveal the inner laws of the complex representations of nature. In the 19th century, through the efforts of the pioneers of science, using mathematical formula as a means, objectively and accurately depicting the "world system" became a model for exploring the laws of nature. This mechanical mathematical model was clearly explained by Descartes. With the perfection of classical physics, this Newtonian-Cartesian worldview is universally accepted, evolves into an authoritative philosophical worldview of the cognitive world, and becomes a new way of scientific thinking, that is, the classical way of thinking, affecting the entire industrial society development stage of human society.

This kind of "classical thinking" is applied to the subject teaching, which excludes the contradictory and uncertain knowledge in the subject content. The subject content is divided into different parts by static, and the parts are independent and mechanically connected with each other. The discipline of education as Foucault said is "a physics of power or an anatomy of power, a technique" which is very similar. Newtonian-Cartesian classic thinking considers the world as a huge linear running clock; Foucault's discipline is to regard education as a mechanism of "control". The process of the "system" education is to abstract the instinct of life and to enhance the instrumental educational outcome. The componentization of subject content is an important prerequisite for improving the tool effect.

In the middle school art education, in order to integrate the emotional art education into the framework system of disciplinary education, the research on the division of the subject content has been carried out continuously. In the early art syllabus, art education was divided into three parts: painting, crafts, and appreciation. The implementation of this method was found to be inappropriate for a period of time (painting and crafts were classified by subject, and appreciation was classified based on teaching behavior). In 2011, after the launch of the new curriculum, the three contents of the syllabus were divided into four areas. The

limitations of this mechanical division are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

- Mechanically determining the overall art discipline as the addition of partial content denies the wonderful contingency in art education.
- Taking the content of art discipline as a solid content, it denies the diversity and multi-level of visual elements and expressions within the discipline.
- The result of the block reduces the procedure of art learning and negates the dialectical connection between learning elements.
- The collection of local learning results is difficult to recognize the overall characteristics of the art discipline and restricts the forward development of the art discipline.

The facts have proved that one-sided contact with local and isolated things will be far from the whole of things. The premise of art learning is to recognize that things are the unity of "same" and "different", and "changed" and "unchanged". In the stage of quantum thinking, the dynamic learning content is dynamic, the relationship between learning content is strengthened, the aim of improving artistic literacy is pointed, and the integrity of learning content is restored, and finally it can realize the "jump" in artistic imagination.

B. *Reforming the "One-dimensionality" of Teachers' Teaching and Accepting the "Randomness" of the Teaching Process*

Foucault pointed out in his talk about discipline: "The pattern of control over people's control means an uninterrupted and continuous force. It oversees the activity process rather than its outcome, and it is based on coding the time, space and activity as closely as possible. These methods make it possible for people to carefully control the operation of the human body, constantly conquer the various forces of the human body, and impose these forces on a tamed-utilitarian relationship."³ Under the guidance of the educational rationality of promoting "efficiency", the teaching is carried out level by level and step by step along the pre-set procedures. In the art education, the complex emotions and the uncertainty in the teaching that are not related to the goal are exhausted. It may be excluded, students progressively create works according to the requirements of the program, and the distance between each step and the target is shortened until the final product is created. Since the art discipline emphasizes the difference in style of the work, the final form of the work reflects certain diversity. This procedural feature is somewhat obscured by the individualized thinking in the creation and the richness of the work. However, from the perspective of the kernel, most of the students' creations are the results of the teacher's "one-dimensional" linear teaching. The contrast between the

³ (France) Michal Foucault. *Discipline and Punishment* [M] Liu Beicheng, Yang Yuanyang trans. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2007: 155.

teacher's rich creative experience and the student's inexperience makes the students unconditionally accept the instructions of different stages in the process of teaching proceduralization. The individualized thinking is a different form of program product formed by adapting to the common procedure.

Returning to the essence of art education, the instantaneous changes in thinking will make art learning moments in randomness and uncertainty. Accepting knowledge without mistakes according to established procedures will reduce the emotional value of art education. Many artistic success stories are produced under conditions of chance and uncertainty. In the history of Chinese porcelain firing, there is a kind of porcelain called opening film, which was the first kind of defect in porcelain firing, that is, the surface crack phenomenon of porcelain formed due to the different shrinkage ratio of tire and glaze. Later, the surface crack of this defective porcelain was appreciated by people with artistic vision, but it became a precious porcelain variety. It can be seen that works of art are not all perfect works, and random accidental effects are sometimes more precious than perfect. Therefore, art education must affirm randomness, and random learning processes sometimes produce unexpected learning effects that cannot be replicated.

C. Circumventing the "Digitalization" of People in Education and Moving Toward "Life Education" with Temperature

The discipline education mentioned by Foucault, the means of discipline include space allocation technology, time control technology, ability-oriented coding technology, and combination programming technology. In the panoramic open-view environment, teachers become the object of knowledge and the object of power through the level of monitoring, standardized rulings and inspections to make the students be objectified. This normalized effect is presented in fractional form, which forms the digitization of people. The pros and cons of students can be distinguished by numerical symbols, and people are also symbolized while being digitized. Under the supervision of educational power, students' personality, characteristics, and abilities are simplified into numbers and symbols. The difference between people gradually evolves into the difference between symbols and symbols. "The quality of life behavior has been replaced by quantity, and people's lives are more of a quantitative relationship."⁴

The ultimate goal of education is human beings. Under the educational ecological environment of instrumental rational expansion, the art education associated with the meaning of life is increasingly instrumental. The convergence of science and the difference of art, the essence of art education is the release of human emotions. The study of art supplies nutrition to the soul and awakens the love of life. The book "The Art of Being Human" by Richard Ghanaro and Telma Arthur, wrote: "In a world that has

become a global village, in a world full of uncertainty, threats and violence, in a world where technology is rapidly changing and the environment is deteriorating, in a world where cynical people ask for the value of life, humanity is always there to sublimate our spirit. All the miracles created by art, music, literature, and the human mind will continue to confirm the words of the American novelist William Faulkner when he accepted the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1949. Humanity will not only survive, but it will also win."⁵ The digitization and symbolization of the "normalized" art education allows students to move from a complete person to a tool with practical value. Art education can only be achieved by returning to its original self and going to a life education with temperature so that to achieve the true purpose of educating people.

D. Advocating the "Diversification" of Evaluation Methods and Encouraging "Free Creation" with Diverse Styles

In the middle school art education, the intervention effect of the teacher's artistic individual style on the student evaluation forms the unity of the student evaluation. In the art study, the individual's creative consciousness is suppressed and is dissolved and unified in the "class". In the process of adapting to the teacher's artistic style, the difference between students and students is weakened, and the "differentiation" advocated by art education moves toward "identity". This kind of "categorized" art teaching is beneficial to the teacher's quantitative behavior of scores from the management level, because the learning style of learning is similar; or returning to the same creative platform, it is helpful to distinguish the pros and cons of its level, thus to better connect with the school management. However, the result of this is that it deviates from the purpose of art education. The "free creation" in art learning is the way for students to enhance the individual life spirit. Teachers' evaluation of students is not the inheritance of their own creative level, but rather trying to measure the extent to which their creative thinking works. It can be prepared in groups or collectively, so that students of different artistic expression styles can find their corresponding affirmations in the multi-teaching evaluation. If this "free creation" consciousness can be exerted and internalized into the student's future career, the individual's innovative spirit will converge into the creative consciousness of the whole society, so that the educational purpose can be realized.

IV. CONCLUSION

In short, the "normalization" of art education can effectively integrate art disciplines characterized by sensibility into school education, but at the same time it will weaken the discipline characteristics of the discipline. Only on the basis of ensuring the order of teaching, as far as possible to eliminate the "educational alienation" brought about by the expansion of the theory of tools, it can make people become the goal of education, so that education can embark on the path of benign development.

⁴ Sun Zhouxing, *The Nentality of Our Time* [M] Beijing: People's Oriental Publishing & amp; Media Co.,Ltd, 2001, 69 - 70.

⁵ (US) Richard Ganaro, *Delma Atsule, The Arts of Being Human* [M] Shuzi Wushan, trans. Peking University Press, 2012.3.4.

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