Research on Alienation of Fundamental Education
—The Contemporary Enlightenment of Marx's Alienation Theory

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Abstract—This paper discusses the alienation of fundamental education on the basis of Marx’s theory of alienation. Educational alienation means that the teaching activities are contrary to the essence of education. The alienation of fundamental education can be regarded as the examination-oriented phenomenon dominated by test scores and enrollment rates, and the partial development of students. The main reasons for educational alienation are utilitarian educational values, imperfect educational system, understandings of distorted human beings and social factors. But the education of alienation also has certain positive significance. In order to develop education better, this paper also puts forward the corresponding ways of eliminating alienation: abandoning the utilitarian education values, reforming the unreasonable education system, eliminating education’s recognition of human materialization and developing productive forces vigorously.

Keywords—alienation; fundamental education; utilitarianism; human development

I. INTRODUCTION

With the development of economic society, the importance of education has been generally recognized. More and more people begin to realize that education plays an important role in individual and social development. People attach great importance to the value and function of education. Meanwhile, the phenomenon of educational alienation is inevitable under the influence of social life. People can't help sighing, "education for teaching, education for scores, and education for further studies, which prompts us to question and reflect on the reality of education."

II. MARX’S "ALIENATION" THOUGHT AND THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL ALIENATION

A. Marx's "Alienation" Thought

Marx put forward the well-known theory of alienation in his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844. The alienation that Marx mentioned is not man's own alienation, but closely related to labor, "Man cannot be alienated in a vacuum. They are alienated in the process of labor. Under the conditions of the private ownership of the means of production, the laborers can only engage in alienated labor. Marx believes that in a private ownership society, labor products are deprived by the possessors of the means of production. The more products the laborers produce, the more they are deprived and the mightier the forces to oppress them. At this time, labor products become alien and dominant forces for labors, which are called alienation of labor. Marx's theory of alienation takes alienation labor as the core, and derives the alienation of laborers from the alienation of labor. The logical sequence is as follows: the starting point of labor is the capitalist's possession of the means of production; the purpose of labor is to produce goods, and thus obtain surplus value; and the result of labor is the alienation of the labor and the alienation of the laborers [1]. Marx's "alienation" refers to the relationship between man and the products created by the laborers, that is, the creations become alien and manipulative."

When we understand Marx's concept of alienation, we should grasp two points: firstly, alienation is the manipulated state of human beings; on the other hand, the subject is alienated, but the cause of alienation is not the subject itself. Alienation is produced under certain social and historical condition, so that is has historical inevitability.

Domestic scholars have reached a consensus on the theory of alienation. "The subject produces the object, due to the development of its own contradiction; and this object, as an external and alien force overrides the subject, and turns to constrain and suppress the subject. That is alienation "[2].

B. Analysis of the Concept of Educational Alienation

Based on Marx's alienation thought, this paper discusses the issue of educational alienation. We should understand the concept of "education" before getting to know the alienation of education:

Jaspers, an existentialist philosopher, holds that "education is nothing more than the interaction between human beings (especially between the older generation and the younger generation), which includes the imparting of content, the understanding of life connotation, and the norms of will and behavior. Through the transmission of culture, the cultural heritage is taught to the younger generation, so that they can grow freely and inspire their freedom nature." [3]

Therefore, the essence of educational activities is to realize the multi-dimensional development of human knowledge, ability, emotion, potential and personality. Human development is the value pursuit of education.

Educational practice deviates from the initial intention of education, that is, human development, and educational
alienation comes into being. Educational alienation contains two aspects: one is that education is alienated by people, namely, education is not the activity for cultivating people, but it serves the test, satisfies the utilitarian needs of value orientation and economic reality, and becomes a tool for people to pursue interests; the other is that people are alienated by education. People who are supposed to be the objects of education unfortunately become educational tools, rather than a human with complete personality in the ideal.

Depending on Marx's theory of labor alienation, the educational alienation is the alienation of teaching activities, which contributes to the alienation of students and teachers. Under the influence of utilitarian values, our classroom teaching often lacks vitality, and students' interests and curiosities in learning are not strong. It is worthy of attention that educational alienation is not equivalent to educational problems, and not all problems in education can be regarded as alienation.

III. REASONS FOR ALIENATION OF FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION

A. Utilitarian Educational Values

The utilitarian education not aims to pursue the all-round development of human being, but to meet the material needs, such as fame, wealth, clothing and food, and to pay no attention to people’s spiritual happiness. It is considered that educational alienation is closely associated with examination. Education has been alienated into knowledge education, especially examination-oriented education. Fundamental education serves examination, and examination manipulates the education. With the examination-oriented pattern, the communities, especially students’ parents appraise the students, teachers and schools by the test scores. In educational practice, teachers tend to take book knowledge and examination outlines as guidance, adopt dogmatic teaching methods, neglect the vividness and education in classroom, and fail to respect the implementation of students’ subjectivity. Therefore, it is difficult to realize students' personality excavation, emotional experience and spiritual growth, which can easily lead to students' weak motivation for learning and become tools for leaning. Professional titles, and bonus assuagements naturally becomes the pursuits of teachers.

B. Imperfect Education System

The few management rules of enrolment and employment in education can inevitably induce educational alienation. The conventional concept of “One, who is successful in one’s studies, can become an official” remains ingrained. It is good to study well, so that students can work in the field of industry, agriculture, commerce, science and technology, and philosophy with their qualification, instead of being an “official”. Nevertheless, parents vary on the point of view. Good schools and higher scores mean a greater chance to get a good job as well as parents hope and a better official career. With this in mind, the majority of the parents strive for a better educational chance for their children with all their force. Regardless of children’s nature and interests, parents send their children to attend various tutoring classes and the key class in the key school at all costs. It is a question that whether children can acquire the happiness in learning and understand the deep “love” from their parents in such circumstance.

C. Educational Understanding of Human Distortion

“Educational alienation mainly originates from the educational views on the materialization of human. The materialization includes two main parts: animals and machines. [4]” With educational understanding of human distortion, it is easy to understand educational alienation. In some circumstance of reality education, the classroom has become a place for knowledge training, the teaching process is mechanical and rigid, the learning is lack of vigor and enthusiasm, and the school has become a place to generate mechanical people lacking personality.

D. Social Factors

“As a kind of social practice to cultivate people, education is the social product of a certain era in term of its reality. As known as what Marx expressed, the source of alienation is not the human or the subject, otherwise the development of social productive forces and the compulsory division of labor. [5]” Social factors contribute to educational alienation as well. Sometimes good education policies bring economic corruption in the process of implementation.

IV. RECOGNITION AND DISSOLUTION OF EDUCATIONAL ALIENATION

A. Recognition of Educational Alienation

In conclusion, teaching alienation can be regarded as the alienation of examination-oriented teaching activities, which leads to the students’ alienation, namely partial development. Utilitarian education is obviously not conducive to the students’ comprehensive development and social development. Scholars criticize the educational alienation a lot, in fact they are not right.

It is not worthless that education alienated into examination-oriented education. Education at different stages of our life needs examination. Oriented-examination education plays an important role in cultivating students’ diligence and sureness, memory training, calculating ability and mind, which is closely related to the rules of examination-oriented education. Examination is an indispensable and effective method of education evaluation, which provides feedback for our education and regulates the teaching scheme and process so as to improve the teaching quality.

The positive significance of educational alienation cannot be ignored. Examination-oriented education is often accused of pursuing only graduation rates, which can reflect the teaching quality in elementary and secondary school in a sense. The key point is that examination-oriented education should not the only pursuit of the educational development. At the same time, the development of students’ potential, endowment and emotion should be noticed. It strictly required that educators should be insight in the teaching process, teach students in accordance with their aptitude, explore meaningful teaching activities, and exploit educational nature of knowledge.
At present, the full implementation of the new curriculum reform is actually an exploration to improve educational alienation. It turns out that those schools that actually implemented the new curriculum and the quality education have achieved a continuous high score in the college entrance examination.

**B. Ways to Eliminate Alienation of Fundamental Education**

It is necessary to choose effective ways and strategies to eliminate educational alienation in order to realize the return of real education to the original education.

1) **Abandon utilitarian educational values**

Utilitarian educational values alienate the social activity education that essentially cultivates people into the knowledge education that centered on textbooks, guided by examination and aimed at tests. Only by changing the utilitarian educational values can we gradually eliminate the negative influence of educational alienation on individuals and society, and pursue the true appeal of education.

2) **Reform the unreasonable educational system**

The unreasonable educational system hinders the development of authentic education to some extent. Objectively, educational alienation has been strengthened to a certain extent. Therefore, it is urgent to reform so that it can create a good environment for the sustainable and healthy development of education and eliminate educational alienation.

3) **Eliminate education’s recognition of human’s materialization**

To overcome educational alienation is to eliminate the reorganization of educational materialization. It is well known that educational activities are aimed at human beings. It is necessary to correctly understand and view the subjectivity of human beings in educational activities. It requires the respect for students’ nature and emotional needs in educational practice, so that it can achieve students’ spiritual happiness.

4) **Develop productive forces vigorously**

The key to eliminate educational alienation lies in developing productive forces and freeing people from the shackles of fame and wealth. Only when the productivity and technology are highly developed, can people have access to high-quality education and self-development. Then the materialization of human beings will be improved to some extent, and the elimination of educational alienation is around the corner.

**V. Conclusion**

Educational alienation is not only bad for people's growth, but also has a negative impact on social development. The research on educational alienation is not aimed to blindly criticize and deny, but to eliminate alienation and develop education better. However it cannot eliminate educational alienation in a short term. It is essential to analyze the causes of educational alienation correctly and provide useful ideas and suggestions for eliminating alienation gradually.

**REFERENCES**


