Research on Network Ethic and Cultural Security

Issues of Network Space

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Abstract. Along with the development in internet era, Network ethic and the corresponding cultural security issues of network space are increasingly concerned and paid close attention by the public. The social foundation of network ethic is still the social ethical standard mutually complied with by people, which possess the characteristics of autonomy, openness and diversification. The major causes of the decline of moral ethic include the propelling of economic benefits, insufficient network supervision and management, as well as the lack of self-discipline of network ethic. In order to build network ethic, it is necessary to give scope to the guidance of positive network consensus, supplement and complete network legislation and regulations, strengthen the education of network ethic and integrity, promote the self-discipline of network ethic and guarantee the cultural security of network space.

Nowadays, the wave of informatization and network, which takes information technological revolution as the core, is extensively and profoundly affecting people’s social lives and survival mode. The fluidity and virtuality of network and information not only form the social organization and cultural environment of a larger spatial and temporal scale, and furtherly break the “center-periphery” operation mechanism and social structure of pre-industrial society and even the industrial society, but also place in its background and mechanism the politics and economy and even the moral culture based on it within specific social order and structure. “The fluxion of network and information is triggering the cultural revolution, thus separate the political and living concept of people from the fundamental frame established in recent period” [1]. Correspondingly, series of problems of network ethic are increasingly prominent, behaviors of network decline are everywhere, and the cultural security of the network space is confronted with unprecedented challenges. Without the support of ethic and integrity, it is difficult for the network space to develop to a healthy and orderly virtual society. Therefore, the research and discussion on the issues of network ethic and the construction of network ethical criterion are currently crucial contents of maintaining the cultural security of network space.

Social Foundation of Network Ethic

What digitization and Network create is a virtual space, and the devolvement of network technology makes the boundary between virtual space and realistic space indistinct. Zizek claimed in the criticism against the cultural noumenon of cyber space that, “this kind of virtual reality is not completely antagonistic to the traditional reality; furthermore, in essence, reality in terms of direct experience never exists, and reality itself had already included minimum virtualization… the radicalness of cyber space does not lie in the technical realization of virtual reality, on the contrary, it is not virtual enough, but merely extend the realistic logic” [2]. Essentially, network ethic is still the ethic of human society, and the social foundation of network ethic is still the social ethical standard mutually obeyed by people.

As an independent field of life, virtual space possesses the characteristic of self-organization and the order of the self-discipline space based on self-development, which has not been queried during the long period of network development. The interaction among network subjects in the virtual space and the anonymity of surrealistical survival create possibilities for people to break away from the constraint of reality and achieve free actions. Each person on the internet is a comparatively independent subject, who enjoys more fairness and freedom than that in the social life offline.
However, this is definitely not the excuse for affecting or obstructing the benefits of other network subjects. Absolute freedom never exists, “space and time are not empty container of social activities, instead, it not only makes the actions of mankind possible, but also plays a restricting role against it” [3]. There is not any kind of freedom without boundary; instead, it should take corresponding social responsibilities equally.

“Decentralization” of the virtual world of network breaks though the traditional distance of time and space. Zizek described the characteristic of openness of the virtual cyber space in virtue of the monadology of Leibniz, “subjects of the cyber space are monads, on one hand, we are merely confronted with virtual simulacrum via human-computer interaction; on the other, we are unprecedented immersed in the global internet, and communicating with the whole world” [4]. The openness and globalization of the internet make the cyber citizens all over the world unite, and integrate different religions, values, customs and life styles, which strengthens the global openness and cooperation, and greatly promotes the development of world economy and culture. The kernel of the future network transformation is moving towards further openness and establishing new standard. On the premise of national security, openness and communication are beneficial for enhancing our immunity and competitiveness, and developing the network faster and better.

Network subjects are different from each other in the aspect of cultural background, value and living criteria; therefore, network ethic is necessarily diversified. Besides the fundamental ethical criteria of network society, network ethic should also contain specific moral standard of different network subjects. Generally speaking, network subjects do not have to alter the original ethical consciousness, moral idea or moral conduct to enter into the internet, which makes different political ideas, cultural concepts, life styles and customs collide, conflict and integrate. Along with the increasing interaction among network subjects, the clash and integration among diversified cultures promotes the understanding among netizens with different moral cultivation, seeks common points while reserving differences, forms new ethical spirit and common understanding of value, and facilitates the ethical development of mankind.

**Causes of Network Ethical Decline**

The internet brings about convenience and efficiency to people’s lives, at the same time, it increasingly affecting the cultural territory, and the contest between advanced culture and backward culture become increasingly fierce. The characteristics such as openness, virtuality and diversification of network space have triggered varieties of phenomena of network ethical disorder, such as network infringement, network fraud and network pornography.

It is not difficult to see through the complicated and confusing network phenomena that, profound economic root is hiding behind the network disorder behaviors. Originally, the internet is developed with the technologies for the public interest, without commercial character; however, its potential economic value was soon explored and utilized commercially, and benefit seeking behaviors along with internet construction has been increasingly intensified, which drives the current society into the specific era of “attention is productivity”. A few netizens commit illegal activities and transactions vigorously, ignoring the constraint of ethic and the concern about laws, and utilizing the characteristics of network criminal that it is difficult to search for clues and penalize the offenders with current legislation; furthermore, various kinds of social network and information consumption platforms become high risk areas of recent network ethical disorder, where the violation of other’s privacy and interests, stealing of bankcard passwords, network fraud and instigation to crime commitment via instant messaging tools occur frequently. Some network media even upload inappropriate images to marketing products or release fake prize-winning information to seduce and deceive the netizens in spite of social responsibilities, which seriously destroy the network circumstance. The above phenomena are inevitable products of free network market, and the serious consequences of the moral decline of some network media.

Another major cause of network ethical anomie is the vacancy of network supervision and management, including the insufficiency of network legislation, ineffectiveness of network coordinative supervision, lag of network monitoring techniques, and so on. A predicament the
network development is confronted with is that the science and technology grow rapidly whereas the legislation is comparatively left behind, which creates opportunities for some network media or individuals to destroy the network ecology. Therefore, it is difficult to expect all the netizens to show fine ethical conduct on the premise of insufficient standardization of law and morality.

To the greater extent, network ethic and standard is a morality of self-discipline and autonomy; however, in virtual spaces, this kind of autonomous morality is much weaker than the heteronomous morality in the aspect of constraint force. The significance of constraint of traditional ethic continuously weakens and shows its insufficiencies. “The dual standard and value of virtual and realistic society triggers the contradiction between network ethic and traditional social ethic, which evolves to the conflicts between the network society and the realistic society” [5]. The virtuality of internet removes the powerful constraints of ethic against the things people are able to do but dare not to do, thus people can escape from the supervision and pressure from the group and let off the negative emotion at will against the realistic world, which more or less results in the separation of character and self-conscious, forms the “digital personality” with heavy dependence on digitalization and information, and causes the crisis of depersonalization, dilemma of self-recognition of identity, as well as the crisis of virtual acknowledgement.

Routes of Network Ethical Construction

The development and popularization of network technology make it very urgent for the issues of network ethical construction. The construction of network ethic is not merely the issue of how to maintain healthy development, more importantly; it is a crucial matter of cultural construction of the cyber space. The network “decentralization” requires changing of the traditional vertical management mode of “subject-object” dichotomy into the coordinative multiagent governance, in order to promote the benign interaction between the virtual space and realistic space. It is necessary to make great efforts to the construction, utilization and management of new media which is similar to the internet, in order to strengthen the network ethic construction.

The guidance of positive consensus on the internet should be put to good use to enhance the network ethical construction, produce mainstream public opinion and gain the initiative. The mainstream websites should persist in true and accurate news report and provide objective and fair consensus supervision to maintain the justice and people’s legal interest and spread healthy and uplifting network culture. Commercial websites and social media should obey all kinds laws and regulations of network administration consciously, and not to pursue eyeball economy one-sided ignoring everything else, or advocate murder, violence, pornography or other content of vulgar tastes on the websites.

Sound and complete network legislation and regulation is the foundation of network ethical construction. To deal with the new circumstances and problems along with the development of network, it is necessary to accelerate legislation and regulation not only in the aspect of management and control, but also for the purpose of development strengthening, in order to furtherly carry forward the process of network legislation. At the same time, we should promote the administration and execution of laws, clarify the right and obligation of the organizations such as the government, mainstream media and social media, establish regular network controlling organizations, build up the mechanism of responsibility with definite affirmation of rights and duties, give full play to the net police for their important role in networks, proceed data monitoring for the information and images on portal websites and regulate the profit pursuing behaviors.

Education of network ethic is a fundamental project and a firewall against network ethical decline. The purpose of network ethical education is to promote the self-administration of the network virtual space, cultivate the cultural mechanism of consciousness with the orientation of self-discipline, make the netizens to form favorable moral habits and live enlightened and healthy internet lives. To carry out effective network ethical education, it is demanded to mobilize the power of the whole society, explore and utilize all varieties of beneficial education resources, practice various education activities according to different age groups, blend the ethical education in all kinds of portal websites and social networks which are used by netizens every day, take full
advantage of the new technologies of network new media for their characteristics of images and voice, change the traditional mode of discourse and innovate the content and form of education in order to make the network ethical education more vivid and lively, enhance the affinity and appeal of network ethical education, thus furtherly guarantee the cultural security of the cyber space.

References

[2] Li-xin He, Criticism of Zizek against the Cyber Space, Foreign Literature, 2 (2014), PP. 139.
[4] Li-xin He, Criticism of Zizek against the Cyber Space, Foreign Literature, 2 (2014), PP. 138.