

Soul Confusion and Moral Education of Human Beings in Technology Age

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Abstract

In technology era, the alienation of science and technology intensifies the confrontation between man and nature, man and himself, and man and the society, bring great harm to people's mind, and obstruct the value of moral education. The effective ways to prevent and resolve this alienation of science and technology are to enhance the education of human mind and moral, to strengthen the guiding role of moral education, and to control and guide the development of modern science and technology with moral ethics.

Key words: Science and technology; Alienation; Moral education

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INTRODUCTION

In modern times, as a "revolutionary power that plays a pushing role in the history" (Marx & Engels, 2009, p.602), science and technology permeate all aspects of human life, bringing great convenience and huge change to human life. However, the widespread application of science and technology, while bringing enormous material wealth to human, has caused a series of ethical issues, posing a great threat to human. Looking back the development of

science and technology in the last century, technological achievements of human exceeded the sum of achievements it made in the past thousands of years, however, it is exactly this century that harms human the most. Therefore, in the context of accelerated development of science and technology, it is necessary to reflect on an issue as a matter of human development: what are the impacts of alienation of science and technology on the human mind? To realize the true benefit of science and technology for human, how can we give ethics guide to science and technology?

1. EFFECT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN SOCIETY

Both science and technology are products of human practice, and are also important means for human to transform the world. With economy development and technology progress, human has created enormous material wealth and promoted the productivity improvement by use of technology, becoming a huge power to promote the social development. However, technological revolutions have exacerbated confrontations between human and nature, human and itself, and human and society while promoting the social development, highlighting the contradiction of social life in all areas. Marx pointed out profoundly:

It seems that the victory of technology is achieved at the cost of morality corruption. As human increasingly controls nature, it seems that individuals increasingly become slaves of someone else or slave of their own immoral behaviors. Even it seems that pure glory of science can only shine under the dark background of ignorance. All our discoveries and progresses seem result in making the material force into intelligent life, and human life turn into material force. (Marx & Engels, 2009, p.580)

This negative effect of modern science and technology application has cause a huge gap in the human mind,

transforming from an extreme respect for the technology to a “science and technology pessimism”, considering science and technology have not only caused a crisis for human survival and development, but also put the human mind and moral education in a difficulty of various contradictions under the background of the technical times.

First of all, technological development has intensified the conflict between human and nature, deteriorating the human living environment. In the late 20th century, in the context of sharp growth of world population and rapid development of economy, although human’s ability to conquest and transform nature has been improved to an unprecedented degree, human recklessly and greedily exploits nature without restraint by virtue of science and technology, and has ignored the capacity of the earth carrying the human survival, severely damaged the harmonious relationship between human and nature, leading to unprecedented consumption of resources on the earth and serious pollution of the environment, and has triggered a global ecological crisis, posing a severe challenge to human. These ecological issues pose potential threat to human survival and development, encourage people to rethink the relationship between human and nature as well as human’s own code of conduct, and reflect on the independent value of “human-centered” ignoring nature in the past as well as wrong environment conception that sets the relationship between nature and human in opposition. Human should be kind to and responsible for nature.

Secondly, the technological development has deepened the contradiction between the human and society, deepening the social crisis. After enjoying the results of scientific and technological civilization for centuries, looking back, people suddenly find that although the development and application of science and technology have greatly improved the social productivity, and has brought highly developed material achievements to people, the material prosperity has neither brought spiritual satisfaction to people, nor brought people into the ideal kingdom in expectation, to the contrary, it has caused and exacerbated a series of social crisis, placing them in a “terrible world” with inner emptiness, value loss, indifference and full of social evils, “In such a world, technological progress has not brought the improvement of ethical level, but has made people become slaves of their possessiveness and big machines, become the tool for people to abuse their instincts and feelings.” (Li, 2000) Economically, with technological monopoly, developed countries endlessly plunder resources of developing countries, therefore the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, which directly leads to greater North-South gap; politically, superior technology has become means for them to implement the hegemonism and power politics, and even become a tool for them to repress and massacre innocent civilians. In particular, some developed

countries scramble to develop biotechnology, nuclear weapons and carry out the arms race taking advantage of high technology in order to protect their own interests, the energy of these nuclear weapons is enough to destroy the earth many times, making human have to live under the threat of nuclear terror. People in many countries still have a fresh memory of injuries and environmental pollution caused by the atomic bomb, bacteria bomb and inhuman human trials in World War II, as a result, a lot of people have emotions of fear, pessimism and anxiety. In addition, some high-tech criminal acts, such as printing counterfeit money, imitating firearms and Internet fraud, etc., have also brought instability factors to the development of the whole society, undermining the harmonious state of the whole society. These social problems have brought great confusion to people, and what exactly that science and technology which used to be worshiped have brought to people, good or evil?

Thirdly, technological development has led to the spiritual crisis of human, resulting in the alienation of human itself. With the modern technical means, human has a better and higher understanding of their physiological and mental activities, getting more freedom and liberation. However, with the development of science and progress of technology, the material desire of people is increasingly stronger, resulting in the personality lost, beliefs fading, mental confusion and the phenomenon human becoming a slave of material. Although human derives great satisfaction from the material wealth, but “facing with the strong social and technical system, human feels more and more powerless, in a dilemma of self-realization and materialization”. (Liu, 2007) Under the technical conditions, people become the slave of the machine, and lose their individuality and autonomy, as well as the judgment and influence to control the society. The material level of technology has been exaggerated, and the spiritual significance has been ignored, increasingly shrinking human spiritual world leads to a spiritual crisis and faith crisis. As a result, under technical conditions, the more material wealth people create, the more they immerse in the material enjoyment, and the degeneration of certain abilities comes with their dependence on science and technology. Technology makes people completely lose the humane nature of “why a human is a human”.

2. THE INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT ON THE MORALITY OF THE HUMAN MIND

While greatly improving the social productivity and bringing enormous material wealth, the development and application of science and technology have also gradually become an alien force suppressing the humanity. Just as Dr. Willis Harman, an American scholar, said:

“The space of our development is faster and faster, but we have lost the way.” (Astingsij, 1988) The rapid development of science and technology has triggered a lot of contradictions and conflicts between traditional ethics and reality, in the development and application of science and technology, human loses itself, loses the faith, and puts itself in the endless greed of the pursuit of material, raising the profound reflection of human on itself, society and nature. Human technological activities and inventions originally intend to benefit and serve mankind, but in the process of development and actual application, modern science and technology deviate from the original intention, “departing from human needs and purposes, become a hostile, alien and unruly force, which in turn controls people, rules people, endangers people, and poses a threat and disaster to human”. (Chen, 2007) The academic circle calls the phenomenon that science and technology deviate from its nature in the development as the alienation of science and technology, which is the root leading to the deterioration of the human social and ecological environment, social and moral anomie, human spirit lost, and the emergence of all kinds of ethical problems and faith crisis.

With the development of technology, people are bound to meet with the revenge and punishment by the nature, which is a bitter pill caused by the excessive conquest of the nature, if we unlimitedly explore her using our wit and various of technical ways. Alienation of science and technology manifests to different levels in all aspects of modern social life, which has become a major potential danger of human survival and development. In the natural realm, alienation of science and technology manifests as environmental pollution, ecological crisis and shortage of resources. As Engels pointed out in *Dialectics of Nature*, “We should not be over enjoyed our victory on the nature. For each such victory, the nature will take revenge on us.” (Marx & Engels, 2009, p.559) In the social realm, alienation of science and technology manifests itself as the “polarisation, lack of justice, moral decline, security crisis, knowledge turn” (Su, 2010) of the society. Science and technology was once the proud of human beings. However, the proud does not evolve into dreamed paradise, but to become a flow of social force to enslave, control and hurt human, resulting in value crisis on various levels. From the perspective of humanity, the demonstration of science and technology alienation is loss of human subjectivity, depreciation of human dignity and value as well as half-development of human. The display of rationality in science has suppressed the instinct of human nature and twisted the personality. (Tian & Cheng, 2014). Constrained by technology, individuals are deprived of freedom bit by bit, finally ended as existence of pure technology dependent on production discipline.

Alienation of science and technology brings about great harm to the spirit of people, wrecking them

physically and psychologically. Under the progress of modern industrialization, moral panics are aroused from all walks of life due to the social anomie and people’s psychic disorder widely existed in certain time and space as well as irreparable damage to society and people living in society caused by technologism. As the resulted great change, People begin to shift from the obsession with the conquering world or enjoyment of material results gifted by science and technology to big changes in their minds, spirits and soles. Many people are frequently hunted with negative emotions such as depression, pessimism, irritation and even anxiety, leading to various psychological crisis under the combined pressure of vanity, boredom and lack of sense of belonging and security. Furthermore, network fictitious society, on the one hand, decreases direct personal contact, deepens interpersonal segregation and results in interpersonal alienation, which eventually produces a great number of indoorsmen and indoorswomen, making people lonely and solitary. On the other hand, with increasing privacy violation and network fraud, people become more indifferent and don’t trust each other. In addition, people are limited within self-designed “automated” world by various new technical inventions. This kind of dependency onto technology results in body function degradation and decreased immunity in muscle function, which is accompanied with diseases including heart attack, hyperlipidemia, hypertension and depression. Consequently, some properties of human reason are gone with the “degradation of certain human functions due to dependence upon science and technology”. The meaning and value of human are gradually weakened (Pan & Zeng, 2011). All of these bring about great impact and stroke onto people’s spirit world.

Alienation of science and technology also hardly struck conventional moral education. On one hand, due to great achievements realized by science and technology in all walks of life, the definite authority of scientific knowledge is established, which results in the prevalence of outlook about scientism and the dominant position of scientism in moral education. Consequently, the moral education, because of ignoring inner connection with living world and losing value being confronted with knowledge rationality, turns into moralization without real life feelings, which directly leads to the deviation of science and technology from ethics as well as splitting between rationality and value. On the other hand, when people begin to rejoice for the victory one after another in conquering the nature by means of technology, people are awoken to the fact that they are all part of material world and human is essentially materialized, gradually losing oneself and retiring into material world, so valueless. Therefore, “Everything worth pursuing is analyzed and intellectualized. Moral education got intellectualized, routinized, refined and scientific, while the meaning and value as human are totally pushed aside.” (Hu, 2009)

Actually, the meaning and value existing in authenticity of moral education is overshadowed by instrument rationality of science and technology, which is mainly specified in three aspects: no subjectivization, scientification and abstraction in moral education (Pan, 2007). Under this educational environment, the teacher would not tolerate his or her students to doubt and think about worthy things, whom are required to accept scientific and rational knowledge unconditionally. These teachers consider that students would obtain virtue with understanding and development of knowledge. This kind of moral education is seriously against the realistic life and ignores the social meaning of morality, which could only turn students into people without individuality.

3. HOW TO DEAL WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BROUGHT THE HUMAN IMPACT OF MIND

Development has two sides. Under the profound background of development in modern science and technology, the occurrence of alienation in science and technology is inevitable. For the purpose of benefiting human through science and technology, it is necessary for us to strengthen the guiding function in morality education, which could be used to adjust and guide the development of modern science and technology. In this way, human could really attain happiness by means of science and technology. And the negative affect brought about by science and technology alienation could be decreased or eliminated. In order to achieve the aforesaid target, the quality of human shall be improved essentially in addition to strengthening human soles and morality in technical times, esp. moral education with science and technology.

The first thing is to strengthen education to science and technology workers regarding their social responsibilities. During the process of scientific research and applications, the research workers are playing a very important role. The science and technology achievements which they would make are unpredictable and uncertain. The dynamic complexity of the achievements makes the applications of it out of control. In a particular period, these scientific achievements will probably make a great impact on many fields of the society including the politics, the economy, the culture, the education and the families. Sometimes it will possibly have a key impact even on the nature, the society, and the destiny of the human beings itself. Therefore, under the conditions of modern technology, the moral responsibility that the science and technology workers are undertaking becomes more and more important.

The unpredictability of the scientific achievements and the uncertainty of the moral responsibility require

strengthening education to science and technology workers about social responsibilities. We should make science and technology center on people, develop with caring for the liberty, the living condition and the future of mankind, to make science and technology stay with people and serve people (Wang & Li, 2003). Every research worker should establish a “people-oriented” values and make it as a rule to grade the development of science and technology, improve their moral evaluation, work hard on forming a loyal personality with perseverance, selflessness and factualism, combine scientific research with human interests, get the scientific development along with the overall interests of the human society, and go together with the development of human beings themselves. This way, they could truly work for the overall happiness of the human beings. Only if the research workers have established right values of science and technology, have possessed strong social responsibilities and the faith of benefiting the mankind, can they make the science and research advance towards the human progress. So strengthening education to the science and technology workers regarding their social responsibilities becomes more and more important.

The second thing is to conduct the public education of the value of science and technology. To citizens, it's necessary both to form their scientific values, and to improve their awareness of participating in scientific activities. Cultivating scientific values means leading the citizens to know the development of science and technology in a eclectic and overall view, leading them to understand and face the relationship between human, society, nature and science in a right way, and realize both the positive and negative effects that the science and technology have brought to the human society correctly as well, to instruct the citizens neither to overpraise the science and technology and say “science and technology is almighty”, nor to overestimate the negative effects and say “science and technology is useless.”, nor to ascribe all the problems produced during the human life to science and technology, leading the citizens to recognize the essence of the science and technology. The proper attitude towards science and technology is that, the value standard of science and technology doesn't depend on itself, but depends on the one who invented and used it. Science and technology is a “kopsis” which will bring positive effects when it's used by “kindness”, and bring negative effects when it's used by “evilness”. How will human use it? To bring happiness or disaster to human is determined by human themselves instead of any of their tools (Fan, 1994).

The third thing is to assimilate the moral education concerning science and technology to the college education system. (*Selected Works of Jiang Zeming [Third Volume]*, 2006, p.104) To strengthen moral education to the students in colleges has great significance. On

the one hand, because of the great contribution that the science and technology have made to the productivity, the science and technology were considered the decisive power. Under the influence of "Scientism", to educate talented students who are professional in a certain field or a certain major is the main aim of modern schools, whereas, the moral education is ignored, and becoming insignificant. On the other hand, the colleges are the important place to educate the Tech talents and the main battlefield to make progress in Science and Technology. But what concerned us is the falsification of experimental data and the fake articles normally appeared among the college students, and the apparent lack of the cultivation of scientific morality, so to strengthen moral education to the students in colleges are becoming imperative under the situation.

To strengthen the moral education, to cultivate the students' awareness in scientific morality, and to assimilate the moral education concerning science and technology to the educational system is an important way to strengthen the moral education of Science and Technology to the college students. Both the instruction of knowledge and the cultivating of values and morality are important in the schooling. It's proved that unilateral education of science and technology can't efficiently clear up the confusions of morality that the variety of science and technology has brought to us. For this reason, to emphasize moral education and make it combined with scientific education is the development direction of future education. (Zhang, 2009). This shows that the moral education, especially concerning Science and Technology morality must be strengthened while the scientific education is going on in the college. On the one hand, we should exert the leading function of moral education on values, and lead the scientific education by it. On the other hand, we should permeate the scientific education during the process of moral education to form the students' moral cultivation of science and technology, and make it serve the human's survival and development.

CONCLUSION

With technology progress, human has created enormous material wealth and promoted the productivity improvement by use of technology, becoming a huge power to promote the social development. However, technological revolutions have exacerbated confrontations between human and nature, human and itself, and human and society while promoting the social development, highlighting the contradiction of social life in all areas. The unpredictability of the scientific achievements and the uncertainty of the moral responsibility require

strengthening education to the science and technology workers about social responsibilities, Alienation of science and technology also hardly struck conventional moral education. So, we should strengthen education to the science and technology workers regarding their social responsibilities, and conduct the public education of the value of science and technology. Assimilate the moral education concerning science and technology to the college education system.

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