The Value of Durkheim's Moral Education Concept in China*

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Abstract—Durkheim criticized extreme individualism, emphasized the organic solidarity of modern society, advocated the attachment to a community, the discipline and autonomy spirit, and laid moral education as the foundation for rebuilding social norms. In the process of modernization transformation, there are problems in Chinese value concept of moral education, such as how to maintain a balance between justice and solidarity, and how to try the best to perfectly realize the value in educational practice. However, Durkheim’s moral education concept properly provides valuable thinking solution to this confusion.

Keywords—modernity; value concept; Durkheim; solidarity; individualism

I. INTRODUCTION

Jaspers once said, "People are not only the products of biological inheritance, but more the traditional works. Education is a process reenacted on each individual." [1] Thus, for a single individual, through the subtle influence of family education, school education and social customs, one may consciously or unconsciously enter the existing cultural system and be constantly improved into a real existing self. This process of growth is the self-individualization process that people paid attention to in pedagogy; of course, the individual may also integrate into the whole existing world, connect with the social world and finally integrate into the whole society through cultural acquisition and infiltration. In this process, the individual becomes a people in the world, and the course of socialization is realized. Through the medium of education, individuals can not only unceasingly discover, improve and gradually perfect themselves, realize the uniqueness of individual life, but also build up an inseparable relation with others and the world. In this process, the course of socialization is started up and the dualistic effects of education are maximized. Playing an important role in educating people, moral education naturally has a inescapable duty to educate people and achieve the said dualistic effects.

However with the society's transformation to modernization in China, education also appears a high degree of differentiation and disciplinary barriers, and there is no doubt that moral education is also facing the impact of modernity. Since the reform and opening up, China's moral education has also been constantly adjusted with the modernization of education. But, it is helpless that moral education may often fall into a misunderstanding of value concept, namely moral education may either rely on individual’s demands for justice despise the overall spirit of ethical solidarity, or focus on the spirit of solidarity of the social community, leading to the elimination of individual spirit. What cannot be ignored is that China's moral education emphasizes subjectivity, individuality, and cultivating conscious and independent individual citizens. This is undoubtedly worthy of being recognized in China's moral education. However, while emphasizing that the student is an individual being, how to explore the social and collective nature of human being as a social being, and how to show it through a rational and legal way in the practical education process are the times' calls for the mission of moral education. In facing the modern predicament of moral education, Durkheim's discussion of moral education can give a lot of inspirations, to facilitate exploring the original meaning of moral education and the content, methods and ways of education.

II. THE MODERN CONTEXT OF DURKHEIM'S MORAL EDUCATION

In the face of the drastic changes in European history in the second half of the 19th century (that is the times when the feudal and religious powers were weakened and the industrial society continued to develop), Durkheim, like the great contemporaries at that time, experienced and observed that the traditional common belief of transcendent was gradually weakened, modern individualism became flourishing and impacted the secular life and moral beliefs. How to deal with the relationship between individual and collective and that between individualism and socialism leads him to constantly think about the spiritual confusion of the times. Durkheim had a keen insight into the economic, social and spiritual crises that have emerged from the transition from pre-modern society to modern society. As can be seen from his works, in the development of industry and commerce in the 19th century, with the deepening of the division of labor in society, the bankruptcy of industry and commerce has become more and more serious, which has
increasingly threatened the social solidarity; the hostility between workers and employers became a distinctive feature of industrial society, and triggered social conflicts and crises; spiritually, people’s suicide rate increased; they are full of pessimism about reality; and the society became seriously disordered. Therefore in his view, it is necessary to build up a moral idea based on the spirit of science to adapt to the development of the new era. Raymond Aron wrote, "As a sociologist, Durkheim believes that the traditional religion can no longer adapt to the needs of his so-called spirit of science. On the other hand, as a faithful believer of Auguste Comte, Durkheim considered that society needed to be 'coordinated', while the ‘coordination’ could only be formed by building up an absolute belief; thus, he asserted that it was needed to build up a morality as inspired by scientific spirit" [2].

What cannot be ignored is that, as a sociologist and philosopher, Durkheim hopes to explore the causes of various modern crises in industrial society on the basis of various disordering phenomena and reconstruct the social order and moral consensus. In the prophecy of the second edition of "Theory of Social Division of Labor", he emphasized, "The law and morality of modern economic life are in an anomie state. This is the state of anomie that we want to reveal and that has caused the extremely tragic phenomena in the economic world. As a result, a variety of conflicts and chaos are frequently produced." [3] In Durkheim's view, social division of labor is a manifestation of disorder, not the cause of disorder. He analyzes in detail the causes and consequences of division of labor. Among them, one of the important consequences of the division of labor is that it changes the foundation of social solidarity and provides a new bond for social solidarity. Durkheim divided social solidarity into two types: "mechanical solidarity" and "organic solidarity." The former type is a social combination that connects individuals through “collective consciousness” and often appears in underdeveloped city and ancient society. This solidarity is build up on the basis of individual similarity and social homogeneity, where human's actions are governed by group consciousness. People have the same lifestyle, psychological feelings, moral standards and religious beliefs, and each part of the society has low extent of mutual dependence. The latter type refers to a type of social integration that connects individuals through their functional interdependence. Modern society is like an organism with various organs. Each person performs his own specialized occupation according to the division of labor. At this time, although the collective consciousness still exists, it has become blurred, and the individual's independent personality has been improved; but because they have functional dependence, they combine with each other. That is to say, it is right because of the social division of labor and individual heterogeneity, members need to unite with each other instead. Thus, social division of labor is the material basis of organic solidarity, and collective consciousness is the spiritual foundation of mechanical solidarity. "Actually, in Durkheim's view, individual consciousness and collective consciousness are not presented confrontationally. On the contrary, the main feature of modern society is that the organic solidarity promotes the emergence of individual consciousness. Individual development is a two-way process, namely individualization and socialization: the former way of process indicates that the individual as the autonomy subject has the ability to freely plan for his own actions for the first time; the latter way of process indicates that through discipline and other means, the society promotes individuals having the self-prescriptive and self-controlled moral practice skills. Therefore, in normal state of society, society and individuals always match each other; society provides the basis for existence of individuals, and individuals incorporate society into the process of concretization." [4] Therefore, when the society is in an anomie state, not only the collective consciousness is concealed, but the coordinated individual consciousness also loses the social being, becomes a one-dimensional self-regulator, and falls into the crisis of extreme individualism.

In order to overcome the impact of egoism and extreme individualism on modern society, Durkheim made a lot of researches, including attaching great importance to the important role of education in human life. His educational concept adheres to his concepts in other sociological works, and emphasizes the relationship between individuals and society. Durkheim’s exploration on educational issues is an important part of his works. This is because, on the one hand, he served as a professor of pedagogy during his teaching at the University of Paris; on the other hand, he has a strong interest in pedagogy. He used sociology's analytical perspective to regard education as a social phenomenon from, explore the purpose, methods, ways and important role of education in the process of human socialization, and specifically explore the content, methods and effects of moral education. In terms of educational purposes, he emphasized that education should train children to become qualified members of the society; in the role of education, he opposed both "the theory of educational omnipotence" and "the theory of educational uselessness", and thought that education is a necessary condition and guarantee for human socialization, and the purpose of education is to make individuals who are inadaptable to social life at birth become a new social self. Education should make people transcend the original nature: children are properly growing up into human beings through this channel. [5]

III. THE MODERN CONNOTATION OF DURKHEIM'S MORAL EDUCATION

Durkheim attached great importance to the role of morality in social development and emphasized the relevance of moral order and social order. In order to build up a new moral order, he carried out a detailed analysis on the content and foundation of morality in modern society, and the connotation, method/approach and importance of moral education.

First, Durkheim separated moral education from religious education. Durkheim firstly got religious morality and rational morality distinguished. He emphasized that the morality built up on the basis of religion is absurd logically, because it uses supernatural transcendental forces to guide moral concepts; however in the secular life of Europe, this concept fell into serious crisis; the collective discipline and
public conscience based on theology were contradicted and lost their dominant position. But by building morality on a rational basis and using the directly observed experience of social being, it is available to reshape the concept of collective. He emphasized that France experienced a great educational revolution, and the religious education generated from religious revelation was being transformed into purely secular moral education. This moral education is "a purely rationalistic education" [6]. In his view, each nation has its own morality; religious society has its own moral education. But in essence, due to the backwardness of society, moral education in this period is essentially religious education. Respecting God and sacrificing for God is the most important moral obligation. "The primary purpose of education is to teach people what to do in the face of religious existence." [7] With the development of history, the traditional Christian morality has become increasingly weakened. Especially with the rise of Protestantism, morality has gained more and more autonomy. The pace of education secularization is approaching, and people expect realizing rationalistic education in moral education and abandoning religious education. Therefore, in Durkheim's point of view, moral education should be for rational education.

Second, the content of moral education consists of three elements: discipline, group attachment, and autonomy. First of all, Durkheim emphasized that discipline is the primary factor of moral education. In Durkheim's view, "morality is not just a system of customary behaviors, but also a system of orders." Morality should include the preference for routineness and the moral authority. The former is the transformation of an individual from certain temperament in his/her body into a conventional existence, becoming a preference, such as an obligation; the latter is a force that one may not like but must obey, such as norms. The moral temperament combined the preference for routineness and the moral authority together is the spirit of discipline. Durkheim wrote that social life needs to obey the law, and also needs to be regularized, so as to ensure the normal running, and complying with established norms is an essential element of people's daily obligations. Durkheim applied his method for analysis on the society to demonstrating the disciplinary elements of morality. He believed that social life is a complicated equilibrium mechanism; and various factors are mutually restricted to maintain a balanced state. If one gets rid of all constraints and norms and no longer limit his/her desire, he/she may fall into anxiety. Moral education needs to bear the function of spreading "limits"; and the unrestricted freedom is pathological. He emphasized that norms and freedoms are not mutually exclusive, but mutually interdependent. "Through the practice of moral norms, people can develop an ability to control and dictate themselves. This is the whole reality of freedom." [8] Freedom depends on norms. He opposed the anarchism's neglect of norms and disregard of discipline. Of course, he believed that the content of discipline would change with the times, and the methods of discipline education should change accordingly. Secondly, the secondary element of morality that he emphasized is the attachment to social groups. According to the purpose of human behavior, he distinguished human behavior into two types: the behavior for individual purpose and the behavior for pursuing interest of the collective. In terms of the former type of behavior, individual purpose can be just for surviving, for individual's purpose or others, which considers the existence of others; if one exists just for surviving, there is no value of the so-called morality; if one survives for his/her family, there is a meaning of morality as it is for non-personal purpose. Therefore, he opposed self-interested behavior and believed that "the acts stipulated by moral norms are always for pursuing non-personal purposes." [9] In terms of the latter type of behavior, society is taken as the target of the object. "In my words, the so-called society refers to a group of people, such as family and nation and human beings. Society should be composed of at least those groups." [10] So, Durkheim did not think that society is only a collection of single individuals, and the interest of the collective is not just the sum of self-interests. He adhered to the social concept that he discussed in sociological works, and believed that the social concept emphasized in moral education is the application of theory in practice. He reiterated that only if individual becomes higher than the individual's own target activities, beyond the individual, and form a social being by connection with people can it has some moral significance. Durkheim refuted a common notion — that is, because society is only composed of individuals, society cannot have characteristics that are different from the characteristics of individuals who make up society. In his view, the whole is not a simple sum of each part; the relevant elements are interconnected and interacted with each other. For human society, only by integrating into the collective can individual be available to play his/her due role. Although the features of the collective are changed as the times goes, there are identity, so individual needs to be attached to the group to which he belongs.

Emphasizing autonomy (self-discipline) is the third element of morality. In Durkheim's view, it is improper to rely solely on discipline and loyalty in order to act ethically, because people should also understand the reasons behind the action, the norms themselves, and the normative roots when abiding by relevant norms and finally achieving collective ideals, and get the norms internalized into self-norms. This is the autonomy. In moral teaching, it is necessary to pay attention to cultivating the principle of intellectuality to make students both understand how to do it and clearly know why it is done, "because moral teaching is neither an evangelism nor indoctrination, but interpretation work". [11] This can help students understanding the moral obligation and understand their purpose of serving the interests of the society. Durkheim analyzed Kant's explanation of duty and self-discipline; he emphasized that Kant had saw that moral laws had the nature of duty and self-discipline, the will is autonomous and self-disciplined, consistent with reason, unaffected by feelings, and spontaneously tending toward being duty. At this time, the law is no longer mandatory, but consciously spontaneous, so that the autonomy (self-discipline) is complete. Durkheim also analyzed Kant's concept of rational autonomy, arguing that Kant emphasized the universality and non-personality of moral laws, because reason is the same among all people, and is the same in all beings having reasoning ability.
Reasonably, one can act ethically and completely autonomously. But man is the unity of reason and sensibility. Sensibility has its own uniqueness and is difficult to obey the reasonable command. Therefore, heteronomy is needed, and autonomy is the product of rational will. Durkheim did not agree with Kant's view that duty and autonomy are fully integrated in one body. He believed that in reality, people might be confused by emotions and desires; hence, it is needed to rationally constrain the sensibility. The feeling of this sense of restriction is the sense of duty. He criticized Kant's thought that the rational sense of independent will separated the connection between reason and nature so that reason transcended reality, became outside real things and was completely abstract. Durkheim held that morality requires autonomy, but it is needed to find a different way of argumentation than Kant's. He wrote, "In this respect, our demands are increasing day by day. This fact clearly shows that this is not a simple question of logical possibility that is always true in the sense of a completely abstract truth, but some kind of growing, gradually formed, and evolving problems about the being in history." [12] In order to explain the nature of autonomy, Durkheim firstly explained the way in which autonomy was materialized in the relationship between people and the material universe, emphasized the way to use one's inner mind to think about the relationship between oneself and an object, understand the laws and reasons of matters and the reason of universal order, and arrange their own behaviors. Of course, for people, what he emphasized is not to passively and negatively maintain consistent with the nature of things due to external forcing, but positively and rationally maintain consistent with the nature of things, use the scientific architecture to liberate human beings. This is the initial level of autonomy and science is the source of autonomy. In the moral order, the existence of autonomy is still needed. If the science of morality becomes an established fact, people will become the master of moral order. One may voluntarily obey the moral order, if he/she find the reason and functions of the moral laws and those functions are built on the basis of the nature of the society. In fact, this is the goal that Durkheim has always been hoping to achieve in other related works, namely to form a science of morality on the basis of science. In the book "Moral Education", he once again mentioned the hypothesis of the science of morality in order to provide a rational basis for moral autonomy, so that one can not only understand what norm is, but also know what the norm is for, and consciously abide by relevant norms and realize the collective and social ideals.

Third, he explored the ways and means of moral education and how to improve the effectiveness of moral education: Durkheim did not agree with Locke's theory of tabula rasa, but emphasize that children have their own nature, and education can play a leverage role, guiding children's nature to maintain in line with social norms. Children have two innate characteristics and are susceptible to external influences. "First, children have the characteristics of being the one dominated by habit; secondly, children have characteristics that are easily influenced by hints. In particular, children are open to the law-like hints. "[13] Because children have those two characteristics, it is available to use appropriate methods to provide an opportunity for education. By using children's preference for habitual behavior, it is available to limit their variable instability and foster their preference for orderly life; because children are susceptible to the influence of hints, it is available to cultivate the role of moral authority. So, with respect to how to cultivate the three elements of morality: discipline, group attachment, autonomy, Durkheim conducted an in-depth exploration. First, how to use punish and reward method to cultivate students' disciplined spirit. Family education is different from school education in that the former gives children emotional comfort, while the latter can cultivate students' sense of solidarity towards the group.

Second, he explored how to use altruism to cultivate students' attachment to the group. Durkheim believed that the dual root of altruism is ‘first, due to habit, children are more and more attached to the things and people in the environment he is familiar with.'[14] Between children and the environment, a restriction relation is formed due to the repeated influence on children's nature; "second, children are easily exposed to external influences, which makes the feelings expressed in front of children very easy to get internalized by children."[15] Children may feel pain for reason of seeing the pain someone shown, share others' happiness, and sympathize with others." Durkheim believed that children did not have cruel tendency; they did not want to impose pain on others; they were only out of curiosity and did not correctly understand their behavior. Because children can recognize the intuitive and perceptual characteristics of things, it is need to have children have a clear and possible conception of their own groups, and have children obtain emotional recognition in specific actions. “To learn to love collective life, it is necessary to live a collective life not only in mind and imagination but also in reality."[16] Therefore, simple attachment is not enough. It is also necessary to stimulate and strengthen students' vitality through effective training in reality. Durkheim attached great importance to children's characteristics of recognizing things and integrated the characteristics into the process of education. Especially, he emphasized that the integration of social group concepts into children's consciousness must highlight a vivid, live and strong image. As for how to achieve this effect, he stressed that on the one hand it depends on the impact of the school environment; on the other hand, it depends on the content taught, that is, the general impact of teaching.

Finally, he explored how to play the role of school in moral education. First, it is important to recognize that when children enter school, they are only familiar with two groups of people: their family and their little mates. The former presents their emotional unity through blood ties, thus forming a moral constraints infiltrating into life through intimate contact; the latter is naturally formed through free choice. The identity transition from family member to national citizen needs to be supported by the media of school environment. School environment can help form some personal relationships, and also enable children to enhance their communication with people. In particular, children can naturally accept the content of moral education by cultivating their habits of class life and attachments to classes and
IV. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF DURKHEIM'S MORAL EDUCATION TO CHINA

Facing the confusion of the times, Durkheim examined the times with the characteristic calm eyes of scholars, and constantly devoted his own thinking to the transformation of the times. Facing the moral anomic in modern society, he criticized extreme individualism, and expected to reshape the collective consciousness and construct a normative life. From Durkheim's moral theory, China can be enlightened in the modernization transition: on the one hand, in terms of cultivating and promoting individual's moral literacy, single individual in the process of receiving education needs to have dynamic self-cognition and practice ability, namely the ability to constantly re-recognize him/herself and construct self and realize self. Durkheim attached great importance to the ethics of vocation and the improvement of the moral literacy of citizens. He emphasized that it is necessary to start moral education from children period so that children can be socialized smoothly and become qualified members of the society. This is one of the expectations of his moral education theory. In the moral education in current China, with the change of specific practical conditions, how individuals can achieve a balance between individualization and socialization requires joint efforts of individuals and the society. Especially, as an individual, it is necessary to constantly recognize the shortcomings of the self, construct a new self, and realize the self from the potential to the reality. Of course, we need to re-examine the concept of self. The self not only has the pre-existence and reality in the ontological sense, but also has the sociality in the sense of existentialism. On the other hand, for modern society, Durkheim's moral education thought provides a theoretical logic and practical wisdom for China to reshape collective consciousness, attach importance to solidarity and enhance social attachment in the process of moral education. In the "Theory of Social Division of Labor", in order to criticize the social disorder caused on the basis of social division of labor, Durkheim elaborated on the issue of social solidarity in detail. He distinguished mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity, specifically discussed the differences between the two and the significance of the times, and emphasized that social solidarity included collective reality, that is, collective consciousness or common consciousness and legal reality, thus criticizing extreme individualism. In "Moral Education", Durkheim once again emphasized that individualism dispelled obligations and pursued the principle of isolation; apart from the family, people no longer participate in other collective life, so the spirit of solidarity is weakened and public morality is damaged. In Durkheim's view, in order to achieve the goal of integration into the collective, it is firstly needed to have a sense of collectiveness, attach importance to collectiveness, and regain the spirit of solidarity. Durkheim wrote, "When you say 'we' instead of 'I', there is always a kind of happiness in it, because anyone who can say 'we' may feel that there is a kind of support behind him, a kind of power he can rely on and stronger than the power isolated individual. When you say 'we' in a more confident and more steadfast way, this kind of happiness will be increased accordingly." [18]

Durkheim criticized egoism by discussing the relationship between individual and the society. He believed that society is not composed of isolated atomized individuals, not a simple collection of individuals, but a community composed of elements interacted and interlinked with each other. People live together, and individual's psychologies interact with each other, constituting group consciousness and collective spirit. It is because individual is a social being, so that the existence of morality have some significance. "Namely, the starting point of the field of moral life is the starting point of collective life. In other words, only if we are the beings in society can we be the moral beings." [19] Surely, emphasizing the essential foundation of social being is not to deny the existence value of individual. Individual does not need to give up his/her self-innate nature to integrate into the society. He emphasized that only under the norms and constraints of society can the individual's nature be realized, because when individual will and collective will reach an agreement and the individual interest is consistent with the collective interest, the group's identification may be stimulated, the bonds between the individual and the society may be strengthened, and the connection between the individual and life may be accordingly strengthened. Egoists only focus on the self; apart from the foundation of society, one cannot achieve a complete self, and their life seems to be a whole, a self-sufficient state, and seems to cut off the connection with others, but it is impossible to achieve, because "people are product of the society to a large extent. All the best things in people and all of people's advanced behaviors come from the society." [20] After criticizing egoism, Durkheim once again emphasized the relationship between individual and the society. "Society transcends the individual; society has its own nature which is different from individual's nature; therefore, society can meet the first necessary condition for play its role as the goal of modal behavior. But on the other hand, society can return to individual. There is no insurmountable gap between society and individuals. Society has built a deep-rooted foundation for people. The best part of people is just a flush of the collective. Precisely because of it, people can deliver themselves to it and even recommend it to themselves." [21]

V. CONCLUSION

Therefore, modern moral education carries forward the freedom and rights of individuals and emphasizes the respect for the object of education. There is nothing to be said against this kind of carrying forward of the subjectivity of the object of education. However in the process of education, if teacher and students ignore the normative nature of norms for individuals, a series of unimaginable consequences may be caused, which may make individual's freedom present
many abnormal state, and may easy to cause popularization of the value concepts of egoism and selfishness.

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