

Research on the Dignity of Contemporary Human Networks from the Perspective of Marx's Concept of Dignity

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Abstract: This paper takes Marx's concept of "dignity" as the theoretical cornerstone, aiming at exploring the network dignity of contemporary human beings in depth. By tracing the theoretical origin and connotation of Marx's concept of "dignity", the paper explores the development logic from Marx's concept of "dignity" to "network dignity", as well as the philosophical relationship between the definition and importance of network dignity in contemporary society. It also explores the philosophical relationship between the definition and importance of online dignity in contemporary society. In addition, the study also focuses on the alienation and dissolution of contemporary network dignity, and applies Marx's concept of dignity to analyze in depth the new challenges to network dignity arising from alienation and to propose a path of dissolution.

Keywords: Dignity; Online dignity; Alienation

1. Overview of Marx's "concept of dignity"

The history of the evolution of the philosophical concept of "dignity" runs through various historical periods of human thought development, and the concept and connotation of "dignity" have been gradually enriched, while Marx's reflection on the issue of human dignity has further expanded the social dimension of "dignity". And Marx's reflection on the issue of human dignity further expanded the social dimension of "dignity".

1.1. The theoretical origins of Marx's "concept of dignity"

Hegel believed that human beings derive their dignity from their free self-consciousness. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he argues that "the concept of freedom has a universality, and within its universality itself there is definitely a developed individuality; such a concept of freedom can only be observed in the concept that exists as a concept, i.e., only in self-consciousness." [9] According to Hegel, the universality of freedom contains within it a developed individuality, because in the process of realizing freedom, the individual gradually manifests his or her unique qualities and abilities through the development of self-consciousness, and this development of individuality takes place within free self-consciousness because the development of the individual's qualities cannot be separated from self-consciousness. Having free self-awareness means that an individual is capable of rational thinking and judgment. Through rational thinking, people are able to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, as well as to understand their own roles and responsibilities, which enables them to make choices based on morals and values, thus realizing their dignity.

Feuerbach's emphasis on the natural attributes of human beings is a departure from his predecessors' emphasis on reason as the basis for the realization of human dignity, and his view of reason as a goal independent of natural attributes. According to Feuerbach, "Only that which is human is what counts as actual reality; for only that which is human is what is rational; man is the measure of reason." [10] Feuerbach associates human nature with reason and emphasizes the actual existence of human beings rather than supernatural or transcendental sensuous existence, which means that individuals should respect and accept their natural nature, including emotions, desires, needs, etc., rather than trying to hide or stifle these attributes, and that this respect for the natural nature of human beings is an important prerequisite for the realization of the dignity of human beings in Feuerbach's case. Feuerbach's viewpoint to a certain extent inspired Marx's critique of capitalism, which in turn had a certain impact on the creation of Marx's concept of dignity.

1.2. The essence of Marx's concept of dignity

According to Marx as a young man, "Dignity is that which most exalts a man, which gives his activity and all his endeavors a sublime quality, that which makes him beyond reproach, admired by all and exalted above all." [4] This implies that class division and inequality exists in capitalist society, this is because under the capitalist system, the labor activities of workers are deprived of their original meaning and value, and the workers are only passively performing repetitive mechanical labor in production rather than creatively participating in the production process, and at the same time the workers feel the loss of their dignity in this kind of labor. Guo Qianqian believes that "human dignity is the core category involving the pursuit of individuality and value recognition of the subject, and Marx's theoretical system is essentially a science that pursues the realization of human dignity." [11]

After Marx first explored the kernel of dignity in his youth, the wheel of time spun to 1844, and his thought was gradually deepened by the experience of the years. During this period, Marx thought more deeply about the intrinsic connection between dignity and alienated labor. According to Marx, "we have alienated each other from human nature to such an extent that the direct language of this nature seems to us an insult to human dignity, while on the contrary, the alienated language of the value of things has become something entirely consistent with the taken-for-granted, self-confident, and self-approved dignity of human beings." [5] Marx argues that in this alienated labor, people are forced to devote most of their time to selling their labor and chasing profit rather than truly embodying their creativity and sociality. This alienation deprives people of the knowledge and experience of their own essence and leads to the violation of their dignity. This violation of dignity results from the alienated social relations and distorted economic structure in which people are forced to define their own value in terms of the value of things, leading to an environment in which human dignity is threatened and harmed.

In his later years, in his Notes on History, Marx once again demonstrated his profound insight into human dignity, arguing that "it is inconceivable that there could be anything more absurd and degrading to human dignity for a part of the population to use their labor not only to pay off their own debts, but also to press for the repayment of those that the great feudal lords themselves should have tried to pay off." [7] By using the word "absurd" to describe this state of labor, Marx emphasizes the absurdity of the phenomenon and the serious impact it has on human dignity; a situation in which the laborer not only loses control over his own labor, but even becomes an instrument in the debt relationship, repaying debts that are not entirely of his own making. This state of labor seriously deprives the laborer of his dignity, loses the freedom of the human being himself, and places the laborer in a subordinate, oppressed position, seriously violating the dignity of the exploited. In the evolution of Marx's thought, his "concept of dignity" is an important theme throughout. At different stages of his thought, Marx explored in depth the meaning of dignity and closely linked it to the social structure and the economic system, revealing that the realization of human dignity plays a key role in social development.

2. Contemporary developments in "cyberdignity"

Marx advocated the realization of human dignity through the establishment of a true "Kingdom of Freedom", freeing it from the constraints of capital. However, with the rise of contemporary digitalization and networking, the connotation of Marx's concept of dignity has become richer and richer.

2.1. The logic of development from Marx's "dignity" to "cyberdignity"

Marx's "concept of dignity" provides a rich theoretical basis for us to understand the issue of dignity in today's virtual network society, and dignity and network dignity in the network society present a new meaning and unity in today's digital era. In the process of criticizing Proudhon, Marx once pointed out that "there is no history underneath all this unchanging and stagnant eternity, and even if there is, at most it is only a history in conception, i.e., a history that is reflected in the dialectical movement of pure reason." [6] Marx here questions the principle of eternity in Proudhon's system, which he considers to be too static and dogmatic, and which does not sufficiently take into account the development of history, thus leading to a denial of the developmental nature of history. Therefore, Marx's "dignity" is not a static concept, but evolves in the course of history. With the advancement of technology, the rise of social media, and changes in digital interactions, we face new challenges to privacy, free expression, and individual rights. Just as Marx's ideas evolved in different historical contexts, we need to rethink

what dignity means and how it is maintained in different historical settings.

Engels also believed that "Marx's theory is not a dogma, but an elucidation of a process of development consisting of a series of interlocking stages." [6]Engels emphasized that none of Marx's theories are dogmas, and that Marx's concept of dignity is not a rigid, fixed principle, but evolves and develops gradually with the development of society, changes in productive forces, and human self-awareness. Marx's concept of dignity is also applicable to explain the real problems of online dignity in today's network society. It is not that Marx's ideas have been arbitrarily applied, but that they have been newly adapted and developed in the changing history and society.

It is worth noting that the unification of today's cyberdignity with Marx's concept of dignity is not a simple copy of dogma, but an organic extension based on the characteristics of today's society. From Marx's concept of dignity, we can regard the network world as a new type of virtual society, in which people realize their own network dignity, which is conducive to the realization of free and comprehensive development of human beings. Extending Marx's "concept of dignity" to today's network era, we can find that Marx's "concept of dignity" and the network dignity of contemporary human beings in the network society are intrinsically unified. Therefore, Marx's concept of dignity is dynamic, historical and adaptable, reflecting the complexity of social and historical development with the times.

2.2. Definition and importance of contemporary cyberdignity

Cyberdignity is a complex and multidimensional concept that covers human autonomy, privacy, self-realization and social participation in the virtual world. Cyber dignity is an extension of the integrity of human personality in real space, which is not only about individual rights, but also involves the core of human dignity. Dignity on the Internet includes, but is not limited to, the following definitions: First, freedom of information and free expression: Contemporary dignity on the Internet emphasizes the right to free expression enjoyed by individuals in the Internet environment, including freedom of speech, expression of opinion, and the right of access to information. Individuals have the right to freely express their thoughts and opinions in the network, which is an important dimension of network dignity. Secondly, the protection of the right to privacy: cyberdignity is also concerned with the protection of an individual's right to privacy, ensuring that personal information is not abused or violated. Individuals have the right to maintain privacy in cyberspace from unauthorized access and use of information. Thirdly, self-identity and realization: Cyber dignity empowers individuals to shape their self-identity and realize their personal values in the virtual world. Individuals can display their talents, interests and characteristics in the network and realize the search for self-worth.

The importance of human contemporary cyberdignity is reflected in the fact that it involves an extension of human dignity, freedom and integrity of the real person, as well as a re-examination of ethical concepts in the digital age. In cyberspace, people's freedom of expression is manifested, which is extended in areas that may be restricted in the real world. Everyone should have the right to express their opinions, thoughts and ideas, and cyberdignity emphasizes this. In addition, cyberdignity is concerned with an individual's right to privacy, ensuring that personal information is not abused, leaked or nourished for commercial gain. Maintaining the right to privacy is not only the protection of individual rights and interests, but also the respect for individual dignity and self-realization. In conclusion, the importance of network dignity lies not only in the protection of individual rights and interests, but also in the maintenance and concern for human dignity in the network era. By protecting the individual's freedom, privacy and self-realization rights in the network, we can construct a more just, free and respectful network society and realize the comprehensive and free development of human dignity.

3. Alienation and Dissolution of Dignity in Contemporary Networks

The challenges to cyberdignity are gradually emerging in this digital age, where human cyberdignity is gradually lost in the waves of alienation, evoking deep concerns about freedom, privacy and social order. However, by drawing on Marx's concept of dignity, we can seek insights at a deeper level.

3.1. Alienation and new challenges to contemporary online dignity

The alienation of human beings' online dignity in the network society has gradually come to the

fore, first of all, in this digital era, the digital divide has further aggravated the problem of alienation of online dignity. "According to the UN ECOSOC document, 'DIGITAL DIVIDE' refers to the gap between countries and between groups within countries that is created or widened by the global development and application of information and communication technologies (ICT).^[3] This gap is based on factors such as geography, socio-economic status, and level of education, resulting in some groups not being able to equally enjoy the dignity and opportunities afforded by the network. This further hinders the development of human dignity online and puts some groups in a situation of marginalization in cyberspace. This technological gap has a direct impact on their ability to access online information and participate in the dissemination of knowledge, leading to a gap in their "right to access" the Internet, a gap that further undermines human self-identity and cyberdignity.

Secondly, freedom of expression, as a fundamental human right, provides individuals with the right to freely express their views and opinions in reality and online. However, with the development of the cyber age, freedom of expression inevitably involves the online dignity of others. Issues such as disinformation, hate speech, and cyberviolence have led to a discussion on the limits and balance of freedom of expression, as individual speech may lead to harm and threats to others in cyberspace. However, excessive restrictions on freedom of expression may also undermine the online dignity of individuals.^[8] The internet, as a platform for free communication, should allow for the existence of a plurality of views and opinions. When speech is overly regulated and censored, individuals may feel constrained and deprived of their right to express themselves, which in turn leads to the erosion of their online dignity. Resolving such conflicts requires finding solutions based on a balance of rights and responsibilities.

Finally, information leakage is also a key network dignity alienation phenomenon, which has become a prominent issue in the information age. With the rapid development of digital technology, the circulation of personal information on the Internet has become more widespread than ever before, yet this also threatens the core value of online dignity to some extent. "In today's networked world, an individual's desire to protect his or her privacy is more difficult to realize than before, especially online. For example, in April 2000 there was an incident in which the IDs and passwords of 435 users of the free e-mail service 'goo', a retrieval site operated by NTTME Information Distribution (NTT-X), were leaked."^[12] Information leakage is not only a privacy leakage, but also an infringement on human cyber-dignity, as the leaked information may be misused and distorted, ultimately affecting an individual's image and self-identity in cyberspace.

3.2. The Path of Dissolving Alienation of Dignity in Contemporary Networks

Marx linked the development of the productive forces to human dignity, arguing that the realization and safeguarding of human dignity is accompanied by a further increase in the productive forces. Marx pointed out that "this form of society is necessary for the development of the productive forces of society to such a high level: a level at which the equal, humanly dignified development of all members of society is possible."^[2] This view of Marx provides a unique perspective for us to solve the problem of alienation of online dignity brought about by the digital divide. First, the development of productive forces, especially the construction of network infrastructure, should be actively promoted, including measures such as improving infrastructure, providing free digital education, and promoting digital inclusiveness, so as to minimize the constraints on innovative capacity caused by the digital divide. Second, for disadvantaged groups, especially those who are more affected by the digital divide, relevant policies can be formulated to provide economic support and social care to help them overcome the impact of the digital divide and better realize their innovation potential. Third, building a social digital community can lead to the sharing of resources among disadvantaged groups, expanding their opportunities to participate in online platforms. This reduces the constraints they face due to a lack of resources and enhances their presence and dignity in cyberspace.

Second, the balance between the boundaries of freedom and the dignity of others online becomes a challenge, and the issue of freedom of expression takes on a more complex dimension in the light of Marx's conception of freedom. According to Marx, "Freedom is the right to do and to engage in anything that does not harm others."^[1] Marx here closely links freedom with responsibility, emphasizing that "freedom" is not absolute laissez-faire, but is subject to certain restrictions and conditions. Therefore, we need to re-examine the boundaries of freedom of expression in the network society in order to maintain the overall dignity of human beings in the network society. First, society should clearly define the boundaries of online speech through laws and guidelines to prevent the dissemination of malicious information, false speech, hate speech, and so on. Second, technical means, such as artificial intelligence and big data analysis, should be utilized to strengthen the monitoring and

interception of false information and malicious speech on the Internet. At the same time, technological innovation should be encouraged to develop more effective tools to maintain the dignity of cyberspace. Third, society should encourage the building of a healthy and positive cyberculture, and advocate the spirit of mutual respect and rational discussion, which is consistent with the goal of safeguarding cyberdignity.

Finally, the problem of information leakage is rooted in the capitalist economic system driven by the pursuit of profit and competition. Technology companies view personal data as a commercial resource, resulting in the right to privacy being ignored and individuals being alienated as data commodities in cyberspace. Therefore, more advanced information security technology tools, such as encryption and authentication, are provided to help individuals better protect their data. At the same time, laws and regulations on privacy protection are formulated and strengthened to clarify the legal use and protection standards of personal data. This not only provides legal protection for the network dignity of individuals, but also builds a dignity maintenance system for the entire social network.

3.3. Implications and significance of restoring dignity to the network

In the age of network, the dignity of human beings on the network is facing serious challenges, and the digital divide, information leakage and other problems have led to the alienation of the dignity on the network. However, Marx's "concept of dignity" provides us with theoretical guidance and practical ways to solve this problem, from which we can draw profound inspiration and significance. Marx emphasized that no individual can be separated from the social whole. This revelation reminds us that the problem of online dignity not only affects individuals, but also involves the safety and stability of the whole society, and that the online dignity of individuals is not only a personal problem, but also a part of the society as a whole. In solving the problem of network dignity, we need to unify our own dignity with the dignity of the whole society, and re-examine our roles and responsibilities in the network era. Marx's concept of dignity inspires us to reflect on how to establish information standards globally and how to respect diversity while safeguarding the dignity of networks in different cultures. Marx opposed exploitation and alienation and emphasized the free and comprehensive development of human beings, but the issue of online dignity reveals the tension between freedom of information and social norms. Further, human online dignity is not only about their own rights and interests, but also about the long-term development of society. Enhancing people's sense of freedom and sense of belonging in the network society through safeguarding network dignity is not only conducive to stimulating individual potential, but also to enhancing the productivity of the society as a whole, which is of great value and significance in realizing the development of comprehensive freedom in today's network era.

4. Conclusion

In today's ever-changing network era, this paper traces the conceptual origins of Marx's "dignity" and "network dignity" through the vicissitudes of history, exploring the profound connection and ideological progress between the two. However, with the rapid rise of the cyber world, the embodiment of human dignity in cyber activities has become more important, but has also been subject to unprecedented impact. The shadow of the alienation of online dignity is gradually emerging, and in order to understand and solve this problem, we look forward from the perspective of Marx's view of "dignity". In this perspective, the construction of contemporary online dignity is like the twinkling of stars in the sky, guiding us towards a bright way to reshape the order of dignity. In the study of this paper, the alienation of contemporary network dignity is not only a problem, but also a warning to the reality of human values. Projecting Marx's "concept of dignity" onto the problem of alienation of contemporary network dignity, and escorting the construction of network dignity for contemporary human beings, presents us with a brand new perspective, a possibility of constructing human network dignity under the cataract of freedom.

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