

A study on the overall development path of college students from the perspective of existentialist educational philosophy

Huang Shuhan

Hebei University of Science and Technology, Shijiazhuang, Hebei, 050018, China

Abstract: Existentialism, as a philosophical trend of thought with far-reaching influence, has exerted an extensive and profound influence on the field of higher education. Jaspers, as one of the representative figures of existentialism, constructed his educational philosophy theory system: the essence of education is the free generation of human, the generation of human is the inquiry of the absolute truth and the ultimate value, and the continuous transcendence of the original spiritual level. The cultivation of human spirit through the humanities is accomplished in the process of the spiritual communication between teachers and students. The study of the philosophical implications of Jaspers' existentialist education provides a new analytical perspective for the development of education and has certain reference significance for the present university education to return to the spiritual shaping of people and the construction of the realistic path of the all-round development of contemporary college students.

Keywords: Existentialist educational philosophy; Comprehensive development of college students; Path Development

Brubeck takes "advanced knowledge" as the theme of the philosophy of higher education, and the epistemology and political theory derived from it are the concrete representations of this theme. [1] However, with the change of times, this concept has objectively limited the academic vision of scholars, and it is easy to ignore the other roles of students outside the cognitive subject. The play of students' subjectivity is only understood as the realization of knowledge goals and the improvement of critical thinking ability, which aggravates the "spiritual poverty of school education". The re-examination of Jaspers' philosophical thought is based on the concern of reality and the rethinking of the nature of human and education.

1. Jaspers' Thoughts on University Education

From the perspective of ontology, Jaspers pointed out that the process of human existence is endless, and there is a second world, namely the spiritual world, on top of the given existence and world. The spiritual life of a university has its particularity, but it is meaningful only when it is a part of a person's overall life. Scientific thinking can not be separated from the guidance of philosophical thinking. It is necessary to recognize the second identity of students outside the cognitive subject -- the existence subject.

(1)View of university knowledge

Jaspers believed that the knowledge of university was transitioning from Newman's "whole knowledge" to the personalized "universe of knowledge". The literal "universe of knowledge" exists only at the level of ideas, but it guarantees the openness and fluidity of knowledge in universities, which distinguishes them from academic stores. Knowledge in practical situations is classified to form academic divisions. In an ideal world where "disciplines communicate with each other without infringing upon authority", philosophy departments occupy a unique position in the classification of knowledge of the university, ensuring the "unity of ideas" of the various disciplines and broadening the horizons of the university. [2]

(2)The educational objectives of the university

Jaspers believed that the existence of human beings should be clarified by the all-encompassing "DaQuan", so the goal of university education is not to be a specialist, but to be a whole person. He did

not make a clear definition of the whole person, but the characteristics of the whole person can be extracted from his related discussion: first, he should hold a scientific stance and attitude; Second, he should develop "holistic consciousness"; Third, he should have "the clearest sense of self"; Fourth, he should live his most passionate self. If only the first three points exist, it will lead to "the paralysis of the subjectivity of human existence", that is, people still stay on the empty assumption of human nature of rationalism and lose their freedom in the inevitability.^[3] These four points should be progressively committed to the generation and flourishing of individual spiritual life, and form a corresponding relationship with the purposeful structure of existence mentioned above. It can be believed that the whole person is to realize the individual potential by taking the rational path. Free your inner self from the inverted state, be true to your choice, and be happy with yourself; A person who enjoys full freedom in practice. Whole-person training in universities is the essential difference between universities and scientific research institutions, vocational training centers, secondary schools and monasteries. After whole-person education, people in real life have both the appearance of "a professional person" and the core of the whole person. The appearance is varied and the core is common because of human nature. How does the cultivation of the whole person proceed? Universities must fulfil their cultural and educational responsibilities and realize the "generation of human beings" in the Socratic communication and dialogue originating from philosophical consciousness.

(3) Cultural education in universities

Based on Humboldt, Jaspers expanded the responsibilities of the university into three categories: scientific research, knowledge transmission and cultural education. Cultural education, with its constant inquiry into the noumenon value of human beings, makes individual self amiable and visible, highlighting the depth value of university education. Jaspers divided education into three types according to the characteristics of teachers and students: scholastic education, apprenticeship education and Socratic education, and stressed that "university education, by nature, should be Socratic education". If scientific research and knowledge education requires students to have the characteristics of "talents" and is a "process of developing critical thinking", This kind of education, then, is the education that acts on the universal human nature, the education where the "high" of higher education lies. Cultural education in college is completely different from aesthetic education or moral education in middle school, and also different from scholastic education and apprenticeship education. The specific differences are shown in four aspects: first, teachers should "wake up" students in a Socratic way and lead them to participate in the process of self-consciousness awakening; Second, because of the age of the student, the mind is mature, he can autonomy, so it is completely free; Third, the equality between teachers and students is far more than the equality in the sense of human rights; Fourth, cultural education should not lack "respect", that is, education should have faith, teachers and students should be serious attitude into the "human generation" of the great and continuous project. The source of educational belief and teacher authority is described by Jaspers as "the center of respect". In academic education, it comes from the immutable knowledge and ideology system, and the teacher is only the "mouthpiece". In apprenticeship education, it originates from the teacher's unique personality charm, personality strength or ability; In cultural education, it originates from the transcendent position of "spirit" itself and the collision and exchange between teachers and students for the truth. In essence, cultural education is philosophical education to some extent^[4].

(4) "Community" and "Communication" in Universities

Jaspers believed that "the ideal of a university depends on every student and teacher to live up to it". In essence, the university has become a giant multi-faceted organization, and without the people involved, it would cease to exist. As an equal subject of cognition, everyone should objectively clarify reality, seek rules and develop academia with an unlimited sense of responsibility for the truth, and not blindly follow any authority but only obey scientific regulations. As an independent subject of existence, it means that the driving force for oneself to move forward does not come from the outside world or others, but from the "real self". In the process of walking towards the truth, it "illuminates the deepest part of me", cultivates the soberest "self-understanding" and realizes the shaping of the spirit.^[5] Communication plays an important role in Jaspers' university philosophy and is regarded as a practical form for the implementation of the philosophy. He believes that "education is the activity of the communication between human and human subjects." In essence, it is a way to search for the truth test the validity of the truth and ensure the openness of the spirit. The members of the university, whether teachers or students have the responsibility of spiritual communication. Different disciplines are also eager to communicate with each other. The "external visible communication between disciplines is based on the general broad internal communication", that is, they accept the existence of other ideas and are open to endless questioning.

2. The Educational Implication of Existentialist Philosophy

Jaspers believed that education means individual world orientation because the expansion process of real "being" must absorb traditional and historical educational materials through education: "individuals learn from the content of knowledge and existing images by absorbing traditional categories and research methods." [6] Therefore, although education is not a sufficient condition for the realization of existence, it is a necessary condition and an "actual situation" that existence inevitably faces. The ideal education is the positive existence situation that existence faces. It should highlight the educational implication contained in the purposive structure of existence and satisfy the development needs of students as the subject of existence.

(1) Students' specific and unique development needs

Jaspers believed that human existence is special, and students, as concrete and unique people, cannot be abstracted in the overall, logical and grand narrative structure. It is concrete because it stretches in time that is not fixed; He is unique in that he has his ideas, interests and talents. A college education cares for a student's specific uniqueness, not only because it is a source of creativity, but also because it is the foundation of a person's sense of meaning.

(2) Students' development needs of dynamic process

Existence exists in the process of completeness, constantly developing, and constantly surpassing. The development of students must also obey the principle of a dynamic process. When its essence is reduced to an objective system, even though the system is still being updated, but away from the original purpose of existence. It should be made clear that knowledge is not the only educational goal, but that the overall development of one's intellect and spirit, cognition and being is the first, and that this development process is "never completed in principle" .

(3) The development needs of students' practical communication

Jaspers emphasized the free communication between individuals with rationality as the goal and authority standard. The community established in this way has intentionality, that is, the community is not pre-determined or passively accepted, but is actively established by individuals through practice with great personal significance. Students are not lonely individuals, nor are they homogeneous units in the group "dissolved by the collective", but the relationship exists of self-determination, autonomy and spontaneity between these two extremes. The realization of the structure of existence in this layer is reflected in the satisfaction of students' practical communicative development needs. [7]

(4) Sound rational development needs of students

Sound rationality is the unity of scientific rationality and philosophical rationality. After unification, students' emotional and volitional needs can also be shown, because sound rationality "dares to ask and take risks, so it is the possibility to completely get rid of everything that has been limited and determined and thus fixed. [8] Sound reason encourages the negative power of reason to constantly reflect on the status quo, break the closed system of knowledge theory, and reserve the field of human existence and life picture, so as to maintain the tension between the real world and the world of meaning.

3. The Path of College Students' All-Round Development from the Perspective of Existentialist Educational Philosophy

(1) Implement the fundamental task of cultivating virtues and strengthening the significance of students' existence

It is the fundamental task of colleges and universities to cultivate virtues and cultivate people, and its effectiveness is also the fundamental standard for testing the work of schools. As higher education has entered the popularization stage, increasing emphasis has been placed on the cultivation of quality and core literacy, which requires universities to cultivate new talents with innovative spirit and innovative literacy. Among them, the cultivation of innovative ability and innovative thinking is closely related to students' unique personality and the pursuit of rationality. No matter how excellent their technical and professional knowledge is, they have no outstanding spiritual core. They will only hurt social development. China has always attached great importance to the education of moral education, emphasizing the moral tradition of "moral education first, self-cultivation based". Through the implementation of moral education first strategy, a large number of the moral, intellectual, physical, American labour and all-round development of high-quality human resources, and then cultivate the

society needs qualified talents. In this process, students can strengthen their "existence" and enrich their spiritual world. Therefore, in college education, we must adhere to the fundamental task of cultivating morality and cultivating people, establish and improve the corresponding implementation mechanism, and nourish the "free soul" while cultivating morality.^[9] At the same time, we should improve the teaching methods of moral education and increase the interest in teaching content and methods.

(2) Strengthening liberal arts education in universities

At present, education is confronted with the constraints of technicalization, instrumentalization and utilitarianism. How to get out of this predicament? Jaspers' existentialist educational philosophy provides beneficial enlightenment for current university education: The state should take education as a priority development cause to improve the national cultural character, educators should take education as a lofty mission activity based on faith, and teachers should pay attention to the free generation of students, which is based on the equal free communication between teachers and students. Education should guide students to continuously surpass the original knowledge structure. Schools should attach importance to the role of humanistic edification in the process of students' spiritual adulthood, strengthen humanistic education in universities, and pay attention to shaping the humanistic environment of students' spiritual freedom, so as to lay a solid foundation for personalized education and all-round quality education.

(3) Improve the university culture education system

Campus culture includes campus spirits such as values, codes of conduct and moral standards widely recognized by college students, as well as university rules and regulations and campus environment. These have a subtle influence on students' knowledge and behaviour, and also play an important role in the education process of college students' all-round development.^[10] Therefore, to promote the all-round development of college students, first of all, the concept of socialist core values should be set up within the whole school, and the system of socialist core values should be taken as the ideological norm guiding the education and teaching process. Guide college students to correctly handle the relationship between social value and personal value, success and moral education, and develop the spirit of unity, cooperation, hard work and unremitting self-improvement. Secondly, the formation of the socialist core value system as the core of the campus culture, the formation of campus culture co-construction consciousness.^[11] Through various rules and regulations, group activities form a good campus culture, at the same time under the influence of the school spirit, school motto, to form a good campus atmosphere of college students' self-restraint. Finally, a variety of campus activities should be carried out to eliminate students' negative emotions, loneliness and frustration through singing contests, reports, visits to history museums, and active participation in volunteer activities, to form a positive and positive attitude.

(4) Establishing a system of practical activities with exchanges as the core

Practice is the fundamental way and the most important condition to realize people's all-round development. Giving full play to the practical education function of colleges and universities in the new era plays an important role in improving the ideological and moral quality, scientific and cultural quality, innovation and entrepreneurship ability of college students and promoting their personalized development and socialization process. College students' social practice activity as an effective form of school education, has other ways of education in college students' quality education irreplaceable special role, is a college student learning exercise in society and the only right way to achieve comprehensive development in society. At present, we must continue to deepen and expand the content and form of its activities, build a practical activity system with communication as the core, pay attention to the effectiveness of students' participation in practical activities, improve the service level of social practice activities, and combine with the school system's theoretical education, professional knowledge education and daily ideological education, actively explore the operating mechanism of college students' social practice activities in the new era. We will strive to train well-developed and high-quality qualified builders and reliable successors of socialist modernization.

References

[1] Brubeck. *Philosophy of Higher Education* [M]. Zheng Jiwei, et al. Hangzhou: Zhejiang Education Press, 2002:153.

[2] Jaspers. *The Spirit of The Times* [M]. Wang Defeng, trans. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 2008:17.

- [3] Jaspers. *What is Education* [M]. Zou Jin, translated. Beijing: Sanlian Bookstore, 1991(3):77-79.
- [4] Jaspers. *Philosophy and Faith* [M]. Lu Lu, trans. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2010:291.
- [5] Zhang Hua. *University: The Existence Community of Seeking Truth -- A Philosophical Interpretation of Jaspers University Idea* [J]. *Journal of Hebei Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 2009, (5):46-50.
- [6] Jaspers. *The Idea of University* [M]. Qiu Libo, trans. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2007:19.
- [7] Peng Yuan. *The Confirmation of the ontological Value of Higher Education -- A Thinking Based on Ontology* [J]. *Higher Education Research*, 2006 (6): 36-39.
- [8] Wei Panting. *Misreading and Thinking: A Review of Jaspers' Existentialist University Idea* [J]. *Research in Comparative Education*, 2018, 42(10):106-112.
- [9] Cheng Shangrong. *Children's Position: Education starts from here* [J]. *People's Education*, 2007(23):5-9.
- [10] [German] Martin Heidegger. *Letters on Humanism* [A]. [De] Martin Heidegger. Signpost [C]. Sun Zhouxing, translated. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2007: 366-367. (in Chinese)
- [11] Cheng Fangrong. *The Return of the true meaning of Education -- Interpretation of Existentialism Education* [J]. *Educational Exploration*, 2007(01):8-9.