

Alienation and Resonance: Re-evaluating the Value of Social Art Education under the Theory of Social Acceleration

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Abstract: *In contemporary society, the rapid development of technology, the swift dissemination of information, and the accelerated pace of social change impose significant pressure and challenges on individuals. This social acceleration exacerbates the sense of alienation, making people feel out of control of their lives, leading to a loss of self-identity and a sense of meaning. From the perspective of alienation under the theory of social acceleration, this paper explores the phenomena of alienation in current social art education and seeks possible solutions to these issues from the perspective of resonance. Ultimately, it aims to re-evaluate the value and significance of contemporary social art education.*

Keywords: *Alienation; Resonance; Social Acceleration; Social Art Education; Value*

1. Introduction

Since ancient times, the concept of speed has been closely linked to human life. From the initial reliance on human and animal power to the advent of steam engines, automobiles, and modern airplanes, each innovation in transportation has significantly expanded people's living space. However, in today's society, the rapid development of technology and the acceleration of social change have made speed itself a core issue in the theory of social acceleration. While we enjoy the convenience and efficiency brought by speed, we must also confront its potential negative impacts on individuals and society. Particularly in the business sector, speed has become synonymous with competitiveness. Companies strive to enhance production and delivery speeds to remain undefeated in fierce market competition. This not only intensifies the compression of time and the contraction of space but also fosters a blind worship of digital parameters, creating a self-accelerating cycle. In this context, social art education becomes especially crucial. It supplements the deficiencies of school art education and enhances the public's aesthetic and humanistic qualities. Unlike the fast-paced pursuit of efficiency and outcomes in society, art education emphasizes deep and meticulous experiences rather than superficial engagement. However, this profound understanding and experience of art are increasingly marginalized in modern society. Art education faces challenges of commercialization and superficiality, leading to reduced artistic perception and fragmented individual self-identity. To address these challenges, this study proposes establishing resonance as a solution. Resonance can help people find inner peace in fast-paced lives and promote emotional connections between individuals, the material world, art, and the self. This approach fosters a deeper reflection on and re-evaluation of the true value of social art education.

2. Overview and Characteristics of the Theory of Social Acceleration

The study of social acceleration is not a product of contemporary times. As early as the 19th century, scholars such as Marx, Adams, Simmel, and Virilio closely observed the phenomenon of acceleration within society. Marx laid the foundation for the definition of social acceleration, associating it with the capitalist production of his time. He posited, "Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones" ^[1]. In 1904, Adams published an article that remains original and astonishingly prophetic, introducing the "law of acceleration" as a unique and insightful approach to understanding human history ^[2]. Simmel observed that the rapid pace of social change brings mental stress to individuals living in modern cities ^[3]. Virilio attempted to establish a new discipline focused on speed, known as dromology, though the concept of acceleration is elusive and lacks a clear

definition. He noted^[4]. "Without the relationship to life and speed, there is no relationship to terror. Terror strikes at the point: it is connected to life and speed through technology"^[5].

In the 21st century, Rosa began analyzing the theory of social acceleration from the question, "What is a good life?" He systematically developed a critique of social acceleration, asserting, "In fact, we modern people can constantly feel the world around us accelerating". His theory examines the mutually reinforcing relationship between technological acceleration, social change acceleration, and the acceleration of life pace, forming a self-reinforcing loop that characterizes modern society.

Technological acceleration leads to the compression of time. Technological advancements increase the speed of task completion, saving time. However, this saved time does not translate into a sense of abundance; instead, it exacerbates the urgency of time, making life's pace faster and more compact. Social change acceleration leads to the shrinkage of space. Development and transformation within society accelerate the dissemination and exchange of information, reducing perceived distances between different regions. The internet and rapid transportation allow people to quickly access global information and cultures, broadening their perspectives and promoting diverse thinking. However, this also leads to "the loss of the significance of space in the late modern world". The acceleration of life pace fosters an obsession with digital parameters^[6]. In modern society, people begin to monitor and record digital metrics such as steps taken, heart rate, and sleep duration to pursue health and vitality. This excessive focus on digital data can lead to anxiety and fatigue concerning physical health and quality of life.

3. The Current State of Social Art Education in the Context of Acceleration

In the rapid development of modern society, social art education is undergoing a transformation. The traditional art education model is no longer sufficient to meet contemporary needs, with current education focusing more on cultivating students' practical skills and innovative thinking. Through practical projects, students' overall qualities have been enhanced, and the convenience of the internet has made access to art knowledge easier, enriching people's artistic cultivation. The development of online courses, art education platforms, and virtual reality technology has broken the limitations of time and space, making art learning more flexible and accessible. National policy support has further strengthened the position of art education within the educational system, promoting the widespread adoption of social art education. Educational institutions have started to incorporate art into formal curricula and have enhanced the training and selection of teachers. The content of art education has also tended toward diversification and digitalization.

However, the fast-paced life and information explosion in modern society pose challenges. People find it difficult to find leisure time amidst their busy lives, and social media and fragmented information distract their attention from art. This lifestyle limits opportunities for people to engage in artistic activities, leading to the marginalization of social art education to some extent. Despite this, social art education remains crucial for personal growth and social progress. Re-evaluating the value of social art in the digital age requires deep reflection on the significance of art education.

4. The Influence of Social Acceleration on Contemporary Social Art Education

(a) Evolution of the Concept of Alienation

Alienation refers to a state of discord between individuals or groups and their environment, culture, and values. As society accelerates, the concept of alienation has also evolved. The term "alienation" originates from the Latin word "alienatio," meaning "separation" or "estrangement."^[7] Discussions on alienation date back to Rousseau, Schiller, Hegel, Kierkegaard, and Marx, with alienation being dubbed "the most excellent disease of civilization". Since the 18th century, alienation has served as a code to convey the "uncertainty, divisiveness, and inner fragmentation" in the relationship between humanity and itself (as well as in the process of industrial development) and the world^[8]. Rousseau proposed a normative ideal of a non-alienated form of socialization, defining alienation as the antagonistic relationship caused by the delegation of power, viewing sociality and social institutions as inherently alienating. Hegel's theory of alienation focused on the division between the individual and society rather than the individual's loss of self within society^[9]. For Hegel, alienation was a defect in social life, representing the loss of ethical universality in social life. The heirs to Hegel's theory of alienation include Kierkegaard's shift toward the ethical dimension of human existence and Marx's economic-philosophical turn. Kierkegaard understood "becoming oneself" as the act of possessing

one's actions and history—a process of actively possessing what external forces bring. He emphasized the uniqueness of human existence and believed that the task of the self is to overcome alienation through self-generation. Kierkegaard also saw the individual as alienated, not because they did not properly integrate into the collective whole, but because this social integration itself was a deceptive form of estrangement^[10]. The uniqueness of the individual is often stifled or suppressed by the demands of social structures, exposing a deeper alienation as the self's compliance with social demands.

In Marxist theory, alienation is defined as the state of estrangement between individuals and their labor, products, and other people. This sense of estrangement is particularly evident in capitalist societies, where workers are deprived of opportunities for self-realization, ownership of their labor's products, and humanized labor relations. This alienation is seen as one of the fundamental contradictions of capitalist society, needing resolution through socialist revolution^[11].

(b) The Scope of Alienation in Contemporary Social Art Education

Social acceleration has profoundly impacted the field of art education, leading to a series of alienation phenomena. These alienation phenomena are closely related to social changes and human experiences, manifesting as estrangement from economic labor relations to social psychological levels, resulting in the gradual disconnection between individuals and society and the self in the context of social acceleration, and intensifying the sense of estrangement among individuals. Below is a detailed explanation of these alienation phenomena:

(1) Alienation from Time: The fast-paced lifestyle of an accelerated society leaves people with less time to appreciate and create art. People are busy coping with various social pressures and work tasks, leaving little time to savor art, leading to a decline in the ability to understand and appreciate art. In the midst of acceleration and competition, individuals develop a contradictory relationship with time, experiencing a mismatch between the time spent on quick art experiences and the time required to internalize art memories. "We have not turned the time we experience into 'our own' time," thus causing individuals to cool off towards art and even feel bored.

(2) Alienation from Space: The accelerated speed of information dissemination has changed people's perception of art spaces. A large amount of commercialization, commodification, and entertainment elements have infiltrated virtual environments, gradually replacing traditional art spaces. Individuals become detached from physical spaces, turning art experiences into mere checkpoints. In this process, the physical location may become unnecessary.

(3) Alienation from Technology: Technological development has changed the ways of creating and disseminating art, leading to transformations in art forms and media, thereby altering people's cognition and experience of art. The widespread use of digital technology allows art to be disseminated via the internet, but it also leads to a saturation of art in online spaces, diluting the value and authenticity of art.

(4) Alienation from Action: In the context of social acceleration, people's modes of action have changed. The fast-paced life reduces the time people spend on deep thinking and experiencing art, gradually weakening their enthusiasm and creativity for art. Additionally, the competitive and utilitarian orientation of an accelerated society makes people focus more on practicality and economic benefits. For instance, a person may want to learn the violin but gives up for various reasons, such as the complexity of choosing the right type and material, thus falling into the consumption of the potential functionality of objects. The action of learning the violin is thus gradually marginalized.

(5) Alienation from the Self: The pressure and anxiety of an accelerated society lead individuals to experience confusion in their pursuit and development of self. Over-saturated social interactions and relationships lacking substantive resonance result in the disappearance of the "other" within the "self," causing individuals to gradually lose their self-identity and sense of recognition. This leads to a deepened sense of estrangement between individuals and themselves, others, and society, ultimately leading to the "exhaustion of the self," burnout, and becoming an individual existence alienated from the self.

5. Effective Resolution of Alienation in Contemporary Social Art Education - Establishing Resonant Relationships

Social art education is indispensable in the rapidly changing modern society. It fosters aesthetic emotions and creativity by establishing deep resonance with others, the material world, art, and oneself. Such resonance helps alleviate social alienation, promotes the reconnection of interpersonal

relationships, enhances appreciation for natural beauty, provides emotional solace and intellectual inspiration, and explores the richness of the inner world.

In a fast-paced society, people often neglect emotional connections with each other. Social art education, by cultivating empathy, helps individuals better understand and care for others. Social art activities, as collective actions, bring people together to participate in artistic creation and appreciation. Through this participation, people establish common interests and identities, increasing communication and interaction. These activities provide platforms for mutual support, allowing participants to feel care and warmth, thus reducing social indifference and estrangement. Through the creation and appreciation of art, people experience others' emotions and thoughts, establishing deeper resonant relationships.

Moreover, modern society values material pursuits but often overlooks connections with nature and the environment. Art can guide people to re-examine the beauty and value of nature, sparking concern and action for environmental protection. Through this resonance, people become aware of their close ties with the world, reducing over-reliance on material pursuits.

Furthermore, artistic creation is a process of expressing the inner world and self-realization. In a fast-paced society, people often neglect the nourishment art provides to the soul. Artworks are expressions of the artist's reality, capable of evoking emotional resonance in viewers, making them feel shared experiences and emotions. Social art education cultivates aesthetic ability and creativity, enabling people to better appreciate and understand the essence and value of artworks. Through resonance with art, individuals gain emotional catharsis and intellectual enlightenment, reducing the pressure of social alienation. During the appreciation of art, people establish connections through shared aesthetics, reducing feelings of alienation. By participating in artistic creation, people discover their creativity and potential, boosting self-confidence and self-identity. Artistic creation is also a means of communication and collaboration. Through joint creation, individuals establish common goals and values, reducing estrangement. Thus, it helps individuals to re-establish connections with themselves, others, and society, promoting social harmony.

In the rapidly changing society, people often lose themselves, ignoring inner needs and voices. Social art education cultivates self-awareness and emotional expression, helping individuals better understand their inner world. Through resonance with the self, individuals find their value and meaning, reducing the impact of social alienation on the individual.

6. Re-evaluating the Value of Contemporary Social Art Education

In the context of social acceleration theory, the value of social art education needs to be re-examined. Here are several aspects worth noting:

(a) The Value of Slowing Down Time

Modern society's acceleration often leaves people feeling stressed and hurried. Social art education can provide a space to slow down, allowing individuals the opportunity to pause, contemplate the meaning of life, appreciate the beauty of art, and experience the deceleration of time. In such an environment, people can better enjoy education, thus gaining more knowledge. By slowing down through art, people can re-evaluate the value of time. In busy lives, people often feel they lack time, neglecting the importance of reflection and sensation. Social art education offers a tranquil learning environment, giving individuals the chance to stop and consider the essence of life, regaining their reverence and appreciation for time. This experience of deceleration is significant for personal mental health and spiritual growth.

(b) The Value of Emotional Therapy

Social art education can serve as a form of emotional therapy. Artists often observe and express social phenomena in unique ways, drawing attention to and reflecting on real-world issues. Through social art education, people can learn the artists' methods of observation and expression, cultivating sensitivity and critical thinking towards social problems. Social art education provides a quiet and peaceful space for people to better experience and appreciate the beauty of life. By participating in the process of artistic creation and appreciation, individuals can temporarily set aside worries and pressures, enjoying the happiness and tranquility of the moment. Moreover, art works and the creation process can offer an outlet for expressing and releasing emotions. Through art, individuals can transform their inner troubles, pressures, and feelings into creativity, alleviating emotional stress and finding emotional balance.

(c) The Value of Alleviating Alienation

In modern society, people increasingly feel lonely and estranged from society. Social art education can offer a platform for interaction and communication, promoting interpersonal connections and reducing social alienation. In an era of technological advancement and information explosion, people are more prone to fall into mechanical and alienated states, losing perception of themselves and the world around them. Art can explore and display individuality and diversity, fostering harmony and inclusion between individuals and society. Through artistic expression and sharing, people can experience and share beauty together, building emotional bonds with each other. By cultivating aesthetic abilities and artistic creativity, social art education encourages individuals to refocus on themselves and their environment, thereby reflecting on and resisting alienation phenomena and reconstructing harmonious relationships between people and nature, as well as between individuals and society.

(d) The Value of Resonating with the World

Social art education can address societal and global challenges through the attention and expression of artists and audiences on real-world issues. Artworks can become mediums for addressing social problems, advocating for justice and fairness, and promoting social change. By participating in social art education, individuals can cultivate a sense of social responsibility and the ability for proactive action, becoming participants in social transformation. In a fast-paced society, people often feel pressure and loneliness. Art serves as a vehicle for emotional expression and resonance. Through participation in social art education, individuals can use artworks and performances to create emotional resonance with others, relieving internal pressures and enhancing interpersonal harmony. By expressing personal emotions, artworks can help viewers understand their own emotions and feelings, finding resonance and connection with the world and others. This experience of resonating with the world can help individuals better understand others, strengthening social relationships and connections.

7. Conclusion

Social acceleration brings new challenges and transformations to community art education. Exploring this through the dual lenses of alienation and resonance allows for a better understanding of the value and significance of community art education in an accelerated society. Community art education holds significant value in this era of acceleration by slowing down time, healing emotions, alleviating alienation, and fostering new forms of resonance with the world. In contemporary society, it is essential to recognize the role and impact of community art education. The future of community art education must keep pace with societal changes and adapt to these transformations, providing more opportunities for art education. Society needs an environment that promotes rational reflection and a deep understanding of diverse cultural concepts, emotional content, and aesthetic consciousness. Achieving this goal requires many social workers and volunteers to help individuals attain genuine cultural literacy in this accelerated age. Integrating art into everyday life will cultivate people's artistic literacy and creativity, fostering their resonance and integration with the world around them.

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