

# The Dilemma and Countermeasures of Humanistic Education under the Background of Globalization

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**Abstract:** Humanities education is rich in connotation, including humanities and science. However, in modern times, technology and humanities have gradually separated, and even formed a situation of opposition and separation. In the context of globalization and business economy, career and technology orientation are on the rise, and humanities education is increasingly marginalized. To get rid of the development dilemma of humanities education, one is to join hands with science and return to the standard of humanities education; the other is to vigorously develop online education and reform the humanities education model.

## 1. Introduction

Humanities education is also called liberal arts education, quality education, general education, etc. It has a long history in both China and the West. The English name of Western humanities education is Liberalarts, which has a tendency of “liberalization”. In ancient Greece, philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates advocated classical humanistic education, aiming to train students through the training of the “seven arts” (logic, grammar, rhetoric, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, music). The outstanding virtues of the people have established a wide-ranging educational concept.<sup>[1]</sup> In ancient Rome, this broad concept was called “freedom”.<sup>[2]</sup> The humanities education in China originated from the pre-Qin period and has a tendency of “moralization”, emphasizing human ethics, and paying attention to the self-cultivation of individuals.

Throughout the humanities education in China and the West, although its concerns and ideological tendencies were different, the ultimate goals were basically the same. Both emphasized the cultivation of the ideal personality and spiritual realm of the educated, emphasize knowledge and understanding, and emphasize humanity education.

Humanities education has played an important role in human history, but as the commodity economy is sweeping the world, it is facing a global development dilemma. It has important value to deeply explore the spiritual value and practical functions of humanistic education, reconstruct the connotation of humanistic education in the new era, and seek strategies to overcome difficulties.

## 2. The Dilemma of Humanities Education

### 2.1 Cognitive Misunderstanding: the Separation of Technology and Humanities

At present, most people have misunderstandings in the understanding of humanities education, thinking that it only includes liberal arts content such as literature, history and philosophy. In fact, humanities education is an out-and-out broad education. It contains two parts of humanities and science. The early humanities education in the West included two major sections: humanistic thought and scientific content, and science and technology disciplines such as physics, astronomy, and mathematics were included. In addition to the Confucian classics, the “Six Arts” of ancient Chinese humanities education also included music, mathematics, sports and other subjects.

However, since modern times, humanities education has gradually rejected the subject of science. Humanities and science gradually separated. Since modern times, with the rapid development of science and technology, the human cognitive system has undergone tremendous changes. All kinds

of new sciences have subverted the traditional cognition of mankind, and challenged the humanities education accumulated by mankind for thousands of years. The prevalence of a narrow scientific outlook that promotes utilitarianism and a narrow humanistic outlook that abandons scientific content has led to a separation of science education and humanistic education.

## **2.2 Marginalization Dilemma**

While humanities education is drifting away from science, it is also facing realistic difficulties.

In the context of globalization and business economy, practical thinking prevails, and the saying that humanities education is useless is becoming more and more popular. Humanities education is facing a global development dilemma. Since modern times, advanced science and technology have greatly changed the face of society, but it has also made “scientism” and “pragmatism” the mainstream. At the moment when the commercial wave is sweeping the world, the public is more seeking utilitarian and practical, rather than the cultivation and cultivation of inner spirit.

This kind of “utilitarian” and “practical” thinking is reflected in the higher education sector, and is mainly reflected in the fact that universities are no longer positioned as “ivory towers” but become social “service stations”, and the tendency of vocational education is obvious. Various technical and functional majors are respected, while the humanities are largely ignored. Government support for humanities has dropped significantly, and humanities have been compressed. The United States is known for its high-quality humanities education and is keen on a free and open system of thought. But in recent years, its humanities education has been greatly impacted, and the enrollment rate of humanities majors has repeatedly decreased. According to statistics, nearly one-third of students in four-year universities in the United States choose business and health majors, while only 1.8% choose the humanities college. There are similar situations in China and Japan.

## **2.3 Harmful Effects**

The separation of humanities education and technology and its marginalization have adverse effects on social and personal development.

Technology and humanities have become two cultures, making society too much emphasis on utilitarian and practical. Everything is measured by the standards of “useful” and “useless”, and the fascination with technology has reached its peak, which has aggravated the crisis of “mental loss” in the entire society. But while technology has greatly improved the quality of life, it has also emptied the essence of culture, “making our world a world with nothing but technical significance.”<sup>[3]</sup>

The blind worship of reason and tools by the public has led to the impoverishment and impetuosity of the social and cultural spirit. Its negative impact on higher education not only makes humanities education a vassal, but also reduces the overall quality of learners. For practical purposes, education is increasingly emphasizing the cultivation of students’ vocational skills needed in the industrial society, focusing on “order-based training”, but seldom pays attention to the cultivation and expansion of the main spiritual world, leading to “the survival of engineering science in the comprehensive quality and knowledge structure Flaws”.<sup>[4]</sup>

Under this background, facing humane education is of great significance. To make human society more healthy and orderly development, it is necessary to reconstruct the connotation of humanistic education and vigorously develop humanistic education.

## **3. The Value of Humanities Education**

Compared with the “rigidity” of other skills education, the humanities education is relatively “soft”. It is not as effective as a skill subject, and it is difficult to see results in a short period of time.. But it makes up for the “instrumental” shortcomings and “utilitarian” limitations of technical education, “integrates the split rational “bias” and perceptual value organically, balances the conflict between science and life, and promotes the continuous enrichment and improvement of

human nature. “[5] At the same time, humanities education has high practical value.

Humanities provide better guesses and insights for the development of social productivity. In the history of human development, the revival and awakening of humanistic concepts have greatly changed social ills. For example, the humanistic concepts and humanistic revolutions of the Western Enlightenment era have greatly changed the face of history. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, after the Renaissance, Europe ushered in a major ideological liberation movement, which is called the Age of Enlightenment in later generations. With the efforts of enlightenment scholars, the humanistic concepts of freedom, democracy, and equality were widely spread, and the “humanistic revolution” changed the face of the entire world.

At the level of cultivating personal professional ability, humanities education is not “useless”. The Yale University report pointed out that, compared with other education, the fundamental significance of humanities education “is not to teach any specific career needs, but to lay the foundation for the common ground of all careers.” Specifically, it can improve learners’ thinking ability, cultivate learning ability, enhance learners’ creativity and decision-making ability, and is of great benefit to career development.

From a practical point of view, humanities are also needed in the technological world. The business world pursues the maximization of profits and pursues technology, but technology requires human ethics as a basic support. The combination of technology and humanities is the right way to promote the long-term prosperity of business. Apple co-founder Steve Jobs is a firm supporter of the combination of technology and humanities. At the unveiling of the new iPad, he said that technology alone is not enough. Technology must be combined with humanities and arts for products to be truly pleasing to the eye. In recent years, Apple’s products have also reflected this philosophy of Jobs.

#### **4. Humanities Education Development Strategy**

To get out of the dilemma of humanities education and change the current marginalization situation, the following attempts can be made:

##### **4.1 Reconstruct the Concept of Humanistic Education and Promote the Cooperation between Technology and Humanities**

As mentioned earlier, humanities education and science education were integrated in the early days. However, since modern times, the two have become increasingly separated and opposed. This has caused a lot of practical problems: on the one hand, the public has many ignorance and misunderstandings about science; on the other hand, utilitarian and practical ideas are prevailing, and the whole society is enveloped by technology and tools, falling into a spiritual crisis. To effectively reverse this situation, it is necessary to return to the standard of humanistic education, make the two cooperate, construct a new concept of humanistic education, and realize the coupling of technology and humanities.

Specifically, it is to get rid of narrow scientific and humanistic views and return science to the humanistic system. In 1997, the famous scientist Qian Xuesen put forward the idea of science of wisdom in cyberspace. He believes that in order to cultivate students’ new thinking system, it is necessary to “marry” science and technology and humanities and art, and infiltrate each other, so as to “integrate great achievements and gain wisdom” and cultivate true innovative talents.

In the higher education sector, the way to implement the new concept of humanistic education is to break the barriers between science and humanities, break through the barriers of departments, and implement general education. Only in this way can we cultivate innovative talents in the new era. In this regard, Yale-National University of Singapore College and Stanford can be regarded as role models. Yale-National University of Singapore College has carried out a series of educational reforms, aiming to return to the standard of humanistic education. The school reintegrated science into the core of undergraduate education. The College of Humanities and Technology replaced the College of Humanities; the major departments were abolished, breaking the boundaries of liberal

arts and sciences. Students should study life sciences, physics, environment, and philosophy regardless of majors in the first two years. All subjects, including drama, history, etc., construct a comprehensive humanistic vision.

## **4.2 Reform the Humanistic Education Model and Develop Online Education**

From a global perspective, humanities education is facing difficulties. In addition to cognitive biases, another practical problem is the high cost of education. Many people think that the “return on investment” of humanities majors is low, and they are more inclined to choose practical majors that can receive returns in the short term. Take the United States as an example. Humanities education was originally one of the characteristics of American education, but in recent years it has been neglected. This situation in other developing countries is even more prominent.

In this context, the reform of the humanities education model is imperative.

The rise of online courses has greatly changed the educational model, and has also provided opportunities for the development of humanities education. Online courses have greatly reduced the cost of education, allowing more people to receive high-quality humanities education. Currently the most influential online education is “MOOC” (Massive Open Online Courses). MOOC originated in 2012 and triggered a boom in online education. Online education breaks through the limitations of the number, time and space of traditional courses, and meets the needs of systematic and large-scale self-study. More importantly, their courses are free. From the feedback data, most users are interested in humanities education.

The traditional offline education of teaching, the biggest function of online education is to level the threshold of education, reform the traditional humanistic education method, and realize the revival of humanistic education.

## **5. Conclusion**

As an ancient form of education, humanities education has a history of thousands of years. It is like the fire that Prometheus bestowed on mankind, bringing warmth and light to mankind, and building the blood and bones of human civilization. How to rejuvenate the ancient humanities education is a problem that the whole world is thinking about.

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