

# The Road of Awakening: The Development of Human Self-consciousness and the Change of the View of Children

Shufei Qin

Guangxi Normal University, Guilin, Guangxi, China

**Abstract:** *Human self-consciousness serves as the mirror of children's perspective. Fundamentally, the notion of children is essentially the orientation of human society towards the survival and development of immature human larvae. The development and transformation of the concept of children can be probed from the course of the development of human self-consciousness in diverse periods. This paper reviews the development status of human self-consciousness in the primitive period, the farming period, the industrial revolution period, up to the electrical revolution of the 20th century and the corresponding era's view of children, and elaborates on the reasons why the view of children is influenced and changed by the productivity of different eras.*

**Keywords:** Human self-consciousness; View of children; Development view.

## 1. Human Self-consciousness is the "Mirror" for the View of Children

View of Children refers to the sum of a series of ideas of how adults view and understand children, which specifically involves the meaning and value of childhood, children's own rights and status, children's individual physical and mental development characteristics, and the relationship between educational means and children. Fundamentally speaking, the concept of children is essentially the orientation of human society for the survival and development of human immature children [1].

Marx believed that practice is an objective activity and a process of self-division. At the spiritual level, practical activities can extend people's self-consciousness and object consciousness. People can differentiate the object consciousness and self-consciousness in the spiritual world through practical means, and self-awareness can create an object world through practical means, thus confirming their own essence. Therefore, the object consciousness created by practice is actually the "self in the mirror". Through the "self in the mirror", we can observe the self consciousness itself, that is, pursue the self through the "mirror" and ask "who I am" [2][3]. "Actually create an object world, is the essence of their own self confirmed", in this sense, human self consciousness through the "mirror" projection for the understanding of children, how to discover themselves, know self and concern self, projection for how the human group in the immature young, thus explore the development of human self consciousness become an important means to clarify the view of children's change.

## 2. The Era of No "People"

In the primitive period, the level of human self-awareness was extremely low, and the primitive tribe visited by anthropologist Levi Brelier was almost crazy to believe that they were the golden golden hero on the tribal totem. The primitive man combines the self and the object, and cannot clearly distinguish between the self and the object. This chaotic self-consciousness makes it unknown where they

belong, and even integrates the "self" as the image of the sacred totem with nature, but is unable to explore what it is. After a long period of spiritual activities practice, the emergence of the myth to the primitive people "attribution" support. Myth is the original product of the spiritual activities of primitive people. We can find that in the fairy tales of their origin, first, God is the object of creation, man is the people of God; second, man creates civilization and causes the punishment of God. The emergence of myth is accompanied by the conflict between man and god, but in this process reflects the original human self-esteem and superiority: the god always bless human beings, give human beings and other animals a different ability to subdue the environment, god always lend a helping hand, save people in danger.

It is because the level of self-awareness is extremely low that people show extreme worship of god. In the primitive society, there was no concept of "man" in the human concept that regarded itself as the son of god, and there was no concept of children at the level of self-consciousness for the immature children. In the primitive times, human existence is full of the conflict between the self and the environment. Life is the most critical issue. In order to facilitate the survival and reproduction of the race, the primitive humans gave some care and education to the young individuals, but the starting point was the existence of these juveniles as members of their own tribe. In the primitive clan of public care, this sense of "parenting" is more like the conservation of tribal public property, existing as a racial continuing labor force and reproductive tool [4]. According to the data obtained by Levi Bourear, in ancient times, human beings had the custom of infanticide and abandoned babies. this is mainly due to material and economic reasons. When the tribal living environment is squeezed, young individuals cannot provide the necessary conditions for the continuation of the survival pressure as the low ability to conquer nature, because of the fear of god, the baby as sacrifice for divine blessing.

The primitive period is the era of "no one", with self-awareness of the extremely high worship of god and nature. The living environment of primitive civilization is extremely harsh. Although children can be maintained to a

certain extent, they are essentially regarded as the public property of the clan and can be disposed of at will.

### 3. Disassemble and Imprison

The farming culture began a shift from non-creative "accidental" to consciously repeated creative experiments. Anthropology learns the tools of creation and creates abundance with their own hands. Out of the harmony of picking up heaven, we must work hard day after day, but a little not careful nature will recover all the efforts and efforts. Such a life makes man and nature start to oppose, the gods in the peasants became strict and capricious, the same bond between man and god completely separated, people began to regard themselves as the center of the universe, from then on, man and god from the same origin to opposition, once the state of man and nature fell apart [5]. Under the impact of farming culture, people's self-consciousness changes from narcissism to the opposite inferiority, and the inferiority corresponds to the cognition is reflected in self-reflection.

#### (1) Axis age

After entering the axis era, the East and the West have had a profound influence on the later generations. With the inner view of self-consciousness, human rationality has gained a considerable opportunity for development. In western countries, Protagoras first began to doubt all things, and praise human wisdom: "Man is the measure of all things, Is the measure of how things exist, Is also the scale of things that do not exist", Socrates called for it: "Know yourself." One has some simple understanding of himself, Some thinkers and educators began to pay attention to children's life, education and growth: Plato advocated that children should live a collective life, At the same time, I realize that games are of great significance in children's life; Aristotle made laws on the custom of killing babies, Malformation or disability exception; Kun recognized the importance of childhood in life and recognized the differences between children. In the east, the contention of the pre-Qin thought, each school are exploring the "relationship between nature and man", although there is no specifically for children's education, we can see children from the understanding of human nature: Confucius cloud "similar nature, learning", including children, and different "habits" differences; Mencius proposed "good nature", benevolence, righteousness, propriety, intellectual virtue are born; Mozi proposed "element silk" emphasizes the influence of environment on human growth and development.

On the academic level, both the contention of the first hundred schools of thought and the ancient Greek and Roman scholars' understanding of the rights and status of children are refreshing. However, such a view is difficult to enter the market and infiltrate into the real life of the secular people. In the consciousness of the public, they do not realize the addition of childhood, the people generally do not respect children, and even arbitrarily deprive them of their right to live, treat children as their own property, and carry out arbitrary disposal.

(2) "Divine instruction" and "save heaven, destroy human desire"

In the Middle Ages, religion was divine, and religious theology ruled everything. The church people openly declared that "people should despise themselves" or even "despise themselves", fundamentally denying the value of human beings. The human self-consciousness is firmly imprisoned by theology, and it converts people to God in the continuous negation of people's self-consciousness. We believe that the "Creator" created everything, and all the will of people must obey the will and arrangement of God, so the human self-consciousness has lost its subject status. In the Middle Ages, the "original sin theory" was popular. In the Bible, Adam, the ancestor of human beings, passed his sin to his descendants, which was called the original sin, so the newborn baby was born guilty, which is essentially a "sexual evil theory", believing that the primitive and essential morality of children is evil. This "sexual evil theory" was introduced into the American continent with the great geographical discovery, and had a deep influence on the view of children in the modern West. At the same time as the "original sin", there is the "pre-success", that children are "small adults", and children's words and deeds, including dress, should not be any different from adults. Under this concept, there is no concept of "children" at all, the particularity of children different from adults is ruthlessly ignored, it is the dark time under the rule of feudal religion.

In the Southern Song Dynasty, Zhu Xi established the highest category of the pre-Qin Confucianism on the Confucian philosophy, and incorporated feudal ethics into the principles of heaven, and the three principles of dogma became taken for granted, while the normal demands of the people became unreasonable "human desire". In this context, people's self-consciousness has been copied into a thick shackles by the feudal ethics, and even the normal demands have become the "desire" to transcend the ethics, and people can no longer live as "people". In such an era, people are no longer regarded as people, let alone children. In the feudal society, children's enlightenment books are mostly elaborate literacy, etiquette, teaching materials, education way is to use the classic sages poured into the stomach, resulting in "indigestion", children to escape and then moved out of the "stick under the filial son", "three days do not play the Internet to expose the tile" power to deter. Fortunately, there is occasionally a breeze in the long river of feudal society. Both Liu Zongyuan and Yan Zhitui have put forward some progressive parenting views, respectively, advocating "conforming to nature" and "teaching as early as possible".

In a word, the Middle Ages in Europe was a century without children, and China's feudal society was a society without childhood.

### 4. The Dawn of Reason

With the arrival of the industrial age, science and technology have developed rapidly. The production of mechanical tools is different from agricultural tools. which transcends the shackles of the body and breaks the restrictions of personal physical and empirical skills on productive labor. Such characteristics make the relationship between man and nature change again. Man can stay away from the control of natural forces in productive labor. With a mechanical system matching with science and technology, man can create

continuously, and man and nature will be separated further and further, and the power of man will become tall. Mechanical production replaced the previous "gift" of the natural system, and the status of god fell from the peak, and then the brilliance of human nature rose slowly. The slogan of the industrial age is "to conquer nature". People should begin to show off their power to nature. Self-consciousness is emotionally a kind of self-superstition. Humanitarianism and rationalism in modern philosophy are the full expression of the self-confidence state of human self-consciousness.

People's innovation of self-knowledge, the era of change of children's understanding also came. Since the western industrial age, the view of children of the world has undergone an epoch-making revolution [6][7]. From Rousseau's discovery of children, the West entered the era of "having children". "Emile" in the opening wrote: "from the hands of the creator is good, and to the hands are all bad", the "good theory" directly attacked the medieval of sexual evil, for "small adult" of children, Rousseau clearly pointed out: "human status in all things, have childhood status in life, so we must treat people as people, treat children as children." Rousseau's attention to childhood swept the bourgeoisie who mastered a large number of productive labor materials, and then directly triggered the study of "educational psychology" in the history of western education, which made the subsequent western view of children gradually established on the basis of scientific research. Pestalozzi first put forward the slogan of "educational psychology". As a kind of educational trend of thought, the rise of educational psychology thought established a profound philosophical foundation and social and historical background. In the specific practice trend, two branches appeared, one is child psychology, the other is teacher psychology [8]. The development of child psychology directly promotes the society's attention to the development of children, and deepens the attention and research of researchers and even the general public on children's psychology and personality.

In the East, China entered its modern history nearly 200 years later than the West. It can be said that the awakening of children's children was explored under the guidance of feudal oppression and the West. After China entered modern times, the style of society has changed greatly, but the aftertaste soaked by Confucianism for many years is still retained, and the influence on children is very deep, but in the dark, we can still find a trace of light. At the critical moment when China gradually became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, Reformists represented by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao launched the reform movement. They were deeply aware that the transformation of the society must start from the transformation of people in the final analysis. Only by understanding the essence of people can we shape the "new people" and build a new society. In the Book of Datong, Kang Youwei put forward the idea of public education, and stressed that "all evil objects to kill, steal and cheat should be removed from the screen, no make into the mind of infants", pointing out that children should receive education in a good environment. Although Kang Youwei's great harmony world is a utopian idea, but it has a certain enlightenment to the later generations. Liang Qichao, in the private Discussion of Education Policy, clarified the characteristics of the physical and mental development of education and different periods,

indicating that Liang Qichao had a general understanding of the characteristics of children's growth stages, and paid attention to the development and change of children's physical and mental relations. His views made great progress compared with the previous life.

We can see that human rationality shines again in the industrial age. From the discovery of children to the understanding of children, and then to the prediction that "the 20th century is the century of children", human self-awareness gradually realized the importance of children and children in the whole society in the step by step awakening journey.

## 5. Children's Century

"When anything goes to the top, the rest is a helpless decline." Entering the 20th century, the electric revolution replaced the mechanical revolution and entered the nuclear revolution. Behind the progress and prosperity, the modern industrial practice with the occurrence of two world wars and the emergence of some globalization problems, the capitalist industry fell into a dilemma. Marx pointed out as early as the 19th century that universal self-reflection was coming. The accelerated speed of development, the change of information exchange mode, and the dual conflict of interest between man and nature become more and more intense change the industrial practice of modern people, and people turn from continuous creation to the creation of "self-control". A spirit of self-reflection from the heart replaced the blind confidence in the industrial age. People began to view the relationship between self and nature dialectically, and began another layer of reflection and criticism of self. Human self-consciousness is more mature, gradually cultivate the ability to control the self, and finally become the master of their own destiny [9].

In the 20th century, the concept of children was deeply influenced by the Enlightenment movement. In the first half of the early century, there was a trend of "child standard", namely "child-centered doctrine". "Child center" to some extent is associated with Dewey, Dewey profound understanding of children make it created a kind of different from the traditional progressive education theory, the theory of children completely in the center of education, "our education will cause the change is the shift of gravity, this is a kind of change, this is a kind of change, this is and the center of Copernicus astronomy from the earth to the sun that kind of revolution [10]. Here, the children become the sun, and all the measures of education revolve around them, and the children are the center, and the educational measures are organized around them." In China, the spokesperson of "child standard" bears the brunt should be Tao Xingzhi. In Tao Xingzhi's education theory, children are always in the central position of education. He fully realizes the importance of the education and influence exerted on children in their early stage. "Most of the important habits, tendencies and attitudes needed in life can be cultivated successfully before the age of six. In other words, before the age of six is the most important period for personality cultivation"[11]. Tao Xingzhi clearly realized that children have different physiological and psychological characteristics compared with adults. Therefore, he opposes treating children as "small adults", opposing adults imposing their will on children, and depriving adults of children of the

right to play and play. In the second half of the 20th century, many new traditional schools of education emerged, such as edentalism, etc. These new traditional educational concepts inherited the traditional trend of education and criticized the progressive concept of children's education. No matter in the West or in China, the struggle between new traditional education and progressive education has irrigated the generation of new view of children in different ways, especially the rise and development of psychological theory has greatly influenced the generation and development of the view of children. It is also worth noting that in the 20th century West, we can indeed call it "the century of children". Before the 20th century, children did not know what their rights were. Children were in the dark for a long time, and the child labor in the industrial revolution was in an unimaginable tragic situation. After entering the 20th century, the cause of western children's rights has made great development, and the international alliance led by the Organization of the United Nations has made great contributions to the cause of the rights of children in the world. In 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the survival and development of children and the return of power became a topic of common concern around the world.

Through the above rough inspection, we can see the evolution of children change with the human self consciousness, in a spiral, dynamic development: the idea of no self, no children, to find their own ability, found the value of childhood, finally cherish rational, cherish children, human nature slowly awakening in the long river of history. In the 21st century, we are on the road of building a "modern" view of children. The modern view of children will be constructed by modern people in the modern society. But the truth is, 21st century is the century for Chinese children and the century for children around the world.

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