

Philosophical meditation on mental health * ☆

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Abstract

AIM: This paper, starting from the perspective of "human beings' living world", tries to reveal the historical epoch premise of mental health and re-defines the criteria of mental health by "harmonization of human beings' relationships".

METHODS: Sorting out the criteria of mental health by studying a large numbers of literatures.

RESULTS: Four kinds of harmonious relationships in human beings' living world are disclosed, namely, the symbiosis of man and nature, the interaction between man and man, the integration of human beings and their egos, and the signification of mental health by inoculating man and "god".

CONCLUSION: Grasping the real philosophical connotation of mental health to focus on human beings' realistic life quality through "the fashion of man".

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INTRODUCTION

Human beings have never concerned, introspect and pursued self-ego as they do nowadays, or more accurately speaking, the concern, introspection and pursuit for self-ego have never been so real as they are nowadays. Man's focuses on self-life quality and living significances are the communicating points of humanities. So, the new connotation of mental health endowed by psychological history and society era is the core embodiment of the present psychological value.

CHANGING DIRECTION OF PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH TO "LIVING WORLD"

Mental research in psychology is the important method and central way for man to recognize and grasp his ego. It is a long, complex and changeful process for human beings to cognize and grasp their egos. None of the disciplines can bear the weight of such a "deadweight", and none of the discipline is "full of confusion and dispute" like the psychological history^[1]. Generally speaking, the process of exploring and grasping human mentality in psychology is that of man's cognizing and examining his ego. Under the particular condition of western thinking manner, the mental research has three stages in the psychological area (especially in the west).

"Noumenal metaphysics" psychology

This stage is also the classical psychology stage in which psychology like other subjects seeks the soul, scattered in the philosophical questions. The cognition of mentality by human beings mainly depends on rational reflections and comprehensive imaginations. It regards the psycho as an entity, which is reality but outside man's real living. From Anaxagoras's "Nous" to Plato and Aristotle's "soul",

and up to Middle Ages, the belief beyond natural entity is showed in a pure and extreme ways. In this stage, psycho is soul; it has the character of "noumenal metaphysics".

Scientific psychology

Although Wilhelm Wundt established the first laboratory with scientific methods to study psychology in the world in 1879, it marked the formation of scientific psychology, the scientific sense of regarding man as an object. The psycho is entity, and man's real world is scientifically rooted from the abandoning of the abstract soul entity by Leonardo da Vinci, René Descartes, *et al* who accomplished the splendid achievement in physical science area in modern times. They try to study man's psycho like researching substance in physical area. They considered that "human being is offspring of nature; it exists in nature, and submits itself to the natural rules. It can not exceed nature even in thinking"^[2]. In this stage, human beings conduct the pure, abstract and logical enlightenment of man's essence. They deem man as a transcendent entity, which is beyond all "relations". Thereout, the psychological process is disintegrated, the psychological state is frozen, and the psychological action is restored and simplified. Psychology has really realized the scientific representation, whereas the psycho has become the puppet of "subject metaphysics". Although both the first two stages have obvious differences in their displaying ways, they have the same essentials. They all study psycho by using the object entity model, which makes psychology far beyond man's real living world.

Focus on the psychology of man's real living world

Psychology throws itself into man's real living world actively, and it does not go beyond the stillness of "science" anymore. It was in virtue of the need of psychology during World War II. But its basic background is that human beings focus on their life quality and living conditions in the modern society. It is the consciousness of returning life by "psycho" that suffers a lengthy waiting process from objects entity to reflection of ego. Each psychological school tries its best to explain the social meaning and epoch character of psychological research from its own angle, and strive hard to solve man's psychology problems in the real living world. Meanwhile, humanistic psychology, the "third influence", directly explores the relationship between conscious experience and real living, focuses on man's value and need, and pays attention to the problems of personality and humanity. Along with the full development of modern society and the coming of postindustrial society, human beings have already achieved comprehension of man's world and physical character. It no longer relies upon object or object existence of image, but stands on the stable mother earth. If human beings "accomplish the dream of realizing ego through grasping themselves by creating their own actions",^[3] they will no longer try to avoid the reality of life embodied by soul, object, and entity, and they will face the psychological ego of human beings of real social living. So, in the whole cultural field, it is not dominated by "economical benefit" in the economical field and "equality right" in political area, but by "ego expression" and "ego content"^[4]. In this way, the annotation of psycho is not any longer the empty hypothesis and meditation by psychologists, but it is the fervid and clinging love by each man in the real world. It realizes the changing direction of "living world" in the psycho research area by focusing on psycho condition, action, content and process in the living world of man.

The so-called "living world" of human beings is the relational world

that is created and posed by man in practical actions. Human beings, as individuals, do not exist alone and solitarily. They realize the essence of human beings by objective action, which is the symbol and mark of man as a man. "Human beings, as the existence of hypostatic, realistic and material relations, are among the relationship originally. Man's presence, character, essence and the essence of power, all present the relations and are realized and confirmed by the relationships. In any case, it cannot exist, or obtain any realism or thus it does not exist if man is outside the relations. Human beings who locate in the real relations can have the existence of ego actuality, the character of realism and the essence and essence power"^[5]. For those existences that do not have the relations, they can't indicate themselves by relations, he cannot be called men. The real living of human beings is realized by relational actions of human beings, which is objective actions. The relational world of human beings is the objective world of human beings at the same time. From the angle of relationship, living world of human being is formed basically by four objective actions of man: ① The relations between man and nature; ② The relations between man and man; ③ The relations between human beings and their egos; ④ The relations between man and "god". These four relations integrate in man's real living world. It is represented by living practice, and meanwhile, it creates materials and leads to the abundant natures of human beings, and the new real living world by living practice.

REDEFINES THE CRITERIA OF MENTAL HEALTH BY "HARMONY OF HUMAN BEINGS' RELATIONSHIP"

At present, studies on conditions in internal and external show that "mental health" is not only a universal hot topic, but also the focus matter that has the character of times. Human beings' focus on mental health jointly has reasons to make us believe that the research of mental health is not the matter of single subject or a portion of man any longer. However, as the "mental health" has its own complexity, so far, the criteria of mental health also have a lot of opinions, and there is no unified view. The present criteria of mental health are bounded by individual living conditions, and they include external representations of cognition, emotion, will and behavior. For instance, in 1946, the Third International Health Conference considered: By mental health, it is meant that an individual's mood should be developed into the best condition within the scope of non-contradiction with others' mental health in terms of physical, intelligent and emotional conditions. It can develop the mental state of man into optimal conditions". Or it is according to some external social expectations, rules and subjective authentication of authorities. W. W. Boehm, a social operator, proposes: "Mental health is the social behavior that corresponds to a certain level: on the one hand, it can be accepted by society, and on the other hand, it can bring the pleasure for itself". All these criteria of mental health are short of "placing human beings at the center of everything we do", and short of the theatrical analyses that serve the essence of man as the groundwork in the real living world. It stays at the phenomenal expression of mental health mostly, and the results are that it only defines the portion of mental health, but it cannot unveil the nature of mental health in full scales. In order to avoid this obvious shortcoming, people adopt subtle criteria and sketchy criteria in their studies. Or it is from a certain objective angle, for instance, it is from the angle of pedagogy, hygienics, and the needs of a certain career role (e. g. : there are countless criteria of adolescent, teacher). Or weaken the consciousness of criteria. As Huashan Liu suggests, "Mental health is a state and furthermore is a process, and, in the final analysis, mental health is a living attitude". In this way, the study on mental health reveals itself in the situation of "each speaking of each own evidences and each having each own justifications".

In fact, mental health is human beings, health. The criteria of human beings health are prerequisites to mental health. Human beings' health should start with genuine human nature for the discussion of the living world of human beings and the existing conditions of man in his living world. So harmony of human beings' relationship is the criterion of judging whether man's mentality is healthy. Human beings' relationships constitute human beings' living world relationships. Relationships are human beings' forms in practicing actions and indicators of human beings' existing model. "Relational existence in any place is meant for me. Animals are not related to anything, and they do not have any 'relationships' at all"^[6]. Human beings' real living world is formed by human beings and the objects of human beings' consciousness, and human beings and the objects of human beings' consciousness and their relationship constitute the human beings' real living conditions.

The relationship between human beings and nature

This relational condition is the first meaning in human being's relationship, because "human beings are natural existence directly"^[7]. The precondition of human beings as human beings is that human beings are products of nature. In order to survive, human beings must possess the substance power to satisfy their basic living needs. So in the social realism, firstly, the human being should be the man with certain possibility of possessing certain substance power and should have his own style to live in the society. Of course, the more substance power he possesses, the more harmonious living conditions he gets. It is the precondition. However, the most important is, to the result, not all human beings have healthy substance power; and in the process, not all the living styles of possessing substance power are healthy. Only when the internal "needs" of nature are respected can the satisfaction of the need for human beings' self-realization be healthy. In this way, the relationship between man and nature are the essential precondition of harmony of human beings' relationship.

The relationship between human beings and society

Sociality is human beings' most essential regularity, and "the most essential attribute"^[6]. The so-called social relationship is the relationship between man and man. On the one hand, society is the result of relationship between man and man; on the other hand, society exists before individual, the fundamental point of individual action is the influence of society and others. Hereby, the living condition of human beings lies on the relational condition of man and society and others. It includes the cognition, estimation, and the attitude of form of individual treatment of others and society, association, communication, and interaction with others, and on whether we can establish rational and efficient "intersubjektivitaet" on this foundation, namely, the good emotional association, a certain credit standing, and the proper cooperating spirit, is crucial. Social relationship is the portion to centralize token of the essential character of human beings in human beings' relationship. It is the realism in human beings' relationship. Other relationships and their conditions should be shown by realizing social relationship, and social relationship reflects the human being's social power directly, which is the power of human beings. The harmony of interaction between man and man follows the principle of "mutual benefit". When the needs of both sides in the interaction are met (or basically met), the interaction can proceed (or deepen); the satisfactions of "mutual benefits" are not the exchanges of relationship correspondence one by one; the quantity of "mutual benefits" demands are not apparent equality, namely, the "mutual benefits" are determined by the subjective need of both sides in interaction, so, sometimes "strangers" hardly comprehend that men can live together harmoniously for there are most "unharmonious" relations. By this token, the man who can meet others' need is the man who can live together harmoniously. The more he can meet the need deep in man's internal spirit, the more he is accepted and approved,

and he can be a man who has the "social relationship".

The relationship between man and ego

This relationship condition means that consciousness starts from ego, points to ego, and regresses to the condition of "self-consciousness". It includes ego cognition (individual's analyses and estimates of the level at which it treats itself in the respect of various physical and mental conditions, and the relationship between itself and others); self-experience (individual feelings accompanying self-knowing, such as pride, self-respect, self-confidence, amour-propre, self-reliance, etc.); self monitor (self monitor, self-regulation are formed basically in the two formers). The relationship between man and ego is the key portion in human beings' relationship. How man gains the natural power and how he treats others lies in a certain fact in which how man recognizes ego, the internal essence and need of self, and the consciousness of status and character of self in external environment. There is a saying that goes like this: "He is clever who knows himself". If the subject ego has rational self-cognition and efficient regulation, it is easy for man to form good human relationships and good relationships between man and nature.

The relationship between man and "god"

Human beings are not only the ideal existence, but also the existence of pursuing ultimate and permanent ideal. This care and pursuit of ultimate existence and meaning are the belief that aggregates human beings' love of life, living spirit, and living impulses, generation after generation: human beings are partial to be benevolent unconditional in moral area; it represents that human beings are seeking truth that are endlessly clinging in cognitive area; and in aesthetic area, human beings desire to express the ultimate meaning. It reflects the condition of ultimate concern in the whole human beings' spirit area. If they are never conscious of or lose this belief, human beings' real living will be short of sense or have no meaning, relapse into empty and dull desolation of life, and easy to lose the courage of living and the seeking of ideal life. So, life without belief is not the real human being's life. It is the basic of forming harmonious human beings' relationship by seeking the ultimate meaning of human beings' real living world and appreciating sacred image. As it is the optimal Faramita which the first three real relationships want, it is the acting point of the three real relationships. Without (or short of justice) ultimate solicitude, human beings cannot gain the real harmonious living conditions.

The foregoing four relations are both independent and interactive, and they rely on each other. They weave the net of human being's living world together, and are expressed by human being's social practical actions. If one of these four relations is in disharmony, it will disrupt the balance of other three relations directly. It can realize human beings' mental health really by achieving the harmony of human beings' four relationships. Certainly, in human being's real living world, there is no pure harmony of human beings' relationship, and there is no pure disharmony, either. Actually, all the human beings shift among these relationships alternatively, and they always will. Meanwhile, in these relationships, each relationship is independent relatively and even against other relations sometimes. For instance, some ones are bigoted in the relationship between ego and society; some focus on ego condition excessively, and some are addicted to the spirit belief of super realism. But if a certain relationship breaks the harmony of human beings' relationship in case, man who in the real living world will be in unhealthy conditions; in addition, the criteria of "harmony" are a historical dynamic process. It has sociality, civilization and historicity, and "harmony" has different meanings in different social backgrounds, cultural traditions and historical backgrounds. To the individual, "harmony" is the natural character at each stage in human beings living process, and at different ages, the criteria of "harmony" are quite different.

PHILOSOPHICAL CONNOTATION OF MENTAL HEALTH

The basic precondition of concerning with life really and promoting the quality of life is from the point of focusing on the harmony of human beings' relationship, introspecting the philosophical meaning of mental health, and pursuing the philosophical implication

Mental health is the symbiosis of man and nature

"Mental health" is human beings, respect to the nature of life consciously-treating nature that meets the need of man by the particular way that the nature of life has. Human beings, first of all, are the natural existence, which determines that human beings are parts of nature, living body of man follows the internal rules of nature and they must gain the material energy from nature to maintain their life. But there are differences between man and other creatures. The material actions of man are the producing actions, free and conscious. So, satisfying the natural needs of man is impossibility of nature process. The composing nature that encircles the men's actions in human beings' eyes is impossibility. Pure nature only meets human beings' natural needs. In this way, if human beings want to preserve the rational cognition of their self-existence, they should respect the nature when they try to meet their natural needs, namely, to realize human beings' dreams by "natural way". When human beings respect the need of nature, they respect the need of human beings' self content in the nature; consequently, they construct the living footstone of human beings' mental health. The most prior is that human beings' attribute of non-natural existence dictates the ethic, aesthetic and artistic conceptions from nature to human beings'. These artistic conceptions make human beings separate themselves from the living way of pure nature. To sum up, mental health is the self-esteem that human beings have for themselves, for nature, and for life itself.

Mental health is the interaction between man and man

"Mental health" is individuals' personal identify in society-human beings realize the self-relationship according to the expectation and demand of society. Society is human beings' real living world, is the result of relationship between man and man, is each unit's living and developing space, is the arena to incarnate human being's meaning and value, and is abundant and creative. There would be no human beings without society. As man is the direct product of society, and the society endows human beings with essence and separates man from all the creatures in nature ultimately. Human beings' most basic regularity, which is the rooting difference between man and creatures, is human beings' sociality. Only by living in society, human beings are the human beings in real meanings, and the sociality is each individual unit's whole living process and the final aim. Sociality is the process that makes natural human beings have social attributes and become social creatures. Sociality of individual progress is achieved according to certain concrete social roles of individuals that society expects. Different social rules can produce individual's different social way, different characters of individual personality, and form different mentality and criteria of mental health.

The characters of interacting between man and man also express themselves in seeking cultural root in human beings' interacting integration; namely, it will have profound and lasting meaning from the cultural dimensionality to ensure mental health. Culture is the "culturalization of human beings", and it is human beings' whole living practice processes and results. Human beings are the cultural existence. Culture immerses human beings' mentality quietly. Whatever kind of people dictates whatever kind of culture. Meanwhile, culture is the common assumption and principle that compose the human beings' living world, and it is the existence that is before individual. There are a good many unhealthy conditions of mentality. First of all, they are inevitable products in a certain area, and the temporal disharmony or contradiction are produced by human beings' objective actions of adapting and inheriting a certain cultural

condition and creating new cultural gene. Nay, culture, especially in nowadays society, presents dynamic opening character. The culture of different district, structure, idea, and form does not avoid impacting, communicating, and interacting; the conflict of different thinking ways, valuable ideals and living beliefs can be the key factors of unhealthy mentality. By this token, mental health is a cultural matter. Culture and its existing condition not only are the factors forming mental disharmony, but can also stipulate the level of mental health. The criteria of mental health in different cultural conditions have differences; even the differences of essence; and human beings have different evaluating criteria to the same behavior. Sometimes, they have different comprehensions to others' the same evaluated ego. It forms different mental content, state, and quality.

Mental health is the integration of human beings and their egos

"Mental health" is the mark of growing and maturing of human beings' self-consciousness-human beings turn their eyes from the heaven into the earth where they are standing, from the abstract concept and meditation into human beings' practicing and creating living world. In human beings' lengthy history, they never noticed and studied whether their mentality are healthy. Human beings also practice and create their living world. Because human beings once regard themselves as certain object, they express their real living world by pure logic principles. By this way, human beings accomplish the cognition and reconstruction of "physical character" of human beings' world, and realize the fundamentals of human beings' standing on the stable earth independently. Hence, human beings, as the object, begin to really analyze and unscramble their ego. Ego here (namely, the ego is the consciousness) is the ego that stays in the "relationship" world really. It possesses the most abundant nature. It is not only the natural existence directly, but also the super natural existence at the same time. It has the whole meanings that are endowed by nature, society, culture and history. It is the substance existence as well as spirit living, sensible impulsion as well as logical binding, and the polychrome, vivid and three-dimensional ego. "Mental health" is the self-attention of human beings' living in modern society-it reflects that modernists have certain hardships and difficulties in their lives. The essence of "mental health" is the anthropoid solicitude in modern scientific world, and it is also the attention that human beings pay to their own life quality. Human beings in reality are the human beings in objective relationships. Human beings do not exist by individualists imagined by citizenry.

Human beings who are not as objects and do not possess objects are indiscriminating men, namely, they are "nonobjective existence", and they are abstract, isolated, and hypothetic existence. Targeting of human beings' nature determines the targeting of human beings' actions. Human beings themselves are the essential power of realizing self-living pursuit and living harmony. Explanation and attitude with which human beings regard ego, nature, and ultimate meanings determine human beings' real practical acting ways, their real living and survival conditions. How human beings live and how they lived-these lie on what kind of man he is. By this token, the basic way of realizing mental health is ego releasing ego; namely, it is the development and maturation of human beings' self-consciousness: individual's rational annotation to ego world, the formation of self-emotion experience, self mental and behavior monitor on this foundation, and realization of the harmony of human beings' relationship.

CONCLUSION

The essence of formulation and creativity of human beings' living world and practical actions are revealed in the fact that human beings

develop various "relationships" in the process of "breaking balance-seeking balance-achieving balance-breaking balance again": rebuilding and cognition of nature, evaluating and monitoring to ego, attitude and association to others, and pursuit and belief to the ultimate meanings. Thereunto, to human beings, any relationship that breaks the balance means that human beings should suffer the disharmony condition and then produce specifically cognitive attitude, realize mental balance by ego integration, and accomplish individual mental growth continually. In this process, human beings embody their own essence as human beings-possessing and developing their self-essence strength in contradictory actions. Mental health is human beings' transcending their natural form of life and pursuing permanent living spirit. Ideality is human beings' transcending man's real living world. Human beings want to pursue ideality because reality is unreasonable and dissatisfactory and one cannot achieve what one wishes. Human beings themselves and their living world are limited. Human beings always make efforts to change their deficiency, seek the things they do not have, and aspire more perfect, more real and prettier objects. As long as human beings survive, they can never stop pursuing. Mental health is the process that human beings exceed the present and pursue meanings continually. Human beings will always try to realize the integration of ideal and reality, dream and ability, means and ends in the process of pursuing ultimate meanings. When can human beings really comprehend the meaning of life? When will they gain their substantial, happy, tolerant and strong mental health? To what extent do human beings comprehend the meaning of life? What conditions should they exist in and pursue? When can they really grasp the true meaning of life? Only when these questions are answered can they really have what they aspire: wisdom, abundance and mental health.

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关于心理健康的哲学思考*☆

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摘要

目的:试图从“人的生活世界”视角出发,揭示心理健康的历史时代性前提;以“人的关系世界的和谐”重新界定心理健康的标准。

方法:通过大量文献的查阅对心理健康的标准进行梳理。

结果:挖掘人生活世界中四种和谐的关系,即人与自然的共生、人与人的互动、人与自身的同一、人与“神”的共融对心理健康的意义。

结论:真实把握心理健康的哲学性内涵,用“人的方式”关注人现实的生活质量。

主题词:心理学;哲学;生活质量

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