

Study on the Connotation and Process of Moral Education*

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Abstract—From the perspective of moral education, how to think about the connotation, process and thinking method of moral education requires us to trace back to the original state of moral education, and explore how moral education can strengthen moral education and cultivate people.

Keywords—moral education; process; thinking method

I. INTRODUCTION

The continuous development of human society requires the inheritance of history and culture, the pioneering understanding of the world and the transformation of the world. As educator Dewey said, "A community or social group maintains itself through continuous self-renewal, which depends on the education and growth of immature members of the group." [1] For a single individual, the process of self-life generation is also a process of carrying forward the past, integrating into the society and shaping the social person. This is not only because human beings are natural beings, but also more importantly because human beings are social beings. As Marx said, "The essence of human beings is not an abstract thing inherent in a single person. In its reality, it is the sum of all social relations." [2] Education plays an important role in shaping human beings. Jaspers once said, "Education brings individuals into the whole through the existence of individuals. The individual carries on the world rather than sticking to his own corner, so his narrow existence is injected into the new air by all things. If man is integrated with a clearer and fuller world, man can truly become himself." [3] How to create the individual existence of oneself through education, integrate into the world, and integrate with the social world is a problem that must be considered by the discipline of education. As moral education conveying the supreme good and shaping personality, it also shoulders the great mission.

II. THE MEANING OF MORAL EDUCATION

What is moral education? When exploring its connotation and extension, people will fall into the dilemma that the ethicist Moore said. "In my opinion, ethics, as the other philosophical disciplines, is full of historical difficulties and

controversies, which is mainly because of a very simple reason, namely, trying to answer a question without first finding out exactly what it is you want to answer." [4] Under the seemingly simple appearance, it is indeed extremely difficult to distinguish and analyze, as well as the concept of moral education, which needs careful analysis. Russian scholar Churkheim first used the concept of "moral education" in the early 20th century. In the 1960s, the Polish scholar M. Osovska put forward that moral education was only a part of the discourse on moral theory in his book "An Overview of Moral Education". Scholar M. Osafkov classifies "moral education" as a separate subject and classifies it into sociological structure. He believes that it studies the basic principles of the relationship among morality and law, politics, art, religion and social management. In his article "The Social Scale of Morality", K. Neshev believes that one of the tasks of moral education is to explain the complex social constraints of the behavior of individuals and social groups. He specializes in the object and structure of moral education. The famous educator Dewey believes that morality is education. He holds that "all the purposes and values of education that meet the needs are moral in themselves. There is an old saying that a good man is not enough, and he must be a useful good man. To be a useful good person means that he can live like a member of society. In his common life with others, his contribution to society and the benefits he has gained can be balanced. Education is not only the means, but also this kind of life. The ability to maintain this kind of education is the essence of morality." [5] Confucius not only regards education as the key to the formation of personal qualities, but also raises moral education to an important position of governing the country and ensuring the people. Confucius said, "The country should govern the people by decree and rectify them by criminal law. The people only want to be exempt from punishment for crimes, but they have no sense of shame. Guiding the people with morality and assimilating them with etiquette, the people will not only have a sense of shame, but also have a sense of submission." Marxist ethics also attaches great importance to the role of moral education, especially to the guiding role of Communist values in people, and uses comparative analysis to explain thoroughly the oppressive and exploitative nature of capitalist society, and the hypocrisy of bourgeois morality. The morality of the future society is that people follow freely and voluntarily, expressing the essential attributes of human beings smoothly

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and vividly, and truly realizing the charm of morality. From many discussions on moral education, people can see that it involves ethics, sociology, moral philosophy, ecology and other disciplines, and eventually develops into an independent discipline through a long process.

Professor Wang Fengxian holds that according to the needs of and educatees and certain social laws, educators should follow the law of morality formation, adopt effective means such as teaching by words and deeds. In the activities in which the educatees consciously and actively participate, through internalization and externalization, the educatees' ideology, politics, legal system and morality will be developed systematically. [6] The author basically agrees with the outlined view that the moral character of an individual is not inherent, but must be cultivated through moral education; the morality of a society is not formed naturally, but must also be created through moral education.

III. THE PROCESS OF MORAL EDUCATION

People's ideology and morality is not innate, but formed under the external influence of the acquired. Therefore, in order to study the process of moral education, it should not only take into account the external conditions and influences of the formation of the ideology and morality, but also take into account the specific internal factors of the individual educator; of course, it should also follow certain laws and characteristics of education. In a word, the process of moral education has the universality of the general educational process, but also has its special disciplinary characteristics and existing rules. If considering a single subject, the process of receiving moral education and internalizing it into code of conduct generally goes through the following stages: cognition, judgment, deliberation, internalization, devotion and so on, which is conducive to improving moral cognition and cultivating moral thinking; attaching importance to moral emotions and training moral will; and strengthening moral faith and externalizing moral action.

A. *Improving Moral Cognition and Cultivating Moral Consciousness*

Moral knowledge is "the understanding and recognition of various direct and indirect experiences and their activities in the field of morality. It is the rational reflection and experience accumulation of moral relationship and moral life, and the summary of behavior and its social value in social practice. [7] Moral cognition belongs to the category of cognition, but it is the basis and premise of moral behavior. From Socrates, Plato to Kant, the thoughts of western ethical education all emphasize the study of moral knowledge. It is believed that only when knowledge is possessed can moral behavior be developed and manifested. Confucian moral education in China also emphasizes the study of moral norms and the accumulation of moral knowledge in the human heart. "Having the knowledge will make people wise, and then people can make the choice." Therefore, the primary task of moral education is to impart correct moral knowledge, make the educatees master the scientific moral knowledge system, and cultivate and develop the educatees' moral cognitive ability. In the aspect of rational moral cognition, a person

with rational morality can understand the basic principles of morality, recognize their relationship with lower social rules, have good judgment on the specific situation of moral practice, and be good at applying the principles to specific life situations. As a rational animal, only through reason can people realize morality, achieve moral perfection and become a real person. This is just as "Great Learning" said: "Great Learning aims to foster moral integrity, forge close ties with the people and attain consummate virtue in both words and deeds."

To raise moral cognition is to strengthen people's understanding of certain moral principles and norms purposefully and consciously in the process of moral education. Socrates, an ancient Greek philosopher, has been devoted to advocating rationalistic morality. He has great confidence in knowledge and believes that "knowledge is the best good." [8] If people have knowledge, they will know what virtue is, what good and evil are, and will not do evil. In modern society, of course, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of rationality, but also the important role of irrationality in moral education. What the author wants to emphasize is the foundational role of moral cognition in moral action. Moral cognition plays a guiding role in moral behavior. Without correct moral understanding, there can be no corresponding moral behavior, and it is impossible to form a good moral quality. Raising people's moral cognition is conducive to people's correct understanding of the relationship between individuals and others, individuals and groups, and to guiding people to establish correct principles of conduct; conducive to people's understanding of the "ought" of their own behavior in social life; conducive to people's understanding of the reasons for such behavior; conducive to people's constant improvement of moral judgment ability, enabling people to distinguish good from bad, distinguish right from wrong in complex moral life, and actively keeping their own understanding in line with the objective requirements of society.

B. *Cultivating Moral Emotion and Promoting Moral Internalization*

Emotions are related to a person's emotional inclination and experience of loving and loathing. In the process of moral education, it is important to cultivate individual's moral emotion. One's inner emotional tendency tends to dominate and determine one's behavior choice. The process of cultivation is often the process of thinking, absorbing and transforming of the subject, which obtains historicity from others and internalizes into its own spiritual existence. "As a language of historical reality of the world and religion in a certain era, cultivation is full of vitality. Meanwhile, cultivation is the intermediary of communication, awakening and self-realization." [9] Therefore, to cultivate moral emotion is to cultivate people's yearning for good and feeling of hatred for evil on the basis of improving people's moral cognition. Finally, people transform from irrationality to rationality, and individuals actively adjust their behavior to make it good. Moral education has its own special mechanism. If moral knowledge can be truly internalized, it must have emotional recognition and acceptance. Emotion

not only supports people's moral cognitive system, but also plays a huge role in the transformation from knowledge to action. It is the intermediate link between educatees' transformation of moral issues from "knowledge" to "action", and it is also a powerful driving force to promote the moral action of educatees. Therefore, when conducting moral education, the moral requirements of society should take into account the psychological ability of the educatees, and they can know and enjoy it.

C. Establishing Moral Beliefs and Value Orientation

"Moral education is to liberate people from all kinds of incorrect values and norms by means of the meaning of life and the ultimate pursuit of life." [10] Therefore, the process of moral education needs to enable people to establish correct moral beliefs and guide people to constantly think about the value of life. Just as some scholars think, moral belief is a strong sense of responsibility for fulfilling certain social moral obligations, driven by people's strong moral feelings through understanding social moral norms. Once this belief is established, people will continue to work towards their goals. "Devotion to the ultimate value and absolute truth is the essence of all education. Without enthusiasm for absoluteness, people can't survive, or they can't live like human beings and everything becomes meaningless." [11] Moral education needs to establish this faith in morality, which can turn moral knowledge into the internal power of moral behavior and promote people's moral behavior to show firmness and consistency. The most important task of moral education for the cultivation of individual moral character is to promote people to form firm moral beliefs and establish value orientation, which is a strong desire of people to form and pursue certain moral principles and norms only after they have been endorsed from the heart. This strong will enables people to deeply understand the value and significance of this pursuit in the depth of their thinking, so as to strengthen their confidence and courage, and make their actions move towards the goals they have recognized.

D. Exercising Moral Will and Ensuring the Realization of Value

Moral will emphasizes people's psychological state in the process of realizing moral beliefs. In the goal, process and reality of morality, it does not have the compulsion like law. It is possible for the subject to show morality with a high degree of self-consciousness, which requires the self-consciousness and self-determination of the moral subject. Subjectively, moral behavior means the transfer and sacrifice of the subject's own interests to a certain extent, which requires people to have enough courage to correctly look at their own interests. Without strong will power, it is difficult for people to achieve this. Objectively, the realization of moral behavior is influenced by many factors. For example, people's daily behavior can't obtain social justice, or even misunderstood by people, which will bring ideological struggle and emotional fluctuations to the actors. Therefore, the problem of will can usually be reduced to the problem of emotion and action. In this case, whether people can persevere in this moral behavior in accordance with their

own moral beliefs depends on whether they have strong will power. Under certain conditions, the strength of willpower often decides whether an individual's moral behavior adheres to or abandons, advances or retreats, remains unchanged or abandons halfway, remains faithful or deserts. "In the pursuit of a better life, man is not a 'thing'. Man is a living person, and life is a purposeful and valuable creative process of the mind." [12] Therefore, people have spiritual pursuit. In the process of pursuing, it is necessary to give full play to the irrational educational means such as emotion and will and actively exert their positive functions in moral education. Sukhomlinski once said, "I have been convinced for thousands of times that only in bravery and fearlessness can a man truly express himself. Only brave and fearless behavior can protect and sympathize with people's needs, maintain spiritual sensitivity and show boldness, fearlessness, decisiveness and firmness in the face of difficulties. This is an incomparable mental state in human misfortune. The greatest misfortune is to lose courage and become a small, timid poor insect. If every student dares not climb the tree top, swim across the river, walk into the forest at night, and escort helpless children home in the snowstorm, this kind of education can only be education in the greenhouse." [13]

E. Cultivating Moral Habits and Externalizing Moral Actions

One of the ways to achieve the goal of moral education is that people form good moral behavior habits and externalize them into actions, so as to achieve the unity of cognition and behavior, rationality and practice, ideal and reality. "The most important problem of moral education in schools is about the relationship between knowledge and behavior...Knowledge does not integrate with ordinary motivation and outlook on life, and morality becomes moral preaching, a combination of their own independent virtues" [14]. Therefore, moral cognition should be transformed into moral habits. Once moral habits are formed, it indicates that he has transformed the external moral requirements into his own conscious behavior. Moral education is to internalize certain social moral norms into individual qualities, form individual's self-moral beliefs and moral pursuits, and promote individuals to show such qualities, transform them into individual objective behavior activities, and ultimately promote the formation of individual moral behavior habits through the guidance of education. As a behavior stereotype, the moral behavior habit has a remarkable characteristic that it no longer needs external behavior supervision under any circumstances. With this habit, people do everything naturally, and the internal moral quality externalized into the external habits of action, thus realizing a person's appearance is the same, words and deeds are consistent. Aristotle emphasized the importance of forming moral habits in youth. He said, "We develop one or another of the habits from a young age, and the relationship is not small, and it makes a big difference or the whole difference." Therefore, the unity of habits and actions is one of the important achievements of moral education, once people form moral habits, morality will become self-conscious action, so that the subject really becomes a moral person.

IV. THE WAY OF THINKING IN MORAL EDUCATION

This paper can use the five modes of thinking proposed by General Secretary Xi Jinping, namely, strategic thinking, historical thinking, dialectical thinking, innovative thinking and bottom-line thinking, to analyze the basic problems and main contradictions in moral education, and to explore ways to improve the effectiveness of moral education from five aspects, such as standing on the new era, returning to the classics, firming faith, using science and technology, and the concept of moral education.

A. Applying Strategic Thinking, Standing on the New Era and Returning to the Living World

Strategic thinking is to be forward-looking, to take care of the overall situation, and to be good at grasping the overall trend and direction of things. Therefore, using the strategic thinking requires an open mind, keeping pace with the times, and observing and dealing with problems from a strategic and global perspective. It is necessary to use strategic thinking to analyze the problems in moral education and explore how to apply strategic thinking to the course of "moral education". On the one hand, from the perspective of "moral education" classroom practice, it is easy to fall into purely intellectual transmission and political indoctrination in the current classroom. Of course, although traditional cognitive teaching has certain necessity, once it is simply taught, it can't stimulate students' active exploration spirit, and the classroom effect is very small. Using strategic thinking, the teachers can integrate the moral education curriculum into the thinking of the changes in the new era, solve the problems of the real life world, and stimulate students to actively learn the relevant basic principles, explore the wisdom of life, society and the times, and activate the classroom vitality. On the other hand, from the perspective of the principle of moral education, the theoretical quality of moral education is close to life, and the concept of strengthening moral education and cultivating people. The real world is constantly changing, and it is necessary to make full use of dialectical materialism and historical materialistic thinking to gain insight into the changes in the world of life. Only by deepening the real life world of students and solving their confusion about life, society and their own existence can they greatly stimulate their interest in learning. So, how to get back to the new world and return to the world of life? Specifically, the first is to apply the basic principles, understand the national justice, and have the awareness of the times. The second is to return to social and family relations, and pay attention to the relationship between the two. The third is to attach importance to the impact of school life and peer groups. From individual to family, school, and country, it should constantly construct a three-dimensional living space for students from multiple levels and levels. In short, this paper uses the strategic thinking and theory to analyze the real world, insight into the reality of the public, and analyze the rationale of the problem, so as to achieve the connection between theory and practice.

B. Using Historical Thinking, Tracing the Source, and Integrating into the Original

The ability of historical thinking is to use history as a mirror, to know the past and to understand the present, to be good at using historical perspectives to understand the law of development, grasp the direction of progress, and guide the ability of real work. On the one hand, from the content of the moral education curriculum, its theoretical system is based on a series of concepts, categories and principles. Therefore, in the practice of teaching, when facing the abstract and speculative theories, it is necessary to clarify the background of theories and the connotation of principles from the historical context, which needs to be actively integrated into the classic original works. It is easier to understand the theoretical connotation of the theory by pursuing the traceability of the source and the reproduction of historical texts, and the background and theoretical origins of the perspective principle. On the other hand, for the target students, in the face of many basic abstract principles, students are often lost in theory. Simple memory or intuitive explanations can easily lead students into chaos, and they can't master the profound connotation of moral principles, which enlightens people to use historical thinking and return to the classics, so as to give full play to the charm of the classic original works. And then, students can fully understand the background of the emergence of many basic principles, deeply understand the theoretical origins of the principles, and understand the historical context of text behind the principles. The rational use of classic works can not only enable students to clarify the historical context, understand the generation and development of theory, but also understand the content and meaning of the principles.

C. Using Dialectical Thinking, Coming Down to Earth, and Firming the Ideals and Beliefs of Communism

Dialectical thinking ability is the ability to recognize contradictions, analyze contradictions, resolve contradictions, and be good at grasping key points, finding key points, and gaining insight into the laws governing the development of things. In essence, dialectical thinking is to oppose seeing problem from a one-sided and static perspective, but to use a connected, developmental, and comprehensive perspective to look at the problem, and to be good at analyzing the contradiction, and grasping the key points and the main direction of the development of things. From the perspective of dialectical thinking, one of the missions of the moral education classroom is to undertake the value function of the lofty ideal education. In the new era, moral education should pay attention to the relationship between ideals and reality, lofty ideals and common ideals. The young students can strengthen their ideals and beliefs, with the truth guiding the ideals, and create a better future with the faith. Specifically, on the one hand, the teachers can use dialectical thinking methods to correctly understand the relationship between lofty social ideals and reality. It is necessary to strengthen the convictions, but people must also pay attention to reality and be down to earth. At the same time, the ideal is full, but the reality will be full of twists and turns. The students should be fully prepared and strengthen the faith. It is necessary to be clear that the realization of communist

beliefs is a long-term process, which requires people to work diligently and hard.

D. Stimulating Innovative Thinking and Reforming the Teaching Model with Modern Technology

The new era has spawned new problems, and new problems have spawned new methods. This requires people to continue to lead the moral education teaching practice with innovative thinking. Theory needs constant innovation, and practice must continue to innovate. Faced with the new challenges that traditional classrooms are constantly encountering in the perspective of the network society, how to face the problems, integrate new ideas with new technologies and new teaching models, and keep up with the new era is current problem that must be solved in the classroom. How to make the innovation in the course? In order to stimulate the vitality of the classroom and enhance the effectiveness of the curriculum, it is necessary to make some changes. First is to use innovative consciousness to lead curriculum construction, classroom teaching and after-school practice. The teachers can actively carry out the second class, and students can actively value the role of education through social practice, red journey, community service, etc. Secondly, it is necessary for teachers to apply new teaching concepts assisted by the latest teaching techniques to enhance the effectiveness of the classroom and improve the class attendance rate of students. In the information age, the network has profoundly affected the traditional classroom. Young students are addicted to the Internet. How to use the Weibo WeChat, micro-book, micro-video, micro-classroom to activate classroom vitality needs to use innovative thinking to make the class, offline and traditional classrooms and information technology highly integrated, innovate the presentation method, and enhance the sense of the times and attractiveness. Third, it is necessary to promote theoretical innovation based on practice, that is, use new materials, keep up with the new era, and use innovative thinking to present innovative content.

E. Using the Bottom-line Thinking, Consciously Learning to Practice the Concept of Strengthening Moral Education and Cultivating People

The so-called bottom line is that things have insurmountable boundaries, emphasizing the critical point before the qualitative change. In reality, it is necessary to stick to the bottom line, resolve risks and avoid the worst. In the process of teaching moral education, first of all, the bottom-line thinking is used to transform the teaching material system into the teaching system, and the lowest and highest teaching objectives of this course are defined. In the teaching process of a semester, it is necessary to grasp the "degree", so as to truly show the great personality of great figures, the light of the truth of moral theory and the value guidance and practical significance of socialism in the teaching practice. Secondly, teachers can use the bottom-line thinking to clarify the teaching content, teaching objectives and key difficulties of each chapter, so that the teaching objectives can be realized as much as possible. The teachers have the bottom-line thinking consciousness. According to

the different cognitive situations and thoughts, and political attitudes, the teachers should timely adjust the teaching content, and actively make the guidance, both emphasizing the universality of students and the particularity of students of different majors. On the other hand, the students should consciously use the bottom-line thinking consciousness as much as possible, improve the cognitive ability through multiple ways, and establish a lofty ideal.

The five ways of thinking are not mutually exclusive, but are coordinated and mutually reinforced. The new era, new atmosphere, the active classroom of moral education, and the curriculum that truly benefits students will require the holistic use of five ways of thinking. It should not only attach importance to the thickness of history and return to the classics, but also attach importance to the changes in the living world in the new era, keep close to the changes of the times and make it vivid without losing the historical support. At the same time, it should also pay attention to the leading role of ideals and beliefs in classroom teaching, so that students can't indulge in the secular world, but also look up at the stars and practice revolutionary beliefs. Actively applying five kinds of thinking skills can improve the effectiveness of the classroom and realize the mission of a highly unified moral education of political, scientific and humanistic principles.

V. CONCLUSION

Jaspers has said that "the so-called education is just an activity of human-to-human interaction (especially the older generation to the younger generation), including the imparting of knowledge content, the comprehension of life connotation, and the norm of will behavior. Through the cultural transfer function, the cultural heritage is taught to the younger generation, allowing them to freely generate and enlighten their freedom." [16] Jaspers's discussion of education has continually prompted people to think about education. It also prompts people to constantly think about how moral education can be internalized in the heart, externalized in the line, and how to achieve the goal of strengthening moral education and cultivating people.

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