

Progress in Researches on Moral Experience in the Context of Psychology and Philosophy

Rining Liang
Zhuhai College of Jilin University
Zhuhai, China 519041

Dong Long
Zhuhai College of Jilin University
Zhuhai, China 519041

Abstract—Morality as the core concept and the object of study in psychology and philosophy in contemporary times has different focuses in the field of psychology and philosophy. In the context of contemporary pluralism, the study of morality is of great significance to both individuals and the society. The combination of justice and morality has become a new perspective of moral research in light of the co-governance of psychology and philosophy and the co-existence of diverse cultures.

Keywords: *moral psychology, moral philosophy, justice, psychological deserve*

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of contemporary moral philosophy is to explore the moral rules of how people should act based on reason. The pursuit of this goal has led scholars to exclude the complex psychology and true emotion of people in daily moral life from the scope of study. The neglect of moral subject "inner world" makes contemporary moral philosophy attract many criticisms. In this context, contemporary moral philosophy studies are no longer satisfied with demonstrating the universal validity of moral principles, but pay attention to analyzing and elucidating the psychological state and process of the formation of moral principles. The study of moral experience is the representative of this philosophical turn. The word moral experience has multiple meanings, including internal psychological feelings, external language and behavior choices, practical life experience and normative demands. The reason for the rich definition of moral experience is that it involves not only the specific historical and cultural background, social experience and so on, but also the inner emotion and subject consciousness with strong subjectivity.

Moral experience includes both practical life experience and normative appeal. The dispute over the nature of moral experience itself reflects the long-standing moral debate between realism and anti-realism in the field of meta-ethics. In the view of anti-realism, realism does not provide the best explanation for moral experience. The antirealist attempts to abandon philosophical inquiry in favor of psychological or cultural theories to explain moral experience. There is no doubt that moral experience is mediated by psychological content, but the positivist thinking and practical logic cannot fully explain the moral representation in moral experience.

The philosophical approach to moral experience holds that it is not wrong to interpret moral experience in the way of ethical demonstration, but we should also turn moral experience into a meta-ethical problem at the second-order analytical level based on philosophical assumptions, so as to further normalize moral experience. These two approaches have their own scope of application, and there is no more fundamental and priority problem. In fact, the two should encourage and complement each other.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF MORALITY TO INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY

The core of moral psychology and moral philosophy are the good and evil of human nature, moral sentiment and reason, moral individuality and universality, moral cultural difference, moral value and experience. The study of morality is enduring because the explanation and theory of moral problems are the core problems in the spiritual world, public society, human behavior and culture. Whether for individuals or for society, the study of morality is always a hot spot that should be paid enough attention to both in theory and in reality.

III. RESEARCH ON MORAL EXPERIENCE

A. Psychological research on morality

Researches on morality in psychological field can be traced back to the constructivist psychology of Swiss psychologist Piaget, who believed that moral development is a transformation process from other-discipline to self-discipline, from objective responsibility to subjective responsibility.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, under the thinking of cognitivism, contemporary moral psychology has focused its research on moral judgment, and produced the theoretical paradigm of subjectivism, such as the theory of moral development by American moral psychologist Kohlberg. He put forward the theory of "The Child as a Moral Philosopher," in which there are three levels and six stages in the development of moral judgment. There are three levels, namely: pre-secular level, secular level and post-secular level. There are two stages in each level, six stages in all, namely: the orientation of punishment and obedience, the orientation of instrumentality relativism, the orientation of

interpersonal relations, the orientation of morality in maintaining authority or order, the orientation of social contract, and the orientation of universal moral principles

Since the 1990s, the market economy and globalization has brought on profound social changes, moral psychology researches, in response have evolved into diversified research perspectives, multidisciplinary approach, multicultural coexistence, and equal emphasis on sense and sensibilities, which we call Post-Kohlberg era. Moral psychology in the post-Kohlberg era focuses on the uncertainty of cultural differences, drawing on progresses of brain science, neuroscience, cognitive science and experimental philosophy, thus narrowing the gap between rationality and sensibility, and integrating the understanding of body and mind. A series of innovative researches have been made on the problems of "feeling and reason" such as moral emotion, moral situation and moral rationality.

B. Philosophical research on moral experience

After Kant's theory of moral self-discipline, Nietzsche's regarding of the individual will to life as the core of moral philosophy, Sartre's moral responsibility and moral choice of freedom, Heidegger's "thoughts of conscience", MacIntyre, a contemporary political philosopher, put forward the three characteristics of virtue in his *After Virtue*, they are: serving internal interests, benefiting the whole life, and serving the continuous pursuit of tradition. The change between MacIntyre's view of virtue and his moral code is linked to the social situation. The traditional moral structure revolves moral code around morality, while the modern moral structure revolves morality around moral code.

In essence, moral philosophy explores the metaphysical research foundation of morality from the perspective of philosophy. In this sense, it can be said that moral philosophy is the metaphysics of morality and the study of the general and universal principles of morality. Either from the empirical perspective or from the angle of essentialism, from highlighting the universality of moral principle, apriority, or from emphasizing moral principles of empirical, factual, the contradiction between the two always exist, the relationship between "is" and "should", the antagonism takes different forms in different times and situations.

IV. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MORAL EXPERIENCE

The theme of contemporary political philosophy is justice, which since ancient Greece has been regarded as a virtue (morality), just as temperance, courage and wisdom have been regarded as virtues.

One of the cores of justice lies in "due", which in the final analysis is the reasonable increase and decrease of rightful interests. On justice, a debate had been launched between an American political philosopher, Rawls, and another American philosopher, Nozick. Rawls' theory of justice is based on the social contract theories of Locke, Rousseau and Kant, supporting the moral value of western democratic society, opposing traditional utilitarianism.

Rawls thinks that justice is the main virtue of social system, just as truth is to ideology. Unjust laws and systems, however effective, should also be reformed and eliminated. Rawls also believes that justice is closely related to social cooperation, and points out that the principle of justice for the system and the principle of justice for the individual should be distinguished. Nozick tends to individualize interests and emphasizes the supremacy of freedom, and proposed that the two principles on which "due" is based are the principle of history and the principle of end-result (also known as the principle of immediate justice). The "social equality" advocated by Rawls actually enriches the system of Aristotle's justice theory; on the other hand, Nozick's insistence on "each in his proper place" is actually a modern development of Plato's idealistic justice theory.

In reality, if we want to evaluate whether the distribution system is just, we should not only examine what kind of distribution it embodies, but also take into consideration how this distribution occurs. Whether the rights and interests of individuals /the public are just or not, they all depend on the approval psychology of individuals and society. Therefore, at the junction of political philosophy and moral psychology, we can consider introducing the principle of identity psychology. Moral psychology plays a very positive role in eliminating injustice and is conducive to the formation of a realistic social distribution pattern in which "what we get is what we deserve". Every man's moral psychology determines his judgment of the relationship between "gain" and "deserve" : "this is what I deserve, that is what he deserves"; Emphasizing self - interests, exaggerating one's due (greed), choosing to sacrifice or give up a part of self - interests in a certain capacity (temperance); Even if the actual attribution is in place, some of the attribution is not necessarily balanced. Therefore, individual psychology should be satisfied, the state of mind will then be balanced, and the distribution of justice can be meaningful in reality.

V. CONCLUSION

As an externalized principle of moral psychology, the principle of voluntariness can circumvent the difference between Rawls and Nozick's theory of justice. Therefore, in a pluralistic society, the meaning of entitlement needs to adapt to the cognition and living condition of modern people and incorporate the consideration of "psychological entitlement".

REFERENCES

- [1] Lu Dongshuang. Psychological and philosophical approaches to moral experience [J]. *Guizhou social sciences*, 2019(01): 18-23
- [2] Wang Yunqiang, Guo Beny. Phenomenology of morality: origin, connotation and method[J]. *Ethical research*, 2018(02): 38-43.
- [3] Prilleltensky Isaac. Mattering at the Intersection of Psychology, Philosophy, and Politics [J]. *American journal of community psychology*, 2019.