

# Analysis on the Formation Mechanism of Young People's Moral Ideal

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## ABSTRACT

Moral ideal is an important part of young people's "ideals", and also an important content of ideal and belief education in colleges at all levels. However, it is not enough to demonstrate the importance of moral ideals. The key is to clarify the formation mechanism. The formation of young people's moral ideals is influenced by multiple factors. It originates from the psychological needs for being good, is based on a specific system and cultural environment, and also depends on the integration of internal elements and the connection of practice.

**Keywords:** Youth, Moral ideals, Formation, Path.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Moral ideal is an important part of young people's "ideal". The education of young people's ideal and belief must contain the moral ideal. Without the right values of life and the transmission of moral traditions, such ideal will not go far, even dangerous. However, this does not mean that the ideal of young people must have moral elements, or young people must pursue it as a kind of faith. There are significant differences between moral ideal and other kinds of ideals, including professional ideal and life ideal. In the utilitarian culture and market economy, it is very easy for young people to have a sense of scarcity and arouse their yearning and pursuit of future career and life. In fact, whether in absolute lack or in relative scarcity under the shaping of cultural concepts, young people have a desire to change and improve their material and working conditions both in university campuses and in society. However, the moral ideal is different from others. Morality refers to the social standardizations. Practicing moral ideal means transferring part of freedom and even losing some self-interest. At the same time, in the process of realizing professional ideal and life ideal, there are even conflicts and contradictions. And moral ideal is not completely consistent with that. This leads to a result that young people's ideals are often limited to utilitarian goals, and there are varying degrees of neglect of moral ideals, which has become a problem that needs to be solved in

practice and theory. There is no doubt about the importance of moral ideal to the growth of young people. It is of great significance to explore the formation mechanism of moral ideal in the formation process of perfect ideal personality of young people.

## 2. THE DEMAND FOR BEING GOOD IS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MOTIVATION FOR THE FORMATION OF MORAL IDEAL

Ideal is the transcendence and imagination of reality. It must be higher than and based on reality. If it is based entirely on reality or is identical with reality, there is no ideal. If this kind of imagination completely goes beyond itself or the realistic conditions of society, it is groundless fantasy, which will not be helpful to the change of reality. In the conventional knowledge teaching, it clarifies the distinction between ideal and reality, imagination and fantasy. However, it is easy for young people to think that "ideal is a good thing", and when they have setbacks and difficulties, they will face the dilemma of losing the ideal. At the same time, it cannot explain that some people are complacent, while others only care about the present. Of course, these problems also exist in the construction of young people's moral ideals. Ideal is the result of cognitive activities. For the formation

of moral ideal, it is necessary to find its psychological motivation.

"Morality" in the moral ideal belongs to the system of social standardization, and is also in the category of ideology. What kind of moral situation people perform or what kind of yearning for morality should be in a cognitive category. The "ideal" in moral ideal is the pursuit and yearning for the future. Although some people think that the ideal shows people's imagination, this imagination must be based on practice and reality, that is to say, ideal is the outline and planning of the future with realistic basis. Therefore, it can be attributed to a kind of rational understanding. Moral ideal is in a category of "understanding + cognition" or "subjectivity + subjectivity". Does it have a deeper psychological motivation? The answer is yes. Moral ideal comes from people's moral needs. Need is the motivation of people's cognition and behavior. With the need, there is the thinking of the object world and the behaviors of the subject stimulated by thinking. Needs can be divided into natural needs and social needs. The former is embodied in the field of nature and physiology, while the latter is the result of social and cultural functions. Moral needs obviously belong to social needs and are the product of the differentiation in the field of social relations at the moral level of institutional culture. The hierarchical differentiation in the field of morality is manifested in the moral differences and social identity differences of individuals and groups. This kind of difference is just like material, producing the difference of "rich and poor" and "supply" among people. Therefore, people have a sense of scarcity, and the psychological yearning and demand will be formed. Moral needs do not necessarily produce moral ideals. The moral stimulation of "evil" will lead to the decline of people's moral level. However, "people's moral behaviors come from pure rationality and good will" [1], only the moral needs towards "being good" will become the motivation of moral ideals.

### **3. SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENT IS THE EXTERNAL CONDITION OF MORAL IDEAL**

Human beings are the products of the environment, and the specific era and living environment will brand a deep mark on "people" of the group or the individual. The moral need to be "good" is the subjective condition for the formation of moral ideal, but the subjective ultimately comes from the objective, and the most profound source of

moral ideal comes from the specific environment. Specific environment generally refers to the material and cultural living conditions of the youth in a certain era. In addition to the background of the times, specific environment mainly covers the material and cultural conditions on which his production, life and study depend. Moral ideal is social, historical and realistic. What kind of social spiritual outlook young people expect, or what kind of person they want to become morally, depends on the environment in which they grow up.

A certain material and cultural living environment, mainly the institutional cultural environment, constitutes the objective conditions for the generation of moral ideals, and even the former plays a decisive role in the latter. John Dewey, an American educator, believes that "if a man is truly moral and rational, he can't do without education or just rely on his nature" [2]. Of course, education is an important part of the institutional cultural environment. The function of institutional culture on moral generation is reflected in the following aspects. First, the specific environment determines the formation content of moral ideal. Morality is a socialized standard system, which contains a wide range of contents. In different times, it advocates different contents or categories. Generally speaking, young people don't want to be moral perfectionists, but to become outstanding people in some moral categories. In other words, they attach more importance to certain moral categories and want to become people with these qualities. Young people may regard "diligence" as an important moral pursuit in their students' career, and "honesty" may become the moral requirement they value in the future. Although "diligence" and "honesty" are the basic moral principles, the environment determines the focus of attention in the shaping of young people's moral ideal. Second, the historical sociality of moral ideal is shaped by specific environment. The formation of moral ideal is in a certain social environment. Also, moral ideal reflects the mission and responsibility entrusted to young people by the times. In different times, there are different pursuit of moral ideal. "Loyalty, filial piety, chastity and righteousness" are the moral principles of Chinese feudal society. Loyalty and filial piety are recognized by the society and become the goals of people's moral pursuit. "Wisdom, courage, moderation and justice" are the moral appeal of ancient Greeks. Young people regard philosophers and warriors as idols. In the new and old democratic revolution, socialist transformation and construction, and the reform and

opening up in the new era, heroes, models and ideal figures with different styles were born in modern China, and they also became the ideal models of young people with strong moral appeal. Third, the specific environment has shaped the overall appearance of young people's moral ideal. Generally speaking, with the rising of history and the awakening of national consciousness and spirit, it is easy to inspire young people's devotion to the country, full of devotion, sacrifice and courage. And they are easily to be remembered by the later generations. In the declining period of history, young people are easy to fall into the dilemma because of the corresponding decline of culture.

The background and living conditions of an individual are of great importance to the formation of moral ideal, but in any case, the former cannot be an excuse for the decline of moral ideal. For young people, no matter what the situation is, the ideal is a beacon to light up the road ahead. Favorable conditions can provide young people with more stages and opportunities, show more beautiful youthful demeanor for the country and nation, and write a new chapter in the era of peace. However, the difficult situation or the difficulties encountered will test the individual's determination and courage. The strong will turn embarrassment into motivation and show more humanity and morality.

#### **4. THE INTEGRATION OF ELEMENTS IS AN IMPORTANT PREREQUISITE FOR THE FORMATION OF MORAL IDEAL**

Ideal and belief is the "calcium" of spirit. Ideal and belief education plays an important role in ideological and moral education. As mentioned above, in the current ideal education, the education of professional ideal and life ideal occupies a prominent position, while the moral ideal or the moral level of ideal can't be neglected. In fact, moral ideals are important to young people. In order to form moral ideal, it is necessary to grasp the organic integration of its inherent elements, otherwise, the ideal will easily become the imperfect and unhealthy ideal, or fall into the empty talk and preaching of morality, or evolve into a kind of ceremony and performance for the sake of morality.

Moral ideal can extract different elements from different standards. Viewing from the subject, ideals can be divided into individual ideal and social ideal. In fact, moral ideal is personal and

social. Individual and society constitute the two elements of moral ideal. The formation of moral ideal depends on the organic integration of individual and society. For individuals, the establishment and realization of ideals is a personal matter, but if the moral ideals have no social support or do not meet the moral expectations of the society, such moral ideals are unimaginable. Morality itself is the social norm system of social accumulation and identification. In this sense, the individual's moral ideal is also the social moral ideal, at least in line with the latter's expectation. According to Freud's theory, "self" is subject to the domination of "superego" at all times [3]. Of course, there are differences between the individual and the society. In the complex socialization process, based on the needs of personal cognition and self-development, the individual will also show a colorful personality in moral pursuit and present the "self" with personality. At the same time, with the guidance of the government, consensus propaganda or market behaviors, the behaviors of specific characters or events will form a new moral expectation for the whole society and affect the moral atmosphere of the society. In addition, an individual's moral ideal and practice will make virtue and good deeds popular, which will warm people's hearts and illuminate the society. The organic integration and positive interaction between the individual and the society eliminates the one-sidedness of the individual, sublets the "facial makeup" society, and makes the banner of moral ideal fly in the dreams of young people.

In addition, from the content structure, moral ideal can be divided into the elements such as life, occupation and politics, corresponding to people's life ideal, professional ideal and political ideal. Morality must be in different fields. Also, it must be reflected in people's words and deeds and in different fields of social life. Based on the needs of life and development, it is justifiable to establish the ideal of life and career for young people. On the one hand, moral ideals need to be reflected in life and career; on the other hand, they also escort the realization of life and career ideals. There is no doubt that moral ideal is compatible with the ideal of life, occupation and politics, that is to say, it is embedded in these fields in the form of core and soul. Therefore, there are "great ideological and political" ideas in young people's career and life education, and the shaping of moral ideal should be integrated into it, which is a complete and correct ideal education for young people.

## **5. PRACTICE IS THE ACTIVE CONDITION FOR THE FORMATION OF MORAL IDEAL**

"Practice" plays an important role in both Kant's philosophy and Marxist philosophy, and contains rich theoretical significance. In terms of scope, practice covers all fields of human activities including production, communication and scientific experiments. In terms of specific forms, practice is embodied in all kinds of specific activities for people's purposes. Practice is the starting point of people's cognitive activities and the key to understand the moral ideal. At the same time, it is found that moral ideal itself is practical and rational, and its origination, growth and realization cannot be separated from practice. Whether the realization process of moral ideal has reached the subject's expectation or not and whether it conforms to the social expectation or not depends on the practical expression of the ideal subject and its influence. For the formation of moral ideal, the significance is reflected in the following aspects.

First of all, practice promotes the formation of subject personality and creates subjective conditions for moral ideal. Viewing from the history of human development, it is necessary to introduce Engels' famous assertion that "labor creates man itself" [4]. Labor is the key factor in the transformation from ape to man. The formation of human beings is marked by the formation of subjective consciousness, which creates subjective conditions for the generation of ideals. At the same time, the assistance and communication based on labor must be carried out under certain norms and rules. These original rules and norms gradually evolved into the moral standards advocated and followed by the tribe and society, so that people began to have the moral yearning and pursuit. From the perspective of individual growth, abandoning the debate of "good nature" or "evil nature", everyone is like a white board at the ideological level. The surrounding environment and years of practice gradually make the human beings' consciousness social and information enrich. People will find the gap in growth and form moral ideal. Secondly, practice shapes the moral model and creates the object of pursuit for the moral ideal. In thousands of years of history, there are countless heroes who can be regarded as models of the world. As general secretary Xi Jinping said, "a hopeful nation cannot live without heroes, and a country cannot exist without pioneers" [5]. The moral ideal characters play an immeasurable role in promoting

social development. How does heroic model produce? It is not so much that the current situation has created heroes, but rather that the heroes' indomitable practices have created themselves and the society. Thirdly, practice is the bridge between subjectivity and reality, which enables moral ideal to acquire realistic character. Without practical basis, people can improve the ideological consciousness only through learning. However, without the training of life and practice, young people are easily at a loss when faced with the conflicts and the choice. Eventually, it will become a fantasy without the support of faith. The practice is material and objective, which makes moral ideal abandon empty imagination and completely idealized with youth's real life and social reality. Then, moral ideal can obtain materiality, objectivity and possibility. Only in this way can the young people realize the hardships and gains of "being good as you can" and make the pursuit of ideal personality become a persistent belief.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The formation of young people's moral ideal is a process in which contingency and necessity cross and multiple factors work together. It contains the unity of subjectivity and objectivity, the integration of internal factors and the connection with practice. The exploration of the formation mechanism of moral ideal refers to the study on "the great tradition of human moral ideal narration and moral spiritual practice" [6]. The path of the formation of youth moral ideal should be clarified, so as to guide young people "how to do". There are several corresponding ideas. First, young people should strengthen their understanding, enhance their perceptual and rational cognition, acquire "good" knowledge and information, establish the identification of "being good" in emotion, and form the psychological demand. Second, in the construction of system and culture, it is required to form an atmosphere of advocating heroes and moral models, guide the correct value orientation of young people, make the young people know whether they are honored or disgraced, and make the moral benchmark become the inner law and action guide. Third, it is necessary to guide the young people to correctly grasp the moral orientation and correctly resolve the ethical conflicts in the conflict between individual and society. At the same time, young people should pay attention to the balance and integration of life, professional ideal and moral ideal. Fourth, it is suggested to encourage moral practice and attach

importance to the actual actions and real life conditions of young people, so as to prevent moral education from falling into theoretical preaching or formalism.

### **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

This paper is independently completed by Song Zhang.

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