

On the Possibility of Moral Education

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Abstract—The purpose of this paper is to clarify the possibility of moral education, and to teach the majority of colleagues and experts and scholars. It is concluded that the possibility of moral education is mainly reflected in the following three aspects: the analysis of the characteristics of "humanity", "life" and "morality". The originality of this paper lies in answering the basic question of whether moral education is possible or not, making it clear that morality can be imparted to the educate through education, thus shaping the good moral consciousness and practice system of the educate. This will help us to further explore the root causes of the moral decline, and finally put forward practical and effective solutions.

Keywords—Moral education; Humanity; Life; Morality

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, complex and changeable, full of challenges and opportunities, when people enjoy the rich material produced in the process of modernization, they also increasingly feel the moral loss. During the period of social transformation, the spiritual and ideological crisis that broke out in the society gradually evolved into a serious social problem. At the same time, in spite of our hard work in moral education, there are countless publications devoted to moral education, teaching methods and techniques are constantly changing, but the effectiveness of moral education has been low. While people are asking where the "lost" and "wrong" of moral education are, they cannot help questioning the possibility of moral education. Can morality be imparted to educators through education, help shaping the good moral consciousness and practice system of the educated? Only by answering this basic question well, can we further inquire into the root causes of moral decline and put forward new solutions. This paper clarifies the possibility of moral education by analyzing the characteristics of "humanity", "life" and "morality".

II. AN ANALYSIS OF "HUMANITY": THE COEXISTENCE OF UNCERTAINTY AND NECESSITY

First, continuous generative. Locke said: "The human mind has no talent principle, and all reason and knowledge come from experience." [1] Dewey thought, "education is the continuous transformation and reorganization of children's experience, which makes children's instincts and desires grow." [2] The meaning of education "is to change human nature to form new ways of thinking, emotion, desire and

belief that are different from those of simple humanity. If humanity remains unchanged, we can only have training, not education." [3] Although modern psychology, pedagogy, and sociological theories do not directly answer the question of humanity's good and evil, many theories indicate that there is no moral consciousness and no original moral or moral endowments at birth, and modern science has not proved from genetics, anthropology and sociobiology that man has the biological basis of "innate moral endowment" and "humanity is good". The development of morality depends entirely on the acquired education and the influence of the environment. In the absence of innate moral endowments, the moral level of children always grows with the growth of age and knowledge, which, on the one hand, proves that acquired education is effective. Moral development is entirely within the scope of the material basis provided by genetic physiological mechanisms, determined by educational factors. For example, Colberg thinks that the moral quality of human beings is developed, the moral growth is shown in a certain order, and the sign of moral maturity is to be able to make correct moral judgment and form correct moral principles. With the development of cognition, there are three levels: pre-moral level, traditional moral behavior level and principled moral behavior level. The development of cognition is the result of education.

Second, multidimensional development. The continuous development of human also determines the possibility of human development to a certain extent and conditions. "Give me a dozen able-bodied children, and give me a special environment, and I can use special methods to change them at will, or to make them doctors, lawyers, artists, big merchants, or make them beggars and thieves." [4] This is not only an emphasis on the strength of education, but also an emphasis on the multidimensional development of human beings. This multidimensional development is embodied not only in human beings' ability to interact with all kinds of affairs and even all objects existing in the living environment, but also in the fact that human development is changeable through objectified activities. This variability embodies the "freedom", "openness" and "creativity" of human development. It is the foundation and premise of the education to constantly change and develop into an infinitely variable body in keeping with the times. The mission of education itself is also to cultivate a variety of unknown talents for the unknown and diverse world. There are many wonderful blueprints depicted by many educators, and many politicians, scientists, artists, educationists, workers, soldiers, even thieves and criminals emerge in different educational conditions. There are two stages of moral

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development, the stage of heteronomy moral behavior or compulsory moral behavior and the stage of autonomous moral behavior or cooperative moral behavior, they are also based on the development of psychological cognition, especially the development of moral judgment. Among them, physical maturity of children, psychological development and moral development of children with this dependent relationship also provides a possible and basis for moral education. It is the law of children's moral psychological development that allows educators to follow the rules and achieve the goal of cultivating morality.

Third, the need of morality. In real life, everyone has more or less the spiritual need to be a moral and a noble person. For this need, the traditional Chinese Confucianism calls it "the heart of saints"; On this point, Maslow called "meta-needs" is essentially the "divinity" and "spirituality" of human beings, and the cultivation virtue based on moral needs is in essence an important way to realize this transcendental need. Similarly, moral need is also a spiritual regulation of human beings as a rational social animal. As a man, the fundamental lies in its spirit of self desire and pursuit of the meaning of life, and spiritual life is a more true, better and more beautiful realm of life. It not only regulates life but guides life, and spiritual life is multi-level, its highest level is the search for ultimate value or spiritual home. Certainly, human can not be born with good morality, but they need the cultivation of moral education."Any characteristic of children and adolescents' moral structure comes from the need of internal motivation, and at the same time, any component of the moral norms of children and adolescents also comes from the need. "[5] This emphasizes that moral education is an inherent need of the moral subject. In this sense, moral need is the psychological drive for the individual to play the initiative in the moral life. Our moral education is based on the individual's moral needs, and takes the individual's moral needs as the starting point, motive force and main attribution of moral education. It is precisely because of the existence of individual moral needs that moral education becomes possible.

III. EXPLORING "LIFE": THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF BRAIN AND NERVE DEVELOPMENT

First, from the perspective of the prefrontal lobe function of the brain. Neuroethics studies show that moral cognition, emotion and behavior are directly related to the prefrontal lobe of the human cerebral cortex in terms of the location of the main brain regions. Because it enables people to effectively control themselves and understand others. In racial evolution, the prefrontal lobe of the brain, also known as the "brain in the brain," is the last developed neural structure. This is because all kinds of sensory information from the whole body and the activities of different parts of the central nervous system can be gathered in the front collar for final processing; activities throughout the body may also be affected or controlled by the prefrontal lobe. The prefrontal lobe of the brain is also directly related to people's moral beliefs and moral judgment. The prefrontal lobe of the brain is a unique neural structure, because of this neural connection, people can understand that the needs of others should be taken care of, willing to use their own knowledge to care for the

suffering of others. From this perspective, moral cognition, emotion and behavior are based on certain physiological structure. But because the prefrontal lobe is the newest and the most imperfect. If people often watch some bloody, violent and other anti-human scenes, can arouse the attention and excitement of the original brain and animal brain. The mechanism of the brain is part of the excitement, and the other part is inhibited. Therefore, the humanity side will be suppressed, which will greatly affect the brain development of minors, thereby affecting the formation of their normal personality. Therefore, the healthy education content is very important for the remodeling of the young brain and the formation of good personality.

Second, from the perspective of mirror neuron. Human's moral cognition, emotion and behavior are closely related to the mirror neuron system, because it is closely related to human's moral empathy. "there is a psychological phenomenon of empathy in moral sense, which refers to how people interact with each other in their emotions. Individuals can also experience uneasiness or positive emotions when they see others suffer or succeed.....Empathy is an important intermediary between self and moral behavior. "[6] The mirror neuron system is an important nerve basis for human to generate moral empathy. It gives human four kinds of imitation ability: direct imitation of external behavior; internal imitation of external behavior; a behavioral imitation of abstract stimuli such as symbols, figures, etc; internal simulation of abstract stimulus. Whether it's external behavior or abstract stimulus, if we want the imitation to be happen, we must have visual characteristics or intuition essence. In this way, we can make people get 'homogeneity' in the 'mental and psychological reactions', in order to get the feeling and understanding that 'people are with this heart and heart with this principle'."[7] This shows that abstract and simple preaching, indoctrination and punishment can not achieve the purpose of moral education, it only solves the problem of moral cognition, but it can not promote the occurrence of moral emotion and moral behavior. Only through situational education, let the educated be the main body of education and trigger their emotional experience, it will produce moral imitations. Of course, this feeling must reach a certain "threshold", and moral emotion can be transformed into moral behavior. The smaller the absolute threshold, the greater the intensity of the feeling of moral emotion, and the greater the possibility of moral behavior.

Third, from the perspective of the neuron development window. In the 1930s and 1940s, Swiss psychologist Piaget found that there was a critical period for children's moral and psychological development. Later, psychologists in China found that 7 to 9 years old is a critical period for children's moral cognition development. This is because the human brain is an electrochemical body, divided into the left and right brain, and billions of neurons constitute the most complex information network system in the world. Although genes have a decisive effect on brain structure, their structures are constantly developing until the end of puberty, and this process is strictly controlled by neuronal activity. Only in the unique time window of all kinds of neurons can the links between these neurons be strengthened more easily;

if some neurons are activated with a low probability of correlation, links between these neurons are likely to be deleted. If the development window of a certain type of neuron is closed, the neuron will no longer form a new link, and the existing links are no longer deleted. Since all activities in the cerebral cortex are carried out at the neuron level, the development of moral cognition, moral emotion, moral judgment and moral behavior is also affected by the level of neuron development. It is precisely because of the existence of time windows between neurons that the development of human moral development related brain regions and the formation of neural links also have a critical period. The process occurs only within the exact time window, and the time windows of different structures are different. This is the reason why the most vulnerable period of brain development is called the "critical period", and it is a good education to effectively optimize the way the brain neurons link.

IV. THE WAIT-AND-SEE OF "MORALITY": THE UNITY OF KNOWLEDGE LEARNING AND PERSONAL PRACTICE

First, morality is the inner and deep structure of knowledge. Moral knowledge belongs to ethical knowledge in humanities knowledge, mainly including the theoretical results of the social phenomenon of human cognition of morality. Such a way of classifying knowledge in disciplinary field can cause two kinds of misunderstanding: one kind of misunderstanding is that morality is knowledge, thinking moral education is to impart knowledge related to morality. This statement often takes the hypothesis of Socrates "virtue is knowledge" as the oldest and most powerful evidence, which is the source of moral education for a long time to teach "moral knowledge"; another misunderstanding is that in addition to moral knowledge, knowledge in other areas is not related to morality. As the result of human cognition, the ultimate goal of knowledge is to explain the human world and our human-self. Knowledge is the meaning of existence, it must occur when people connect knowledge with their lives. Therefore, the knowledge system itself, no matter how complete, does not have the independent significance, must return to the human's world, it is not only the life world of human beings, but all that has entered into the field of human thinking and concern, which has the significance of its existence. The ultimate meaning of knowledge is not for knowledge itself, but for existence, for the construction of a rich spiritual world of human and for the better existence of human in this world. This "better existence" refers not only to the great richness of the material world, but also to the independence, plentiful and tranquility of the spiritual world. The structure of moral and value meaning of knowledge is deeply embedded in the inner structure of the surface symbol of knowledge, is contained in the interpretation and description of the world by knowledge, and is the structure of the deepest level of knowledge. Morality is not a category of knowledge, but a deep structure of knowledge; Not only moral knowledge is related to morality, but all real knowledge has the intrinsic structure of morality and value meaning, which plays a guiding role in human behavior. Therefore, even if we look at only the knowledge related to nature in content, it will also affect people's world outlook and natural view. As Darwin's theory of biological evolution is about the

knowledge of biology and nature, but this knowledge leads us to reject the idea that man is created by God and accept the materialistic worldview, which is the world outlook behind it. And this kind of knowledge characteristic of morality, also explained the possibility of moral education.

Second, morality is the harvest of practice and recognition. "It is true that the teaching of natural science may be a form of technical exercise. If we take the knowledge of the world as the purpose in teaching, this will happen. However, this kind of natural science teaching method does not enable students to acquire culture, it does not prove that natural knowledge and humanist cause are antagonistic, but proves that the attitude of education is wrong." [8] It is the wrong view of education and the teaching mode guided by the plane and divided view of knowledge that lead to the "demoralization" of knowledge teaching. Therefore, the problem is not whether knowledge learning can reach moral significance, but how to learn knowledge to obtain the ethical characteristics of knowledge. The teaching of knowledge, which is based on instruction, is very easy to translate into a kind of teaching aimed at the study of knowledge. It pays close attention to the symbol, structure of knowledge and the explanatory and descriptive meaning of knowledge system itself, regarding the mastery of knowledge system as the ultimate goal of teaching, but forgetting the development of human beings. Dewey strongly opposes this "listening course", emphasizing experience, "learning by doing", giving students the opportunity to acquire ideas and knowledge in active homework that represents important social situations, and to test these ideas and knowledge. The purpose of this is to make the knowledge learning of educates intertwined with their real life, so that knowledge and knowledge learning can become the torch of life, not just the tool of test scores. In the field of moral education, there is "knowledge of virtue", which is a statement of "knowledge of recognition", which shows the acquired experience characteristics of moral experience of knowledge. It means the moral meaning of knowledge, can be realized and acquired only through one's own personal experience, so that knowledge and the world of the life of their own connection, can be realized and acquired." As a complex system, the cognition of the body must include the mind and the spirit, which is a very difficult understanding that requires the body to be connected to the spiritual god." [9] Only by connecting knowledge with the world in which people live, by returning the results of human cognition to the knowledge learning in the world of human life and reaching the deepest meaning structure of knowledge, can we obtain the deepest value and moral meaning of knowledge, and too achieve the ultimate goal of knowledge learning. The realization and practice of morality also explain the possibility of moral education.

V. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the question of how moral education is possible involves the natural gift of human beings. Kant believes that nature endows man with the natural gift of goodness, and that in human nature there is a tendency to be good, which is necessary for people to develop it through education so as to achieve the essential stipulation of human

beings. It is the bud of goodness in human nature that makes education possible. As a rational being, man is born with rational ability. People make great progress through education. The possibility of moral education can be seen from the continuous generative nature and the multidimensional development of the humanity and the humanity's need for morality; the possibility of moral education can be proved from the perspective of the study on the function of prefrontal lobe, study of mirror neuron and study on neuronal development window; the possibility of moral education can be understood from the deep knowledge characteristics of morality and the reaping of moral experience.

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