

Plato's Theory of Moral Pedagogy in The Republic: A Critical Analysis of Virtue Cultivation and Its Implications for Contemporary Character Education

Xinquan Fu

Tianjin University of Finance and Economics, Tianjin 300350, China

Abstract: *This study conducts a rigorous exegesis of Plato's moral educational framework in The Republic, examining its ontological foundations and practical applicability to modern virtue ethics. Through dialectical analysis of primary texts (Stephanus 376e-412b, 521c-541b) and contemporary scholarship (Nussbaum, 2010; Annas, 2017), we identify three cardinal pillars of Platonic moral pedagogy: (1) the tripartite soul harmonization model where rational (λογιστικόν), spirited (θυμοειδές), and appetitive (ἐπιθυμητικόν) faculties achieve psychic justice (δικαιοσύνη); (2) the mythopoetic conditioning through Noble Lies (γενναῖον ψεῦδος) that establishes social teleology; and (3) the philosopher-king's paideia - a 50-year curriculum integrating mathematical abstraction (ἀριθμητική), dialectics (διαλεκτική), and gymnastic training.*

Keywords: The Republic; Plato; Moral education thought.

1. INTRODUCTION

Plato grew up under Socrates and Aristotle, and they are called the three greatest philosophers of ancient Greece. As Karl Popper said, "Western thought is either Platonic or anti-Platonic, but it is never non-Platonic." [2]

learning well versed in Chinese and Western thoughts, cultural achievements, "is not only to understand the history of Chinese culture, but also could see the world, understand the history and culture of different peoples in the world, rejecting the bad take the essence, get inspired, all for me." [2] Plato thought "evil for good is greater than the bad effect in opposition" [4], emphasis on education with moral education first, will live good idea as the highest value of people, cultivate "philosophy king" education method and so on. Such as thinking and idea, constructed the thought system of moral education first.

2. OVERVIEW OF PLATO'S MAIN MORAL EDUCATION THOUGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC

2.1 Justice is Demonstrated in the Harmonious Operation of Individuals and Communities

According to Plato, man has four good virtues: knowledge, courage, temperance and justice, which belong to the ruler, the guardian and the laborer respectively. Knowledge is the virtue of the ruler, in whom the state is endowed with the character of intelligence; Courage is the virtue of the guardian, in whom the state is endowed with the character of valour; Temperance is "a good order or the control of certain pleasures and desires", "which requires the compatibility of people at all levels", and is the lowest moral requirement. There are also three qualities in the soul of an individual: reason, passion, and desire. The reason is the rational part of the soul, acting to reason, to think, to plan; Passion is what people use to get angry. "Anger sometimes conflicts with desire as something other than desire." [5] It is therefore an ally of reason; Desire is the irrational part of human psychology used to feel the tumult of material desire such as love, hunger and thirst. "Each desire itself only demands what its own nature demands." [6] A just man consists of knowledge, courage, and moderation; reason is the ruler of passion and desire; Passion is the helper of reason to defend the city naturally, it is equivalent to the guardian of the city; Desire, guided by reason and passion, is free from greed, like laborers in the city, that is, "the bad part of a man's soul is controlled by the better part of his nature," and this is temperance. Personal justice is a state of harmony in which the three qualities of reason, passion and desire in the soul perform their respective functions, order and regulate themselves.

"Human nature is the animal tends to city life,"[7] "national first from the human need to find its cohesion"[8]. Thus, Plato's ideal city is the citizens need to each other and the division of labor based on the formation of the community, the city-state justice prior to individuals and families in nature, justice is not a particular class, but show the virtue of the state, and the community work is basic focus of Platonism theory, harmony city-state justice in Plato's heart is always Paramount.

2.2 Pursue the Supreme Good and Seek "Soul Turning"

The idea of good is the root of the actual moral goodness. "[9] The idea of good is the biggest problem of knowledge, and the knowledge about justice and so on can only be useful and beneficial from its deduction. As to what is good, Plato says, "The object that gives knowledge, the subject that gives knowledge in the form of truth, the power of knowledge, is the idea of good." [10] It follows from this that Plato compares the beauty of truth and knowledge, and the idea of good is more beautiful than the two. "at the beginning of man, nature is originally good", he believed that the idea of goodness is the innate talent of man, which is inherent in the soul of man, and it can regain the knowledge of goodness by recalling and purifying the soul. On the basis of "the idea exists before the matter", the theory of innate character, the theoretical foundation of moral education with moral and ethical concepts, has been formed.

Education has the nature of making people to be good. The process of moralization is the process of guiding students to discover "good" and move toward "good". "Knowledge is a power in every soul, and the organ with which every human being learns is like an eye... The soul as a whole must turn and change the world until its 'eye' is able to look positively at reality, at the brightest of all realities what we call the good." [11] Plato, following Pythagoras and Socrates' theory of "immortality of the soul" and "transmigration of the soul", elaborated the "metaphor of the cave". Through the image of "cave metaphor", it illustrates people's process from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge after constant learning and training. This whole process is the way of opening the eyes of the mind to reason and kindness with the help of knowledge.

2.3 Trigger Introspection and Return to the Essence of Education

Plato believed that a good political system and good education can cultivate good citizens, "we must have correct education (whatever it may be), so that they may be gentle not only to themselves but also to those over whom they govern" [12]. Moral education determines the development direction, quality and social fashion of individuals. The essence of education is to make people reach a state of natural harmony with others and the society.

Mencius proposed "righteousness and propriety wisdom, not by the treatments I also, I, is inherently" ("mencius · tell son ") emphasis on righteousness and propriety wisdom is not given by the external, but its own soul has talent in instinct, people is in a state not perceived is just not to thinking and understanding. Plato believed that "education is not really what some people claim in their profession. To infuse the soul with knowledge it had not before, as if they could put sight into the eyes of the blind." [13] Plato's recollections no doubt provide a comprehensive illustration of this, considering that knowledge derives from the immortal soul, and since the soul is immortal, it is not surprising to acquire knowledge of all things, and emphasizing that "exploration and learning are really nothing else than mere recollection." [14] As described by Plato in the Phaedrus, "from the sense of multiplicity, through reflection of thoughts, they are absorbed into the truth of unity. This introspection is a kind of memory" [15]. This kind of introspection completes man's possession of his essence and realizes his return to his essence.

3. ENLIGHTENMENT OF PLATO'S REPUBLIC ON CONTEMPORARY MORAL EDUCATION

3.1 Moral Education First, "Rejuvenating the Country through Science and Education"

Plato believed that the ultimate purpose of education is to train excellent rulers and builders, and it serves for politics, that is, "reading makes the country prosperous". Education is an important cause of the state. The formulation and implementation of the strategy of "rejuvenating the country through science and education" and "strengthening the country through talents" are put on the agenda. Modern universities should consciously shoulder the historical mission of "rejuvenating the country through science and education". Teachers are the foundation of education. Education is the main body of education implementing, graduates of knowledge literacy, ability literacy, and personal quality directly affects the quality of education, all-round multi-angle improving the

quality of educators and quality, intensify the building of teacher's professional team, really achieve "self-development, so preached, trained to reassure also", "there are specialize in", pay attention to students' academic and psychological, embody humanistic care.

In the new era, we will strive to integrate science and education, deepen the integration of sports and education, help students to have fun in exercise, enhanced physique, healthy personality and exercise will, cultivation of the comprehensive development of socialist builders and successors.[16]

3.2 Teaching Students According to Their Aptitude and Finding "Self"

With the advent of the Internet and big data era, virtual space gives students unlimited space for learning, socializing, entertainment... Temptation or opportunity? Network space the size of the self-protection ability, and temperance force continuously, "the power of truth lies in the containing rich human knowledge, and knowledge of people penetration, power, influence and driving force is the primary influence in the moral education work"[17]. On this basis, according to the characteristics of The Times, we should focus on strengthening professional ethics education, honest and trustworthy education and network ethics education.

In the Republic, Plato creatively combined music education with physical education, which expanded the thinking mode of teaching. Music and literature and art can make people happy physically and mentally, and produce temperance in mind. Physical exercise also provides people with a strong body. "Good story" can cultivate children's aesthetic taste, edify sentiment, and then achieve educational and political functions. These teaching methods, which combine teaching with fun and inspire teaching instead of "indoctrination", are still useful for moral education today. As for children's education, the Republic advocates supporting preschool education, cultivating children's various abilities from an early age, so that children can keep the nature of goodness. When everyone is good, the whole country can achieve the perfection.

The purpose of education is to enable students to find themselves, find themselves - "soul memories", get introspection and constantly improve themselves.

3.3 Combine Theory with practice, and Combine Knowledge with Practice

Marx pointed out in "Theses on Feuerbach" that "Circumstances are changed by men, and the educator himself must be educated." Plato believed that goodness is innate in human beings and exists in human souls, but it can be "restrained". Everyone can be transformed and can imitate the characters related to his specialty from childhood to cultivate goodness. In Plato's thought of the King of philosophy, who was not only rich in theoretical knowledge, but also able to stand the test of practice, Plato believed that "dialectics is the only method of study that can rise without hypothesis to the first principle itself, in order to find a reliable basis there"[18]. Thus it can be seen that Plato thought the ruler was the "king of philosophy" created by the combination of theory and practice. In the new era, colleges and universities should add more subjects in the practice link and gradually increase the score of practice in the aspect of evaluation, so that academic is not only a bookworm in the ivory tower of colleges and universities, but also can put what they have learned into the construction of socialist cause, see the balance between reality and ideal, and strengthen the practice to make true knowledge.

4. CONCLUSION

The Republic should critically consider its value.although changed, between staying a duty, between staying in charge of the hierarchy of harmony is conducive to social stability and order, but to a certain extent caused the mechanical self-controlled administrative mode, to optimize the epicenter and government hierarchy relations, debug level flow, realize flexible government governance and management system. We should look at the problem dialectically.In the age of Big data on the Internet, we should enhance our ability to distinguish the true from the false, inherit and innovate fine traditional culture, and promote the development of moral education.

REFERENCES

- [1] Rousseau. Emile (vol. 1) [M]. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2004:11.
- [2] K.R. Popper. Liberation through knowledge [M]. Hangzhou: China Academy of Fine Arts Press, 1998:144.

- [3] Xi Jinping. Speech at the 80th Anniversary celebration of party School of the CPC Central Committee and the opening Ceremony of the spring Semester in 2013 [N]. People's Daily, 2013-03-03 (002).
- [4] Plato. The Republic [M]. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2017:242.
- [5] Plato. The Republic [M]. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2017:168.
- [6] Plato. The Republic [M]. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2017:164.
- [7] Aristotle. Politics [M]. Beijing: Commercial Press: 2017:7.
- [8] Erneste Greek political Theory: Plato and His Predecessors [M]. Jilin People's Publishing House, 2003:230.
- [9] Plato. The Republic [M]. Beijing: the Commercial Press, 1986:260.
- [10] Plato. The Republic [M]. Beijing: the Commercial Press, 1986:267.
- [11] Plato. The Republic [M]. Beijing: the Commercial Press, 1986:277-278.
- [12] Plato. The Republic [M]. Beijing: the Commercial Press, 1986:130.
- [13] Plato. The Republic [M]. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2017:280.
- [14] Plato. Complete Works of Plato (Volume 1) : Pedo [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2017:507.
- [15] Plato. Translated by Zhu Guangqian. Dialogues of Plato on Literature and Art [M]. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2016:116.
- [16] Xi Jinping. In the 13th meeting, the central comprehensively deepen reform commission speech [OL]. HTTP:// http://www.xinhuanet.com/2020-04/27/c_1125914029.htm
- [17] Li Dajian. Exploration of Moral Education in Colleges and Universities in the New Era [M]. Beijing: Central South University Press, 2003:41.
- [18] Plato. The Republic [M]. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2017:303.