

Research on Wang Yangmings Theory of Good and Evil in Mind

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Abstract: The first two sentences in Wang Yangming's four-sentence teaching point out the possible dimensions of the existence of good and evil and the place where good and evil unfold. As a value judgment, the source of good and evil lies in meaning, which has two levels, one is the original sincerity, and the other is the private intention processed by the subject. The good and evil in the empirical world is from the level of private intention. Evil is not substantive. In terms of its content, it can be divided into two categories: natural evil and moral evil. Moral evil is manifested in the relativity of phenomena, the value regulation of phenomena, and the obstruction of ontology. Wang Yangming emphasizes overcoming the evil of morality with sincerity and standing up for the morality of the subject.

1. Introduction

The theory of good nature is an important theory in Confucian philosophy since Mencius. Under the premise of the goodness of human nature, philosophers are overly optimistic about the good side of human nature, and fail to pay attention to all kinds of negative ugliness in human nature. However, there are sporadic discussions within Confucianism on why there is evil in the world. The philosophy of good and evil is an urgent problem to be solved in Wang Yangming's theory of mind.

2. The source of evil

There have always been different understandings of Wang Yangming's four-sentence doctrine. The core issue of the debate is how the noumenon of the heart without good and evil can logically lead to the movement of good and evil?

2.1 The noumenon of the heart: the possible direction of the development of good and evil

On the whole, the noumenon of heart without good and evil contains three aspects:

Although noumenon emphasizes body when used together, it contains the word essence, which has the meaning of origin and growth. It is the perfect state of the entity, including body and function, movement and stillness, launched and unlaunched.^[1] In short, body is not launched, and body is both launched and unlaunched.

Nothingness is intended to explain the relative appearance of good and evil, not falling into the

opposition of good and evil.^[2] The noumenon of such a mind is that natural things are innocent, neither good nor evil.^[3] It is a natural state that cannot be referred to in any name, so it highlights the purity of the original heart with nothing.

Good and evil refer to the specific appearance of good and evil at the ethical level. Most of the academic circles use the highest good to explain no good and no evil, or take the no good and no evil as the highest good, or take the highest good as the no good and no evil. However, supreme good is the description and description of the entity, and supreme good cannot be equated with the noumenon of the mind.

Although the noumenon of heart provides the basis for people to achieve morality and become sages, it does not directly produce good and evil. The noumenon of heart stipulates a dimension of possibility, but does not show the ready-made form of subject development, that is, to be good does not mean to be good.^[4]

2.2 Action: the place where good and evil unfolds

From the structure of "unlaunched-launched," "meaning" contains two levels: one is the original meaning, that is, "sincerity "; the second is the meaning of obstruction, that is, private or intentional. The difference between the two is whether unity of knowledge and action. "Sincerity" is the spontaneous noumenon of the heart, which is carried out with the situation and is not persistent. Private or deliberate is obsessed with the situation, knowledge and behavior do not match.

From the level of sincerity, Yi is the direct launch of the noumenon, which is in line with the noumenon, so Yi has the characteristics of lively and free noumenon. The " meaning " of freedom should have two conditions : first, the " meaning " of freedom cannot be predetermined, that is, it cannot be determined by the ontology ; second, the " meaning " of freedom must be a decision made by the subject of " I, " which also shows that the content of " meaning " is special with different subjects.^[5]

The evil under the level of sincerity is not true evil, but the true expression of conscience ontology.

Private and sincerity are a kind of meaning. Sincerity is launched with different circumstances, when we think it is right, naturally it is done at the same time. Private will is added to the concept of purpose and stubbornness. Wang Yangming believes that the emergence of private will is caused by the separation of knowledge and practice. The reason why the empirical world is difficult to cultivate good and evil is due to the interference of private will, so. The effort to eliminate evil for good is to be removed from the source of selfishness.

3. Classification of Evil

In Wang Yangming's exposition, evil can be divided into two categories, one is natural evil; one is the evil of morality.

3.1 Natural evil

The evil of nature is the loss caused by natural phenomena to the subject. In the face of nature, human behavior is so small that when natural phenomena swallow up human production achievements, human beings are powerless. Therefore, the subject determines that the loss or pain caused by natural phenomena is evil.

3.2 The evil of morality

The evil of morality is mainly manifested in two aspects: one is intentionally evil; the second is hypocrisy.

Intentional evil is that the subject has realized that evil may occur and tolerates it. Wang Yangming's said that evil is selfish desire and human desire, which exists in the relationship between people and people, and thus points to the evil at the moral level.

Hypocrisy refers to the use of good deeds to disguise evil thoughts. In Wang Yangming's view, it is manifested as false benevolence and false righteousness.

4. The essence of evil

To clarify the context of Wang Yangming's theory of good and evil, it is necessary to solve the problem of what evil is. The essence of evil is reflected in three aspects:

4.1 Qi is not equal to evil.

Wang Yangming found the basis of qi for good and evil, but the problem is how to explain the two sides of qi? Why does this experience make room for the "evil" of "Qi" in human nature? Qi and heart exist as relative categories. We cannot definitely judge that evil must come from qi, and will naturally attribute evil to heart in turn. Wang Yangming's discussion of evil also starts from the internal structure of heart.

4.2 Evil is the alienation of good

Confucianism has always attached importance to the middle way. Then neutralization is good, and all deviations from neutralization are naturally considered to be evil. There are two main cases of this deviation: beyond or insufficient.

4.2.1 Evil is the endless mind.

According to the requirements of Wang Yangming's thought, people's emotions about external things should be changed over time, so as not to make these emotions tired and maintain a good psychological state.

4.2.2 Evil is the absence of ontology.

The discussion of evil by the medieval thinker Augustine affects the development of Western thought. Through Augustine's theory of evil, we can help us grasp the essence of evil in Wang Yangming's thought.

Augustine believes that evil is the lack of good. All things come from the creation of God, so it is inevitable. At the same time, everything created by God is also good. But the problem is that God does not create evil, so where does evil come from? Augustine opposes the dualism of good and evil by pointing out that evil is not an entity. In Wang Yangming's thought, good and evil are not entities. Why should we deny the substantive nature of evil? If we recognize the substantive nature of evil, we fundamentally recognize the necessity of the existence of evil in reality, then eliminating evil has become a completely insurmountable thing, which Wang Yangming cannot agree with. Augustine continues to explain what is the lack of good. Physical health is a kind of good, and a person suffering from disease, physical injury is the lack of health, that is, the lack of good. When the disease is removed, the body returns to health, and the state of lack returns to the state of good,

but it is by no means to transfer the disease to other places. In short, disease is the lack of goodness and is not independent.

4.3 Good and evil homologous

From the perspective of the phenomenon, good and evil are indeed incompatible like water and fire, so Wang Yangming's students will raise such questions. However, the one thing referred to by Wang Yangming is not the specific thing at the physical level, but refers to the noumenon. From the logical pursuit, the source of good and evil in the empirical level lies in the ontology of the heart, and the root of good and evil is the same. Both Mencius theory of good nature and Xunzi's theory of evil nature are explanations of the homology of good and evil, but they have different perspectives.

5. Evil performance

5.1 The relativity of the phenomenon

For example, compared with the finiteness and infinity of time, extension and quantity, the subject shows fear or worry about limited things, and then he will make a bad judgment on limited things. Everything follows the development of natural nature. Spring, summer, autumn and winter, wind and rain, thunder and lightning, cold and heat are all natural and popular, but drought leads to crop reduction and land cracking, so people express a strong desire for rain. Drought and rain are all natural revelations. People are powerless, but they show concern or fear about the appearance of yield reduction and cracking. This negative emotion is considered to be evil.

5.2 Values of Phenomena

Wang Yangming believes that it is not to deny the objective reality of matter, but to point out that things can only highlight their value when they are in relationship with the subject. When the subject is related to things, it will inevitably produce the value judgment of things. The object without the subject's value participation can only exist in logic. When the subject is related to things, the subject will judge the good and evil of things according to the effect of things on himself. This judgment is to judge the value of things. The value judgment of things is not fixed, but changes according to the different needs of the subject.

5.3 Obstacles to Noumenon

The relativity of the phenomenon can lead to the subject's value judgment of the phenomenon, and the finiteness of the phenomenon limits the perfect free conscience ontology. Conscience is lively and free in the process of "clarifying virtue," but the ontology of conscience must be related to phenomena, otherwise it will become a mysterious ontology that cannot be understood and described, and the finiteness of phenomena hinders the infinity and freedom of ontology.

The mind is only one. On the one hand, the mind takes reason as the content, obtains the congenital and universal necessity, and becomes the development of the ontology. On the other hand, the mind is also connected with perceptual existence. The ear, eye, mouth and nose are separated from the heart and cannot be seen and heard. Similarly, if the heart wants to see and hear, it needs the perceptual existence of the ear, eye, mouth and nose. Under the influence of value judgment, the subject will choose to seek advantages and avoid disadvantages. Why do we choose good rather than evil has become a self-evident proposition. It is impossible for us to regard the

noumenon as evil, which is to deny the existence meaning of the noumenon, thus endangering the rationality of the existence of things. If the subject is evil, it should not exist. We can eliminate it, and things lose the basis of existence and no longer exist. Therefore, it is impossible for us to make a value judgment of evil on the ontology. The only choice is that we can only take the ontology as good, and the shackles of the ontology of good are naturally evil.

6. Conclusion

Wang Yangming emphasizes that the standard of judging good and evil is in the heart of human beings, not in the words of saints. It is precisely to put the authority of the saints under the authority of the people's hearts, to internalize the Confucian moral ethics in the heart, and to carry out the truth from the people's hearts into things through the realization of conscience. This is of ideological emancipation significance for criticizing the old tradition and affirming the subjective value and subjective initiative of human beings.

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