

Analysis of Plato's "Concept of Good"

Pengfei Wang

School of Marxism of Tianjin University of Business, Tianjin, China

Abstract

The core concept of Plato's philosophy is "concept", and his philosophy is therefore called "concept" theory. In "ideal", Plato in order to illustrate the concept of "good" in turn used the famous metaphor, line metaphor and cave metaphor, let us have a deeper understanding of the concept of "good", which not only for Plato ideal city states has great significance, also to our social construction.

Keywords

Plato; Japanese metaphor; Line metaphor and cave metaphor; The concept of good.

1. Introduction

Plato confirmed the "concept of good" as the highest principle of the world, is the fundamental of everything, it makes everything to obtain the reality and essence, and is also the fundamental motivation and ultimate goal of the pursuit of everything. In order to explain the concept of good, Plato has a solar metaphor in the Republic, which opens the curtain of a systematic discussion on the concept of goodness and reveals the essence of the concept of goodness. Then the use of line metaphor and cave metaphor, let us have a deeper understanding of the concept of "good".

2. An overview of the "Daily Metaphor, Line Metaphor, and Cave Metaphor"

2.1. The Connotation of "Daily Metaphor"

Plato explains the question of ideas in volume 6 using the Sun as analogies for the dialogue between Gracan and Socrates. Plato said in a mysterious tone that about the idea of "good", "I find it too hard to explain what I understand now." [1] He refused to make a direct discussion of the concept of "good", but only used the metaphor of the "good", by the "good son" to ponder and explain the "good", this metaphor is the "daily metaphor".

He pointed out: "The human soul is like an eye. When it looks at the objects illuminated by truth and truth, it is able to know these things, and understand them, obviously with wisdom. But when it turned to the dim world, it became blurred, only variable opinions, as if something without wisdom..... Now I can tell you that this thing that gives the object of knowledge the truth and the subject of knowledge is the idea of good. It is the cause of knowledge and truth. Truth and knowledge are good things, but it is the better thing. Although you may regard it as the object of knowledge, but it is appropriate to regard it as something above truth and knowledge. The "goodness" is of higher value and honor ". [2] This is Plato's interpretation of the idea of "good" in the original text.

According to the above description, we can understand that "good" is the "sun" of knowing the world. Plato compared the idea of "good" to the sun in the visible world ", believing that the sun is the son of the " good "in the" visible world ". Specifically, our eyes to be able to see the object, must have three conditions, namely "eyes, light, visual object", eyes have to have the ability to see, object to see the attributes, more important is to have light, no light irradiation even the brightest eyes are dark, even the most dazzling gems to disappear dark, and the light comes from the sun. Therefore, the sun is both the reason why the eye can see and the object can be

seen, which is most like "good". In the visible world, the soul is "eye", and truth and existence are "sunshine". To the eye of the soul, it must have three conditions, namely, "the reason, the truth, the light of existence and the knowing object in the soul". In the "visible world", the sun is not only the cause of vision, but also feeds the growth of everything, and is the cause of its existence. Similarly, in "knowing the world", "the concept of good" is the sun. Only when the object can become the concept through the light of the "truth" of "good". Only the eye of the soul can observe the concept when looking at the visible object of the light of the truth. So, in this sense, "good" is perfection itself, the reason for all other ideas. Other ideas are the concept of "sharing" and "good" that becomes perfect. As long as any concept keeps looking back up, you can see good ". In other words, the conceptual world is derived from the visible world, and good concepts deduce and derive other concepts, and make them gain the essence and reality, and then realize all concrete things, thus becoming the fundamental driving force of world creation and the ultimate goal of all things pursued.

2.2. The Connotation of "Line Metaphor"

Plato introduced the concept of "good" after the solar metaphor, and the line metaphor further discussed the concept of "good". The line metaphor more clearly divides two worlds and four fields, divides the fields of knowledge, and reveals the epistemological connotation of the concept of "good" from a different perspective from the solar metaphor. In the fifth volume, when explaining the philosopher, it says that knowledge is complete, ignorance is nothing, namely zero, and opinion is between ignorance and knowledge, so the ratio between opinion and knowledge is two to one. Because the visible world corresponds to opinion, know the world and knowledge corresponds, so the line metaphor is a line segment according to the ratio into two parts, the first part for the visible world, the visible world, the visible world is the world copy, and the world is the prototype of the visible world, so the world is more real than the visible world. It can be seen that the world and the visible world are divided into two parts in a ratio of one to two: the first part of the visible world is the image, It is the shadow of sensible things, For example, a reflection in the water, The image is the least true, Is a facsimile of sensible things, Corresponding to this part is the imaginative power of the soul, Truth and reality are the lowest, Because imagination does not have the ability to distinguish between the images and things, It is not clear that images are only a facsimile of things, And things are the image, So I don't know that things are more real than images; The second part of the visible world is the sensible thing, It is the specific things that we see, It is the original part of the image, More real than the image, The ability of the soul corresponding to this part is the belief, Truth and realism are higher than in Part 1, Because faith can distinguish between images and specific things, But I don't understand why they are different.

The first part of the knowledge of the world is mathematical objects, such as geometry and arithmetic mathematics, which use the sensible things of the visible world as the prototype of the second part of the visible world, thus a higher reality, corresponding to the intellectual ability of the soul; the second part of the world is the idea of "good", the highest form of understanding, the second part, the concept of the visible world, with the most complete truth and reality. [3] Line metaphor is the classification of knowledge according to the process of understanding, which reveals that the true degree of knowledge from the first level to the fourth level increases in order. The concept of "good" is the highest level that people desperately pursue, and it is the most complete concept of authenticity and reality.

2.3. The Connotation of the "Cave Metaphor"

The cave metaphor depicts the path to the good. In Plato's "cave metaphor", described is a group of prisoners generations chain in the cave, can't turn back or look around, only look at the scene on the wall, they can only see by the fire behind the wall shaking shadow, but they don't know the cause of these images, over time, they see these images as real things. One day one of the

prisoners broke free of the chain, turned around and found the cause of the shadow in the cave wall, and realized that the shadow they saw was just a phantom. He went to the mouth of the hole, found the vast world and colorful things outside the hole, but because the sun was so strong that his eyes felt painful, he could only look at the shadows and the reflection of the water, slowly adapt to the things around, and finally can look back to the sun. When he understood that all of these real things was due to the light of the sun, he decided to return to the cave and tell the truth to the other prisoners. But the action paid for only partnership attacks by other prisoners, and everyone even believed that his eyes had been damaged. The process of the prisoner walking out of the cave to discover the truth and then returning to the cave is a painful process.

This part points out that the acquisition of truth requires a process of understanding from the bondage of opinion, and a difficult habit process for the soul to escape the visible world to the visible world. Plato thinks the soul itself has the ability to know knowledge, but need a soul turn, soul first see concept image, and then turn to the concept itself, finally get the concept of "good", see the concept of "good" the process is a process of hard work, rather than simply instill knowledge into the soul, the soul turned to admit the soul inherent ability of knowledge. Here is another theory, another metaphor, and then describe the idea of "good" from another perspective. Plato uses this metaphor to illustrate the process of soul turning, which obtains the general understanding of truth and finally grasp the idea of good.

Plato doubles the world here. He compared the "cave" to the "visible world", the world composed of visible individual things, the "outside world" to the "visible world", the world composed of ideas, and the sun to the highest "good". The prisoner had always thought that the shadow he saw in the cave was the real world, but it was not until he was pulled out of the cave and even forced to look at the sun that he knew that everything in the cave was only illusory, and that the shadows came from the sun, and that the sun was the real existence. The prisoners live in the "visible world", from "visible world" to "the world", if there is no guidance of others, then the transformation may never happen, from the beginning can not look at the sun can only see the reflection in the water, to the sun, the process from the visible phenomenon of the world to the world, the concept of the process is realized, from the soul to the hole, from the water to the outside world, this step by step to make the prisoner finally realize the concept world.

3. The Concept and Justice of "Good"

To sum up, from the ontological concept of good, Plato divides the world into sensible and knowable worlds. The two worlds are in absolute opposition, and they are equally objective. The sensible world belongs to the knowable world, and it is derived from the knowable world, the former is a copy, the latter is the original. In Plato's famous "solar metaphor", the sun is the most sensible existence in the world, while the concept of goodness is the highest existence in the world. At the same time, Plato compared the "idea of good" to the sun, believing that just as the sun shines on all things and gives vision to mankind, the idea of good gives the ability to recognize and the object of knowledge. Plato finally concluded that "good" is not knowledge and truth, but " has a higher honor and value than them. " " Good is not existence, but above existence, with more dignity and more powerful than existence. "

From the perspective of epistemology, Plato, in order to divide the world into the sensible world and the knowing world, Plato divided knowledge into two categories: opinion and knowledge. In Plato's philosophy, knowledge is the real existence, and the "opinion", relative to the non-real existence of ignorance, is in the position between existence and nonexistence, clearer than ignorance and more ambiguous than knowledge. In addition, Plato believes that the conceptual world and the rational world are far higher than the perceptual world and perceptual understanding in both truth and authenticity. He also believes that the concept of

good is in the highest place of epistemology, believing that only the concept of acquiring good can obtain the highest knowledge, that is, truth.

Plato has carefully built a grand world of ideas, but his ambition is not just in the concept world. Although the "visible world" is the constantly changing world and the "projection" of the "visible world", Plato still wants the "visible world" to be more realistic and more reasonable; although the eye of the soul cannot see the whole concept of "good", he can see the "justice", "wisdom", "courage" and "self-control" can be illuminated by the light of truth. At the same time, "justice" is higher than "wisdom", "courage" and "self-control", which is closer to the concept of "good". [4]

Therefore, although the concept of "good" is the highest and final principle and the highest pursuit of the whole world, from Plato's point of view, "justice" is the most realistic and achievable pursuit in the human world. "This characteristic of good" makes the soul cannot exhaust the essence of "good", but "real" — exists in the form of flesh, always live in the changing "visible world", and for a dislike of rule, desire peace Plato, he wants "feeling world" can be closer to the "know world", can be more real, more reasonable. It is of course beautiful to build a "sensible world" according to the concept of "good", but this beautiful society is just an ideal society that can never be realized, because no one can observe the full "good". Therefore, Plato could only take the second place, hoping to establish a reasonable and orderly "sensible world" by observing the concept of "justice" closer to "good". For Plato, "justice" is the most realistic and likely pursuit in the human world.

4. Plato's Concept of "Good" Is Contemporary Enlightenment to China's Social Construction

The idea of "good" is proposed to lay the foundation for the establishment of the "just city-state", but also promotes the concept of pursuing the perfect good. It is not only of great significance to the political construction of the Plato era, but also of reference to today's Chinese social construction. Although it is difficult to leap from the "cave" to the "outside the cave", it also shows that the pursuit of truth is full of bumpy and rugged road. People should not be immersed in the illusory world, but should seek a more real world outside the illusory world. The prisoner in the "cave metaphor" walks out of the cave and goes to the world outside the cave, which is the process of getting rid of the shackles and troubles of the phenomenon and moving towards the pursuit of goodness. Plato believes that only mastered the concept of "good" to the philosopher good governance, because in the "metaphor", out of the trouble of the free man is a philosopher, only the philosopher can get out of trouble and realize the concept of good, the philosopher has wisdom, is the most just, he knows what is "good", what is "bad", how to achieve justice. As long as philosophers gain political power and combine power with wisdom, they can better govern the country, and contribute to the establishment of just city-states and the stability and harmony of society. [5] Plato designed an ideal city-state country according to the concept of justice, and it is also a concept of "kingdom" taken and photographed by the highest concept of "good".

4.1. The Concept of Goodness Helps Us to Establish Correct Values

Plato sees the idea of good as a source of knowledge and truth, and as a being above all else. Plato believes that the philosophical task is to grasp the essence and internal order of the conceptual world with thinking. After Socrates, Greek philosophy shifted its focus from nature to man itself, so it raised values such as moral orientation related to good and evil to philosophical themes. And Plato inherited the ideas of his teacher, Socrates, so his philosophy was originally designed to promote good, and goodness was its ultimate goal. In today's socialist market economy, although our country's economy has developed rapidly, but in such a social

background, often easy to make people one-sided pursuit of money and wealth, easy to make people desire, distort people's values, breeding bad values, such as see the old man fall indifference, etc. These phenomena appear because the values of Chinese people today are not correctly guided, which is distorted. Studying and exploring Plato's concept of good can help our people distinguish good and evil, distinguish right and wrong, improve their own personality cultivation; help us cultivate correct values and establish correct values; help awaken "good" in human nature and create a good social atmosphere.

4.2. Help to Promote the Harmonious Development of the Society

Plato's idea of good can be said to be the starting point of human society, which inherently reconstruct the concept of interpersonal relations and social system of legitimacy. As the highest concept, the concept of goodness is not a strong external binding force, but it has a general sense of normative significance. When this concept of goodness becomes an important element in the national order, when this concept of goodness becomes the significance of Chinese people's action, the concept of goodness will play a normative role in improving the social relations between people, so as to establish an orderly and friendly society. At present, our economic and political reform is constantly advancing and deepening. On the one hand, the contradictions and disadvantages of the transition period are increasingly exposed. On the other hand, the people awaken their democratic awareness, their own rights and interests and their awareness of attention to the development of social development. In such a period, to fully highlight rationality, people need to think about social problems from a rational perspective, to avoid the upsurge and flood of public emotions. For individuals, to pursue the virtues of goodness in our personal life, we should restrain ourselves with higher moral standards, start from me, and form a good atmosphere of advocating rationality and pursuing goodness in the whole society.

References

- [1] and Plato. *Utopia* [M]. Guo Binhe, Zhang Zhuming translation. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1986, 506d.
- [2] and Plato. *Utopia* [M]. Guo Binhe, Zhang Zhuming translation. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1986, 507d.
- [3] Zhu Xuewei. On the triple connotation of Plato's concept of "Good" [J]. *Yanbian Party School Journal*, 2014, 30 (01): 47-49.
- [4] Liu is well known. "Concept" "Good" "Justice" —— Thoughts on Plato "Concept Philosophy" [J]. *Northern Theory*, 2017 (06): 106-112.
- [5] Fang Wei. System Design of Social Problems and Policy Compared with China [D]. China University of Mining and Technology, December 2010.