

What Is the Use of Philosophy and How to Do It Well?

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[**Abstract**] Philosophy has survived for a long time, which is based on the classics and keeps up with the times. Philosophy is the theoretical character of philosophy, which is consistent with the true connotation of philosophy. Philosophy is to love wisdom. This kind of wisdom is not self-talking, but the wisdom of the times, which needs to be constantly loved and pursued. What is the use of philosophy? It not only serves national politics, but also is indispensable to people's spirit, mood and social development. Philosophy examines the world and is constantly reflecting on it. We need to have great care, conceptual thinking and appropriate research methods to study philosophy, so as to better do philosophy and make philosophy develop better.

[**Key words**] philosophy; love wisdom; what is the use of philosophy; how to do philosophy well

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1 Introduction

How to do philosophy well? Not everyone will ask this question, but for people who love philosophy and engage in philosophical research, it is a classic question worthy of in-depth thinking and answering. Of course, for the answer to the question, we must first explore the two questions of what is philosophy and what is the use of philosophy. In fact, many scholars have given a lot of good answers to the definition and function of philosophy, but they may not give a good answer to the question of how to do philosophy well.

2 What is philosophy

Philosophy came into being in the ancient period of slavery when social productivity had certain progress. People's cognitive ability was inspired and further improved under the impetus of social economy at that time, and they began to think about the composition and essence of the world. As for the word philosophy, it is a term coined by the ancient Greeks two thousand and five hundred years ago, namely Φιλοσοφία (philosophy). At first, the Japanese translated it into "Aizhixue". In 1874, the Japanese enlightenment scholar Xizhou first used the Chinese word "哲学" to translate the word "philosophy" in "Hundred New Theories". Around 1896, Kang Youwei and others introduced the "philosophy" translated from Japanese to China, which gradually became popular. The word "哲" is taken from ancient Chinese classics and has the meaning of "wisdom". Therefore, the understanding of philosophy as "the study of wisdom" is accepted by the Chinese people. The traditional Chinese culture emphasizes that "the study of wisdom" should be useful, that is, to solve the problems of real society or life. Otherwise, it will be considered that philosophy is some mysterious theory, which is only people's talk after dinner. However, philosophy is in the true sense of "love wisdom", that is, love wisdom itself, rather than the use of wisdom.

The question of wisdom runs through one's life. What is the purpose of one's life? Just want to live to understand. Like Socrates said "know yourself", people should have self-knowledge, and be able to think about how they are living, and what is the value of their life. In order to know the value and meaning of living, we must examine our own life and have our own thinking, that is, Socrates said, "life without examination is not worth living". At the same time, one should also know their own ignorance. Only when people know their ignorance, can they better pursue wisdom, gain more wisdom, and make their life truly meaningful. To Kant, philosophy is

wisdom. Kant said that philosophy is to let people know what they can know, what they should do and what else they should hope for. Deng Xiaomang, a famous scholar, talked about what is philosophy in the beginning of philosophy, which revolved around three questions: Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going? These are the wisdom problems that we need to think about if we want to live valuable and meaningful life. This wisdom is not our daily knowledge, but the knowledge beyond the secular life, that is, the knowledge of truth, goodness and beauty. This kind of wisdom itself cannot be used as a tool, because wisdom itself is the purpose of human pursuit and the ultimate value entity. This kind of wisdom is not innate to human beings, because human cognition is limited. Therefore, wisdom needs human beings to pursue and love.

Love wisdom is to make people's brains work and think better. Thinking about society, life, nature of things and etc. are only wisdom itself. As for whether it is useful for the development of society and individuals, it is unknown in the pursuit of wisdom. It may be effective immediately, may be effective for a long time, or may not see the actual effect on society, but simply in-depth exploration of some wisdom. The process of loving wisdom is actually constantly transcending, constantly developing the road of innovation, and creating material and spiritual civilization, among which, there is more continuous creation of spiritual civilization. This transcendence of wisdom is a constant reflection and questioning of self-life, the essence and development of society, and even a denial of established facts, that is, a further thinking of the idea of existence. For people, this further thinking is endless.

Therefore, philosophy is not to speak for itself behind closed doors, but to always pay attention to the development of society and grasp the direction of philosophical research. Philosophy is not "dead" and does not stay in the history of philosophy or philosophical works, but is based on the classics and keeps up with the times in its survival.

3 What is the use of philosophy

Usually when people face philosophy, they would first ask "what is philosophy?" and "what is the use of philosophy?". Of course, answers to these questions cannot be completely separated. Most people think that the main function of philosophy is to serve politics, which also leads people to think that philosophy is politics. Philosophy can indeed serve politics, because it contains politics. Many famous philosophers have some political thoughts, such as Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Hobbes and so on. Similarly, at the symposium on the work of philosophy and social sciences in China, it was also stressed that, "the level of development of a country depends on the level of development of both natural sciences and philosophy and social sciences". This also profoundly points out that philosophy is indispensable at the national level, and learning philosophy can better serve national politics. However, the core issue of political science research is the state power, and the problem of philosophical research is more extensive. Therefore, it is wrong to simply equate philosophy with politics. Philosophy is not politics, but only part of it belongs to politics and serves politics.

It is true that philosophy came into being shortly after the emergence of human civilization. Philosophy is ancient but full of vitality. With the development of society and the growth of human beings, it has gone all the way to the present and will continue to go on. The reason why philosophy has not been eliminated along the way is that it has great wisdom, and the problems of philosophical research are not limited to the epistemological and unity problems of philosophy itself. It can also play the role of philosophical wisdom when there are contradictions in life, society or life and society. It actively connects the theory of philosophical research with the hot issues of modern society, such as nuclear technology, cloning technology, abortion, euthanasia and gene editing. People pay attention to these ethical issues in order to solve some difficult problems. Philosophy is to correct or restrain the ethical problems faced by human beings through the ideological construction of the meaning of life, the origin of the world and the development of society, which plays an important role in solving these problems.

For students, what is the use of professional learning and philosophy research? Those who study philosophy know that philosophy is to cultivate people's speculative, reflective and critical ability. Some people will ask:

“Can we acquire these abilities solely by learning philosophy?”, “Can’t we acquire these abilities by learning other disciplines?”. It is reasonable to question these. Indeed, it is not only philosophy that can cultivate these abilities, but mathematics and physics can also train students to acquire these abilities. However, not all students like mathematics and physics, some of them like philosophy, history, politics and other disciplines. Each discipline has a certain similarity in cultivating students’ ability, but the way of training, the field of concern of the discipline, and the method of research are different. Philosophical research pays more attention to the method of theoretical inference, and its value lies in inspiring people to cast doubtful eyes on things that are common, habitual or unproblematic, so as to carry out independent thinking and innovative exploration. It is to provide a general and comprehensive theoretical framework, that is, to meet the spiritual needs of human beings, so that the needs can be met in a rational way, so as to establish a unified spiritual world.

In this world full of material enjoyment, satisfying the human spirit in a rational way is the realization of the value of philosophy. Feng Youlan said, “The function of philosophy is not to increase positive knowledge, but to improve the realm of mind—to achieve a realm beyond reality, to obtain value higher than moral value”. In Feng Youlan’s opinion, philosophy is the most impractical knowledge. The fact that philosophy is not practical knowledge does not mean that it is useless. In his view, the philosophical thinking and the thorough and logical analysis of the truth enable us to have a rational and sympathetic understanding of the truth, which can be used as the basis of our humanity. This is probably the “useless use” of philosophy. However, in real life, more people are in the pursuit of practical utility and material feedback. For example, marketing can teach people to become successful businessmen, all kinds of engineering can teach people to become successful engineers, medicine can teach people to become successful doctors. In today’s world, few people ask “what kind of person make the highest achievement that people may make?”. Therefore, philosophy is despised by many people who do not understand it. These people may be satisfied materially, but have to satisfy their spirit through philosophy. As an advertisement says, “If people lose their imagination, what will the world be like?”. It can be speculated that if people had no wisdom, they would not have philosophy, and the world would be lonely and boring. In such a world, people will not be optimistic about life. Therefore, people cannot stop the pursuit of wisdom, and the love for wisdom.

4 How to do philosophy well

The role of philosophy is one of the answers to what philosophy is. Therefore, how to do philosophy well? (how to learn philosophy and how to do philosophy) From the perspective of its evolution process, philosophy examines the world, and at the same time constantly reflects on it, so as to better do philosophy and make philosophy develop better.

4.1 Requiring great concern

The understanding of philosophy cannot stay at the level of theory, nor can it stay at the level of experience, but should be derived from the combination of experience and theory to sublimate experience. If we want to grasp the philosophy, it would be about how to grasp the world. There is a grasp of knowledge and an empirical grasp, among which the grasp of knowledge will be limited to a certain aspect of a particular field. However, the research and exploration of philosophy is not limited to a specific object and field. In this way, adding empirical facts to the field of knowledge to think will connect the philosophical knowledge separated from each other in different aspects. In fact, the world itself is a whole, an interdependent and interrelated whole, but it can be separated to do detailed research, and in this interconnected whole, the study of philosophy requires great concern. In addition to understanding the integrity and connection of the world, the humanistic concern of philosophy is also extremely important.

In recent years, China has been advocating socialist core values, which is the fundamental problem of our society and has become a philosophical concern. Therefore, the problems that philosophy focuses on cannot stay on

specific empirical knowledge and technical issues that can produce practical effects. Otherwise, philosophy is not philosophy, but a specific discipline. Then the meaning of wisdom of philosophy has no relative value. To study philosophy well and reflect the value of philosophy, we should not only take “people” as the starting point, that is, to examine the world through people themselves, but also to understand the world from the perspective of “meatus”.

4.2 Requiring conceptual thinking

As we all know, learning philosophy requires unique thinking, which is known as conceptual thinking. Thinking is a kind of subjective consciousness, and the concept is an objective existence. The two seem to have different meanings, but they are inseparable. For example, if there is no concept in one's subjective consciousness, there will be no conceptual thinking. Conceptual thinking is also called logical thinking. Philosophy is to grasp the world in such a theoretical way of thinking. The formation of new philosophical thoughts is realized through the proposal of new concepts, or the reinterpretation of existing concepts. Philosophy is a process that first manifests itself as a concept and then continues to create.

As a theoretical thinking that uses concepts, philosophy requires conceptual thinking that includes both concrete thinking and abstract thinking. Some people who do not understand philosophy usually think that what philosophy needs is only an abstract thinking, ignoring the concrete thinking. The philosophy that ignores the concrete thinking is ethereal and mysterious, which is not real philosophy. Philosophy needs concrete thinking, and its concept needs to contain concrete stipulations. Only in this way can philosophical thinking be realistic. Philosophy is a theory based on reality. It is not an illusory thought, nor is it just an expression of language or a feeling. It is necessary to put forward these feelings in a justified and demonstrated way, which cannot be simply summed up as abstract speculation. It should also replace conceptual thinking with empirical taste and give priority to imagination.

4.3 Using appropriate research methods

To study philosophy, one needs to find appropriate research methods. In the process of studying philosophy, it is generally advocated to learn the history of philosophy. Indeed, learning the history of philosophy can improve one's philosophical literacy and consolidate the foundation for learning philosophy. However, even if you master all the history of philosophy, it does not mean that you can study philosophy well. Moreover, the history of philosophy is not the only way to study philosophy, it also requires to learn logic and some natural sciences. Studying philosophy is not to master the history of philosophy, but to develop one's own critical thinking in a certain field of philosophy. Critical thinking requires sufficient argumentation process, in which the object of argumentation needs to be identified. This object is a specific philosophical problem with research value. Some problems are very good, but may not be solved by philosophy. Therefore, they shouldn't be imposed on research, but can be studied in or handed over to other disciplines. In addition, theoretical philosophy should use a clear narrative way to express a clear point of view to be discussed, that is, the point of view should be prominent. These are the research methods that need to be adopted in philosophical research.

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