Original Paper

What Is the Philosophy of Problem?

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Abstract

The philosophy of problem is a logical view, putting the problem at the core of logic, promoting the development of thinking. The philosophy of problem is a view of life, revealing not only the skills and interests of survival but also the significance and value of life. The philosophy of problem is an ethical view, regarding the development of morality and ethics as the result of questioning in its most profound sense. Philosophy of problem is a scientific view, putting the problem at the core of the philosophy of science, exploring the law of the generation and evolution of scientific knowledge from the proposition, expression, structure, presupposition, evaluation, solution and evolution of questions. The philosophy of problem is a philosophical view, regarding answer as its goal and question as its service.

Keywords

philosophy of problem, logic view, view of life, ethical view, scientific view, philosophical view

1. The Philosophy of Problem Is a Logical View

Traditional logic is a study of concepts, judgments, reasoning, and argumentation, but there are few in-depth discussions on the status and role of problems in thinking. We will get a new logic, that is, problem logic, if we put problems at the center of thinking and highlight the decisive role of problems in the generation, deepening and development of thinking. Problem logic does not simply add the new research object of "problem" to the traditional logic, nor does it simply imitate the research ideas and methods of traditional logic to study thinking (See Ma, 2003, pp. 155-174). Problem logic should put the problem at the core of logic, make it dominate concepts, judgments, reasoning, and argumentation, rescue traditional logic from rigidity and closure, and turn it into a flexible, open and full of tension of a rational way of thinking. Traditional logic is based on the law of contradiction, avoiding affirmation of "yes" and "no" at the same time. Problem logic will transcend this law, because there is no contradiction between "why" and "why not". Unlike traditional logic, problem logic no longer simply rejects content and emotion, but extends the scope of question symbolization to context beyond

question answering, expands the coverage of logic unprecedentedly, and builds a new bridge between human reason and emotion. Problem logic pursues accuracy, but it does not exclude fuzziness. Appropriate fuzziness is one of the basic conditions for the existence of human intelligence. It is also fuzziness that leads to great richness and Transcendence of thinking. The accuracy of fuzziness and fuzziness of accuracy reflect a profound thinking power. The universal revelation of the rich relevance, appropriateness, and validity between the content, form, and structure of the problem, the way of representation and the timing of inquiry, region and environment will help us greatly enhance the effectiveness of thinking. Questioning determines the emergence of new concepts, categories, and propositions, and the connection and deduction between questions and solutions determine the direction and depth of thinking. Questioning is the engine of thinking. It stimulates thinking, promotes and deepens thinking. From the point of view of the history of human thinking, it is the evolution of human thinking that presents the path and law of human thinking from simple to complex, from superficial to profound, from closed to open, from naive to mature.

2. The Philosophy of Problem Is a View of Life

Man is essentially a social existence, and the realization of socialization is presented through questioning life. People not only ask themselves but also others. When people break away from their instinctive way of life and enter the stage of independent life, their internal mechanism and external symbols are all questions and answers. This tradition comes from Socrates, who is usually to be found in the marketplace and other public areas, conversing with virtually anyone he could persuade to join with him in his question-and-answer mode of probing serious matters. Thinking that "the unexamined life is not worth living for a human being", Socrates's lifework consists in the examination of people's lives at his trial (See Plato, *Apology* 38a). The living conditions provided by nature are insufficient for human beings to survive. How to adapt to life and choose the way of life is established through continuous questions and answers. By the question-and-answer mode, man establishes the orientation of himself and others, establishes the ways and skills of interpersonal connection, and learns to think and live. Question and answer thus become the necessary condition for pursuing a happy life and life itself. The lack of material and spiritual life inevitably manifests itself in the lack of questions and answers (See Michel, 2003, pp. 303-304). The only way for people to learn to adapt to and transform nature is questions and answers, which comes from curiosity, fear, a pressure of survival and yearning for a better life. The answer is a kind of directional exploration, an emotional concern, a life skill, which relieves the inquiry and generates new inquiries. The more comprehensive, rich and in-depth the question and answer are, the more delicate people's experience of life and the stronger their ability to live is. As long as people still exist, as long as people are still living, inquiry and answer will never end, and how the inquiry and answer themselves reflect the value and pursuit of life is the key to determine the quality of life. Question and answer is not only the scene of life but also the necessary condition

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and pushes hand of a better life. Question-and-answer life reveals not only the skills and interests of survival but also the significance and value of life.

3. The Philosophy of Problem Is an Educational View

Current textbooks condense and solidify the results of thousands of years of human thinking and life in the form of so-called "truth" or "knowledge" in a row of boring words. They are simply the accumulation of propositions, which are roughly overlapped and seem to have some logical structure but constitute a rigid knowledge system. In order to cooperate with people to possess and manipulate knowledge in as short a time as possible, and to adapt to the rigid knowledge system, a rigid and closed education system will be formed automatically. Although Socrates is one of the greatest philosophers, he adamantly insisted he is "not a teacher" (Plato, *Apology* 33a-b). Socrates's wisdom consists in his saying that he knew nothing of importance and wanted to listen to others, yet keeping the upper hand in every discussion. Unfortunately, modern educators regard themselves as authority, while educatees passively accept inculcation. This distinction and orientation between educators and educatees are constantly consolidated and strengthened through strict teaching and assessment forms. Education loses its true attribute of exploring and pursuing truth, goodness, and beauty. The philosophy of problem will fundamentally subvert this educational model. Knowledge is the result of observation and thinking. Observation is initiated by problems, and thinking is promoted and deepened by problems. The core of education is inquiry and questioning. It is to find different answers in the emerging problems for us to evaluate and choose in the complex living environment. The so-called "modern education" that standardizes and absolutizes the answers and forces people to remember and use them is to concentrate on trifles and neglect essentials, and it is great destruction to the human spirit of innovation and pioneering. Textbooks should restore the interesting exploratory process that conforms to the nature of thinking, and present the concrete picture that knowledge can be excavated from an inquiry. The function of textbooks is to tell people that it is question-answer thinking power rather than knowledge itself that promotes the discovery, accumulation, and application of knowledge. Educators and educatees should examine current knowledge and explore new knowledge in interactive question and answer. The role of educators is to use the skills of inquiry to guide the learners to learn to inquire and explore. Thus, education will return to its original position, full of flexibility and openness.

4. The Philosophy of Problem Is an Ethical View

The presupposition of humanistic goodness and evil is only the answer to some kind of question, which is the prerequisite of human nature thinking and moral thinking. Man's thoughts and actions are formed in the questions and answers between man and himself, man and nature, man and others. Self-questioning in interpersonal relationships refers to self-reflection. It directly points to people's hearts, questions themselves, forces them to adapt to the relationship with others, overcomes selfish desires, defends themselves, sympathizes with the weak, has compassion, does not fear power,

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highlights justice, regulates the mind, promotes morality, and constructs reasonable and more suitable human relations for survival and development (See Michel, 2003, p. 305). Man constantly interrogates nature in observation and experiment, and naturally answers in his own form. People's questioning of their own setbacks in nature leads to a new understanding of the relationship between man and nature, and forms and follows some kind of ecological ethics. People also establish and continuously debug the harmonious relationship with others in repeated questions and answers. When traditional ethics often face modern challenges, the key to solving the problem is to transcend the formation of a well-ordered question-and-answer chain of contradictions. Questioning oneself can construct and practice a good spiritual order, questioning nature can construct and practice a healthy ecological order, and questioning others can construct and practice a friendly human order. Questioning, listening, and responding, they are phenomena, essence, conditions, and results. The purpose of questioning is to pursue love. Listening and responding are also the needs of love. Open and benign development of morality and ethics is the result of questioning in its most profound sense.

5. The Philosophy of Problem Is a Scientific View

Although the actual development of science is problem-oriented, the philosophical investigation of science pays too much attention to "scientific theory" and neglects "scientific problems" (See Nickles, 1978, p. 34). Philosophers of science seem to define and use such concepts as induction, law, explanation, confirmation, and falsification directly while putting "problems" on the shelf. Some philosophers of science, such as Popper, Kuhn, and Laudan, seem to attach importance to the study of problems, but they place the problem in the protective belt of "theory", so that the problem kneels under the theory and becomes the servant of theory. The new concept of science established by the philosophy of problem is to put the problem at the core of the philosophy of science and to explore the law of the generation and evolution of scientific knowledge from the proposition, expression, structure, presupposition, evaluation, solution and evolution of questions. When science is at a standstill or facing many difficulties, it is the key to open the deadlock by raising new questions. The new perspectives of new problems break through the barriers of old theories and bring new things and ideas to us. The emergence of a large number of problems in science is the symbol of the vitality of science. The lack of problems means that the channel of independent advancement of science is blocked, and no amount of knowledge can open up a new way of advancement. Scientific exploration begins with problems and ends with problems. Problems trigger thinking, theory and new problems. The Problem runs through the whole process of research, and theory is only one of the links. Revolutionary problems lead to revolutionary theories and produce a large number of new secondary problems. The goal of science is to transform the negative and neutral problems in empirical and conceptual problems into positive ones as far as possible.

6. The Philosophy of Problem Is a Philosophical View

Socrates, an ancient Greek philosopher, helped the production of knowledge by inquiring, and also revealed human ignorance and helplessness (See Plato, *Meno*, *Theaetetus*). Questioners and respondents cannot eliminate the question but cause new questions. Questioners reveal the contradictions in the response through the question, forcing respondents to admit their ignorance, revise their responses, and get less contradictory knowledge. This philosophical method has great enlightenment in using problems and seeking help, but later philosophical development only tends to propositionalize, ignoring the problem. Problems are forgotten and marginalized. The propositionalization of a problem means ignoring the doubtful items of the problem and replacing the inference from the problem to the problem and from the problem to the proposition with the inference between the propositions. Philosophy regards answering as its goal and questioning as its services, such as syllogism and its structure, as the transformation of propositions, which is proof-oriented and a propositional method. The fundamental difficulty of the propositional method lies in the unavoidable circulation. "I think, therefore I am" is the origin and cornerstone of some philosophy, but it is circular. "I think" has presupposed "I am", how can it prove "I am?" (See Guéroult, 1968, p. 308). Propositional philosophy is keen on proof, but what can proof create besides being trapped in a cycle? Faced with realistic concerns, new philosophy inquires into questions, reflects on the rationality of raising questions, and reflects on the rationality of the philosophical thinking process from questions to questions and from questions to answers. When the question has presupposed an answer, the answer is not a proper answer to the question. The new philosophy sees inquiry to be the goal of philosophy, answers as the service of inquiry, and propositions are guided by questions. Questioning emphasized by the new philosophy can shake the old stubborn ideas, show new research paths, and lead to the discovery of new things, new ideas and new relationships. Flourishing branches lead to flourishing leaves. The problem is like a branch. Where it stretches, the leaf of theory grows. The mission of the new philosophy lies in the multiplication of branches, and lush leaves are only a by-product of the spreading branches. The bundles of "lush leaves" are lifeless and will soon wither and die.

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