

The Difference Between the Theory of Conformity and Neo-Confucianism in the View of Truth

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Abstract: In philosophical theory, the understanding of "truth" can be divided into axiological truth and epistemological truth. The truth in the axiological sense mainly involves the problem of meaning and value, while the truth in the epistemological sense involves the problem of the conformity between the subject of knowledge and the object of knowledge or the objective reality. From the epistemological point of view, we can clarify the difference between the coincidence theory and the Chinese Neo-Confucianism in the view of truth so that we can not only explain the truth of each theory but also understand the harmonious relationship between the two views of truth.

Keywords: coincidence theory, Neo-Confucianism, view of truth

1. Introduction

What is truth? Any theory with a set of universal life explanation systems must face such a problem. Among the epistemological problems, the question of truth has always been debated, "What is true"? Since ancient Greece, the theory of coincidence has greatly influenced answering this question. Aristotle's expression of this in *Metaphysics* is: "Whoever is no for yes and is no is false; whoever is real for real and false for false is true [1]." In essence, coincidence theory emphasizes the agreement between proposition and fact. The neo-Confucianists in the Song Dynasty had an essential influence on the history of Chinese philosophy, and their thoughts all involved the truth. Cheng Hao's "Li" is the law of things that exists objectively or the law of things, emphasizing "the reason of things." The truth view of Chinese philosophy needs to be proved by the practice of life.

2. The basic viewpoint of coincidence theory and Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism truth view

In the Western philosophical tradition, the concept of "truth" can be traced back to the word "Altheia" in ancient Greek philosophy, which, from an etymological point of view, has the meaning of "removal of masking [2]". The conformity theory focuses on "What are facts" in the view of truth? A proposition's criterion of truth and falsity lies in whether it conforms to the facts. Logical positivists believe that the source and basis of the whole knowledge is the empirical facts, and the observation statements directly reflect the empirical facts [3]. According to Schlick, facts or reality are not transcendent, but this does not mean that they are unrecognizable and visible, and observation statements satisfy our true knowledge of reality in the form of "here is how it is now." Schlick emphasizes that the observation statement has not been processed, which reflects a kind of originality

and directness, and thinks that it is a direct reaction to empirical facts and has absolute certainty. The observation statement is the description of direct experience, and only the feeling of "me" is the most direct experience. In his unpublished manuscript, Wittgenstein states:

One can only interpret language through language. Therefore, language is unexplainable. If people express themselves only (always) within a linguistic system and therefore can only explain what a proposition means through the propositions of that system, then in the end, "signification" is banished from the language, that is, from our investigation. Only language is something we can examine [4]. The famous proof principle of logical empiricists is to use observation statements to test whether scientific propositions are true or false. Shilik points to actual facts through observation statements, and the basis of knowledge is facts. "Whether knowledge, belief, judgment, statement, etc. correspond to reality, facts, things, objects, etc. is the criterion for judging truth. Any proposition that accords with objective facts is truth. Otherwise, it is a fallacy [5]." When the subjective knowledge conforms to the objective reality, this knowledge is the truth, and the relationship between language and truth is a mirror image.

As far as the current literature is concerned, the earliest use of the word "truth" in the existing Chinese literature can be traced back to the Han Chinese Kong Anguo's "Shang Shu Zhushu": "If you seek the reason of gossip, there are 1,520 things in the world, so it is called the line." It is not just a claim again, also called the claim in the Zuo Zhuan, which is different, and later generations have lost its truth, and it has pierced the ears [6]." Chinese philosophy emphasizes that truth is connected with "Tao", or as a kind of "truth", which is a broad axiological sense of truth, but in the "Chengzhu Neo-Confucianism", from the perspective of epistemology to look at "truth", there are the following points. First, truth has objectivity. Cheng Hao said in volume 11 of his "Suicide Note", the principle of all things in heaven and earth, no one alone must be right, they are all-natural, not arranged [7]." The universal nature of things in the world is natural, not human. "Reason" here is the law of things that exist objectively or the law of things, which can also be said to be the truth. Whether you do things well depends on whether you act according to reason. The existence of reason is objective and does not depend on human will. Second, the relationship between truth and "things". Cheng Yi said in Volume 15 of the "Suicide Note", "People's trouble is a matter of tired thinking and solid, but not to it, to be good in the Ming, Ming good care about the poor reason." As for physics, over time, everything in the world can be poor, just one reason [8]." People know reason through things, "things" proposed by Cheng Yi actually refers to the perception of things, through people's concrete, practical activities to verify the truth, emphasizing that the test of truth lies in "things", affirming that people's correct understanding (truth) is closely related to the perception of things (things). Third, the relationship between "reason" and "Qi". The reason is also the metaphysical way biology is; Qi is also a physical and biological tool. Is the life of the character, will be reported this reason, and then sex; Must have this qi, then tangible. [7] Although its nature and shape are nothing more than one, the division between its Dao and its instruments is clear and should not be confused."

3. Understand the difference between truth and time

In coincidence theory, pure logical reasoning has nothing to do with time, logical inference follows from a "fixed order" of logic that conforms to something other than time. Observation statements test whether scientific propositions are true or false and point to actual facts and whether cognition, belief, judgment, statement, etc., conform to reality, facts, things, objects, etc., is the criterion for judging truth. Aristotle's expression of this in *Metaphysics* is: "Whoever is no for yes and is no is false; whoever is real for real and false for false is true [1]." Aristotle's rules of formal logic confirm truth, and logic does not involve time. The formal argumentative truth behind logic does not unfold in the time of the empirical world. Truth or falsehood is not a combination of proposition and fact in traditional coincidence theory, out of the control of time. Words are the direct expression of "reality",

"reality" is "is what it is", that is, the empirical fact itself. This means that the statement of observation is absolutely deterministic, free from time constraints, just as the deterministic statement of analysis is irrefutable.

The presupposition of "Li" and "qi" in Neo-Confucianism of Cheng and Zhu is that the world is changing in Yin and Yang, and this change involves time, emphasizing the pursuit of truth in practice. "Li" and "Qi" discuss the "you are in me, you are in me", "mutual transformation", "Yin and Yang alternating" between truth and concrete things in the process of change. There is no "fixed order" beyond time, only balance in change. "The metaphysical way is also the basis of biology; Qi is also a physical tool, a biological tool. Is the life of the character, will be reported this reason, and then sex; I will take this breath and then become visible [7]." The visible thing is called "Tao", here "tao" can be understood as the truth of things or the law of human behavior and is a kind of regular principle that people should follow. Fang Yizhi mentioned in "Little Knowledge of Physics" that "Qi is the real image, things are the real number, and people are in heaven, and the truth is not twinkling in front of me." Here, truth refers to the law of grasping objective things. In the "Zhuzi Language Category" volume 94 also said: "the total principle of heaven and earth is tai chi." [9] Reason is connected with the essence of all things in the world. From the perspective of understanding truth, Neo-Confucianism emphasizes that metaphysical "Tao" is manifested through metaphysical "qi", truth is developed through time relations in the empirical world, and objective things are grasped, which is different from the accuracy of pure thinking and the separation of time discussed in the traditional Western sense of coincidence theory.

4. Recognize the difference of truth in practice

Aristotle said in *Metaphysics*, "Whoever is no is false; whoever is real is real, and false is false is true." [1] In essence, coincidence theory emphasizes the agreement between proposition and fact. Although the theory of conformity seems to give a simple and straightforward criterion for the judgment of truth, the answers to such questions as the grasp of "facts", how to correspond between "facts" and "propositions", and how to describe "facts" through language or text that is easy to be understood from multiple angles are ambiguous. Kant further explained the concept of "truth" based on the law of contradiction and the concept of "system" after reflecting on the traditional concept of "truth". He believes that the truth lies in the completeness of a certain system of knowledge and the consistency of the system of knowledge to which it belongs rather than in the conformity of knowledge with objective reality. In early Wittgenstein's "Introduction to Philosophy of Logic", he emphasized that "fact" is beyond our understanding and uses language to describe the fact, but what language expresses is only the "state of affairs" of things and the function of language can only express the "image" of things. The accuracy of "image" to reflect things remains to be verified, and Western logic should eliminate inaccuracy. We cannot compare "language" with experience, the world, or "the thing with" to determine the truth and falsity of sentences or propositions. In the theory of coincidence, truth is a human word. The *analects* of coincidence have no distinction between true and false but only focus on whether it is the true record of facts. The theory of coincidence considers the truth in sentences. In the process of grasping the truth, there are questions such as how the "facts" and "propositions" conform to each other, whether the "images" of the "facts" formed by language are identical to the facts themselves, etc. The truth of the theory of conformity is actually that the language conforms to the facts, and the truth cannot be tested from the fundamental practice, which does not exist in the Western logical world of conformity. When discussing the "true value" and "false value" of the truth proposition in the logical world, practice cannot be involved. Otherwise, "logical proposition" and "empirical proposition" cannot be distinguished, and the truth is an ideal state of knowledge.

"Practice" is a concept commonly used by Chinese philosophers, emphasizing grasping the correct understanding of things in practical activities in the flood of time. In the Neo-Confucianism of Cheng and Zhu, on the one hand, while emphasizing the test standard of truth, it emphasizes the knowledge of material objects. Traditional Chinese logic and traditional thinking are based on the presupposition that practical activities are carried out in the flood of time. It is a theory about the empirical world, which is about the truth and falsehood in the empirical world. Its internal relations and structure are entirely different from Western logic, meaning it cannot deduce the necessity in the logical world. What practice can communicate is still the consistency of an anticipated possibility with a realistic possibility, not the fact itself, and we are testing the truth with a "finite" existence, which is still essentially inductive reasoning.

What comes out of the "test of practice" are all probable results, the possible states of things, and the possible consistency of thought and fact, rather than the consistency of necessity, which cannot solve Western logic's requirement of excluding possibility and achieving necessity. Marx absorbed the core of rationality based on Hegel's idealist dialectics, combined with the method of materialism, and insisted that truth "is not a theoretical issue, but a practical issue, and people should prove the truth of their thinking in practice", [10] thus forming the truth view and practice view of dialectical materialism, emphasizing the internal connection between truth and practice. This method of conformity between truth and practice is far different from the traditional conformity theory. However, its method of exploring truth has many similarities with the method of seeking "knowledge" of Neo-Confucianism of Cheng and Zhu. On the other hand, in the relationship between "knowing" and "doing", neo-Confucianism emphasizes the importance of "doing" to "knowing". Wang Fuzhi said in "Shang Shu Yinyi": "Those who know also, insist on the behavior of merit; He who does not take knowledge as his merit. How to do, you can know the effect also; If you know something, you can't do it." "You can do and know, but you cannot do and know." "The learning of a gentleman is not separated from the practice before he knows it." [7] Here, Wang Fuzhi emphasizes that knowledge depends on the action, but action does not depend on knowledge. Action can include knowledge, but knowledge cannot include action. Although Wang Fuzhi emphasized here that knowledge or truth cannot be separated from people's behavior practice, and behavior practice can be separated from knowledge or truth, this view is not entirely correct. However, it is correct to say that knowledge or truth cannot be separated from behavior practice. The knowledge or truth previously acquired can also have a guiding effect on the later behavior practice and affect the effectiveness of practice.

5. Conclusion

The difference in the logical understanding of truth between the theory of coincidence and neo-Confucianism mainly involves the difference in the view of the empirical facts in China and the relationship between practice and truth. The cultural background of this divergence is mainly the difference between the presupposition of logic in China and the West. Western philosophy presupposes separating logic from empirical facts as much as possible to become a pure form of thinking and to pursue the accuracy of scientific thinking. However, the presupposition of Chinese philosophy emphasizes the development in the empirical world, the logical world with "man", and pursues the "usefulness" of truth rather than the logic of form, allowing the imprecision brought by the subjective judgment of man in the empirical world. It is of positive significance for us to know the truth and inherit the excellent cultural heritage of humankind to explore the main differences and ideological characteristics between them in the view of truth.

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