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Education of The Emotion and Philosophy

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Abstract

It cannot be denied that man has emotional properties. The roles and effects of emotions in his life are great. The nature of emotion is studied by different disciplines like morality, philosophy, philosophical psychology, and philosophy of mind, psychology of motivation, learning theory, educational psychology and theology. But each discipline examines this issue from its point of view. Knowing and understanding of man are possible to evaluate as his properties. Again developing and evaluating his relationships with other people are associated with this knowledge. Also human actions are affected by their emotional properties as well as their basic biological and mental properties. As a social being, human being should be educated with appropriate training of the social structure. Therefore education should help man for know and himself and the others. In fact the main purpose of education is to develop the raw capabilities of man for living harmoniously and peacefully with others. This goal is directly related with the knowledge of man about his and others' emotional properties. Therefore education should be planned to accomplish this goal. For this reason it is important to recognize the emotions of man. Also emotion training is an important dimension of education. In this presentation, the necessity of emotion training for society and individual will be discussed from a philosophical perspective

Keywords: emotion; man; education of the emotions; emotional training; philosophy;

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1. Introduction

The roles and effects of emotions in human education cannot be denied. The main purpose of education is to develop the raw capabilities of man for living harmoniously and peacefully with others. The ultimate end of education is to change the inner life of learners by transforming his/her knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviors. This goal can be realized with considering all properties of man.

However, because of accepting the mind as a distinctive part of man, educators take into account the rational dimension of education during the history of education. The most important negativity of this educational model that it focuses on the development of cognitive abilities of man and ignore the emotional education.

The idea of ignoring emotional tendencies of man can get back to Ancient Greek thought. For example, according to Plato, the famous Greek philosopher, intellect is a distinctive feature of man. Human mind can reach the unchanging knowledge by using intellect. Intellect is a power of control for the passions and excitements of the body of man. For him, passions and excitements must be controlled. For this reason, the essential part of education is to learn to get rid of the effects of emotions and suppress them.

Similarly, as emotions and impulses are contrary to intellect, Stoic philosophy which is the last philosophy of ancient times claims that the criterion of morality is to struggle with these emotions. Thus the aim of morality is to obtain the correct knowledge (Zeller, 2001).

Likewise, in modern philosophy the view of opposition between intellect and emotion depends on Descartes' views about the relationship between mind and body. To him, mind and body are two separate substances of man. Substances are known by their attributes. The attribute of mind is thought and the attribute of body is space. Mind does not have space and space does not think. The solution put forth by Descartes for mind and body problem is mind-body interactionism. Mind-body interactionism asserts that mind and body are two separate and distinct realities, each causally affecting the other; mental events can change bodily states and bodily events can affect mental states.

Also his mechanical philosophy certainly brought into question the relationship of mind and matter and offered an uncomplicated and unencumbered way of separating the body from the mind. Descartes' brilliance was his ability to weave together two worlds that had hitherto remained separate, the physical–inorganic and the living–organic. One consequence of the Cartesian revolution, however, was the loss of emotions, which were seen as part of the body—separated and relegated from the rarefied rationalism of the mind. Emotional responses such as sorrow and joy are discussed at length in the *Mediations* and conveniently (if not persuasively) separated from more rationalistic considerations of hunger and thirst. Cartesian dualism offered a convenient means of elevating the pureness of reason from the messiness and irrationalism of emotion (Alsop, 2005).

In a more general sense, there is a suspicion in Western culture that there is something wrong with emotions. Emotions are irrational processes that lead to weakness and vulnerability and need to be closely monitored and ultimately controlled. Descartes (1637/1911) portrayed emotions as passions of the soul, emphasising their passive, oppressive nature rather than their potential for liberation. Even though we no longer think about emotions in his narrow way, this view is embodied in our everyday language and culture.

At this point, it can be said that intellect and emotion dichotomy is an important problem in the history of philosophy. There are two groups about this problem; one group is in a favor of intellect, other is in favor of emotion. Ideas supporting the intellect about this problem have been summarized above.

Now, the ideas giving back to emotion will be evaluated in the history of philosophy. Philosophical evaluations about the emotions have emerged mostly in the field of ethics. For example, David Hume stated that passions determine the human behaviours in the 18th century.

Intellect which is a passive and inactive power cannot be effective and cannot control human behaviour in dynamic area of ethics. For him, reason is a slave of passions and cannot claim another task to obey and serve to passions (Hume, 1997). In the same way, the existence of moral numbness among humans depends on the sympathy. Sympathy enables people to take others into account and its source is the individual's own nature. There is nothing more valuable and important than sympathy in human nature. Sympathy moves us beyond ourselves, urges us to take pleasure from other people's characters. It has indirect influence on shaping our personal emotions. Sympathy is a universal effect that makes us a social being in essence. Accordingly, people are like mirrors reflecting each other in their mutual relations (Hume, 1997).

Arthur Schopenhauer another philosopher in 19th century expressed that the relationship between emotions and moral depends on a sense of mercy. To him we choose our behaviours depending on the feeling of mercy on the state of perceiving the pains of others. Mercy which is located in the human mind is an undeniable truth for human ethics. This emotion is inherent in the human nature. Everyone has this emotion in everywhere in all circumstances. In this sense mercy can be used as a synonymous with the word of 'humanistic' (Schopenhauer, 2007).

Similarly intellect and emotion dichotomy in philosophy affected the models of education. Many educational theoreticians focused on development of the abilities of intellect. One of them Piaget, the genetic epistemologist and cognitive developmental psychologist, claims that the relationship between individual and environment is important for shaping his mind efficiently. He pointed out the importance of an educational plan which contains the routes of cognitive development of human mind in an efficient way.

However education based on cognitive processes ignores the irrational part of man and divides into two parts of man as a rational and irrational. For that reason in human education the irrational part of man must be taken into account. Irrational part of man can only be trained by the emotional education.

According to LeDoux, in the process of decision-making and practicing of man the effects and roles of emotions are greater than the effect and role of mind. Our emotions depend on the separate and independent intelligence which is different from rational intelligence. He says that "we have actually two mind; one thinks the other feels" (Goleman, 1998). These two are separate and different intelligences interact with each other and create our minds. We are often aware of rational mind. The other, irrational one which is impulsive and powerful is emotional mind. The rational and emotional mind of man together work harmoniously.

As Goleman pointed out, the emotional mind has to be trained just like the cognitive mind and this training should be structured to integrate these different states of consciousness.

Then, emotional education is important and education works best when it combines hearts and minds. As Dewey writes, "there is no education when ideas and knowledge are not translated into emotion, interest and volition." (cited in Alsop, 2005).

I think that the concept of awareness forms the basis of the philosophical analysis of emotional education. The concept of awareness is used in the meaning of the individual's cognitive process of accepting the existences and giving value to other people outside himself. Individual has a consciousness about other people including their meanings. Having a consciousness about other people means that establishing a meaning by identifying similarities and differences between him/her and others. This is the state of discovering common features and values of being human.

In this case the concept of awareness can be associated with the concept of empathy in psychology?

Empathy is defined as having feelings and thoughts correctly about other people by putting himself for others' shoes in psychology. Accordingly, empathy has both cognitive and emotional dimensions. Individual perceives both himself and his environment in a unique way. Therefore, if we want to understand other people, we have to enter his role and we must look to the world and the events through his eyes. This state is called as take a cognitive role. On the other hand, in addition to empathy for understanding the thinking of the other people, it requires that we feel what he felt.

Moreover, emotions appear to function in social cohesion with an almost universal tendency to share one's emotions with others. Emotions like sympathy, liking, and affection also establish and maintain social bonds. They enhance social cohesion in groups and support social adaptation. In this manner an important domain of the function of emotion is the regulation and even the constitution of interpersonal relationships and social harmony.

It seems that the philosophical concept 'awareness' has different meaning from the psychological concept 'empathy.' Because the meaning of empathy is related with cognition but the meaning of awareness is related with cognition and valuing process. Individual has the meaning for himself and others in the valuing process. It is a process of feeling value for himself and creating his own cognitive and emotional unity. He first realizes his own independent existence and then realizes other's existence. Further he accepts their existences and values. To be aware of others is to establish a meaning for them by identifying similarities and differences between him/her and the others. It is discovered through common properties and values we have because of being human.

That situation depicted above as a phenomenological process is a person's mental and emotional development. The beginning of this development starts from childhood and with family. It should be continued in the other stages of education. A central point is that while emotions may be experienced individually, they arise out of social situations and interaction with others. Hence, emotions should be seen as a response to a communal situation. It is the development of the ability to understand your emotions, the ability to listen to others and empathise with their emotions, and the ability to express emotions productively.

Consequently, the education of emotion is an important part of human education. It should be included in the school educating programs and should be continued. It would be possible to train the integrated person with his cognitive and emotional dimensions by practicing and improving that education models. To be emotionally educated is to be able to handle emotions in a way that improves your personal power and to improve the quality of life around you. Emotional education improves relationships, creates loving possibilities between people, makes co-operative work possible, and facilitates the feeling of community.

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