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功利主义

UTILITARIANISM

[英] 约翰·斯图亚特·穆勒 著

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在西方学术思想的发展流变中,出现过很多影响深远的经典著作,这些著作穿越时空,为人们长久研读,有的甚至影响了整个人类文明的发展进程。这套《西方学术经典文库》(英汉对照本),精选了其中最有代表性的一些名著,计划达到一百部,将陆续分批出版直至全部完成。

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Utilitarianism
By *John Stuart Mill*

本书根据 Longmans, Green, And Co. 1907 年版本译出

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CHAPTER I

General Remarks

There are few circumstances among those which make up the present condition of human knowledge, more unlike what might have been expected, or more significant of the backward state in which speculation on the most important subjects still lingers, than the little progress which has been made in the decision of the controversy respecting the criterion of right and wrong. From the dawn of philosophy, the question concerning the *summum bonum*, or, what is the same thing, concerning the foundation of morality, has been accounted the main problem in speculative thought, has occupied the most gifted intellects, and divided them into sects and schools, carrying on a vigorous warfare against one another. And after more than two thousand years the same discussions continue, philosophers are still ranged under the same contending banners, and neither thinkers nor mankind at large seem nearer to being unanimous on the subject, than when the youth Socrates listened to the old Protagoras, and asserted (if Plato's dialogue be grounded on a real conversation) the theory of utilitarianism against the popular morality of the so-called sophist.

It is true that similar confusion and uncertainty, and in some cases similar discordance, exist respecting the first principles of all the sciences, not excepting that which is deemed the most certain of them, mathematics; without much impairing, generally indeed without impairing at all, the trustworthiness of

第一章 概 论

人类知识发展至今,像“是非”标准这样令人争论不休、始终无法给出满意定论的话题可谓寥寥可数。换言之,在“是非”之争上,人们对于那些至关重要问题的探求一直处于踌躇徘徊之中,而且这种现象再明显不过。自哲学问世以来,何为“至善”这一根本的道德问题,便成了推论思想的主题,困扰着诸多天才的哲学家;并因此造就了五花八门的学术流派,相互之间不断发生口诛笔伐。当年轻的苏格拉底聆听年长的普罗塔哥拉^[1]教诲时,他并不苟同这位诡辩学者所宣扬的那种风行一时的道义,而坚持自己的功利主义思想(倘若柏拉图的《会话篇》真实可信的话)。两千多年过去了,“是非”争论依旧,哲学家们仍在各自为营进行着唇枪舌战;无论是智者抑或是芸芸众生,似乎都无法达成共识。

不可否认,在人类所有知识学科的基本原理中,均存在着类似的混乱、不确定性以及某种程度上的冲突,即使是一向在世人眼里最确信无疑的数学领域也不例外。然而,这并不有损于(从

[1] 普罗塔哥拉(前485~前410),古希腊哲学家,诡辩学派代表人物之一,提出“人为万物之尺度”的观点。该派对知识持彻底怀疑态度,专攻辩证法和辩论术。

the conclusions of those sciences. An apparent anomaly, the explanation of which is, that the detailed doctrines of a science are not usually deduced from, nor depend for their evidence upon, what are called its first principles. Were it not so, there would be no science more precarious, or whose conclusions were more insufficiently made out, than algebra; which derives none of its certainty from what are commonly taught to learners as its elements, since these, as laid down by some of its most eminent teachers, are as full of fictions as English law, and of mysteries as theology. The truths which are ultimately accepted as the first principles of a science, are really the last results of metaphysical analysis, practised on the elementary notions with which the science is conversant; and their relation to the science is not that of foundations to an edifice, but of roots to a tree, which may perform their office equally well though they be never dug down to and exposed to light. But though in science the particular truths precede the general theory, the contrary might be expected to be the case with a practical art, such as morals or legislation. All action is for the sake of some end, and rules of action, it seems natural to suppose, must take their whole character and colour from the end to which they are subservient. When we engage in a pursuit, a clear and precise conception of what we are pursuing would seem to be the first thing we need, instead of the last we are to look forward to. A test of right and wrong must be the means, one would think, of ascertaining what is right or wrong, and not a consequence of having already ascertained it.

The difficulty is not avoided by having recourse to the popular theory of a natural faculty, a sense or instinct, informing us of right and wrong. For—besides that the existence of such a moral instinct is itself one of the matters in dispute—those believers in it who have any pretensions to philosophy, have been obliged to abandon the idea that it discerns what is right or wrong in the particular case in hand, as our other senses discern the sight or sound actually present. Our moral faculty, according to all those of its interpreters who are entitled to the name of thinkers, supplies us only with the general principles of moral judgments;

根本上而言完全无损于)这些学科中各种结论的可靠性。对于这种表面上的无序,合理的解释是:一门学科中的具体原理通常并非从该学科的基本原理推断而来,也不依赖基本原理来加以证明。如若不然,所有的学科就都会像代数学那样相对稳定、推理充分了,就不会存在如英国法律般虚无缥缈或如神学般神秘莫测的学科了,也不会出现即便由学科泰斗布道讲座亦无法解开听者满腹疑团的现象了。那些最终被确立为一门学科之基本原理的真理,事实上乃是对与该学科密切相关的基本概念进行形而上学的分析后所得出的最后结论;它们与该学科之间的关系并不是地基与大厦的关系,而是根与树的关系;它们从不曝光于众目睽睽之下,却发挥着与学科本身同样重要的作用。然而,尽管在纯理论的自然学科中具体真理先于一般理论而存在,但在实践型的人文学科如伦理道德和法律方面情况则很可能相反。一切行为均出于某种目的,故行为准则势必屈从于行为目的并完全体现出目的的各种特性——这样的推测应当是合乎情理的。当我们追求一事物时,我们似乎首先就要对追求之物心中有个清晰明确的概念,而不是最后才想到。故我们或许可以认为,“是非”标准,乃是确定孰是孰非的手段,而非业已确定的结果。

倘若我们诉诸于当下流行的自然官能之说,即凭借感觉或本能来评判“是非”,那么无疑困难重重。除去这样一种道德直觉是否存在本身就颇富争议之外,那些信奉者如果还打算与哲学沾上点边的话,就应当扬弃这种观点,切勿以为如同其他的感觉能够洞悉当下存在的光线和声音一样,我们也具有某种在特定情况下能明察是非的道德直觉。那些真正称得上思想家的人无一不向我们诠释道德官能仅仅为我们提供了道德评判的一般原理,同时

it is a branch of our reason, not of our sensitive faculty; and must be looked to for the abstract doctrines of morality, not for perception of it in the concrete. The intuitive, no less than what may be termed the inductive, school of ethics, insists on the necessity of general laws. They both agree that the morality of an individual action is not a question of direct perception, but of the application of a law to an individual case. They recognise also, to a great extent, the same moral laws; but differ as to their evidence, and the source from which they derive their authority. According to the one opinion, the principles of morals are evident *à priori*, requiring nothing to command assent, except that the meaning of the terms be understood. According to the other doctrine, right and wrong, as well as truth and falsehood, are questions of observation and experience. But both hold equally that morality must be deduced from principles; and the intuitive school affirm as strongly as the inductive, that there is a science of morals. Yet they seldom attempt to make out a list of the *à priori* principles which are to serve as the premises of the science; still more rarely do they make any effort to reduce those various principles to one first principle, or common ground of obligation. They either assume the ordinary precepts of morals as of *à priori* authority, or they lay down as the common groundwork of those maxims, some generality much less obviously authoritative than the maxims themselves, and which has never succeeded in gaining popular acceptance. Yet to support their pretensions there ought either to be some one fundamental principle or law, at the root of all morality, or if there be several, there should be a determinate order of precedence among them; and the one principle, or the rule for deciding between the various principles when they conflict, ought to be self-evident.

To inquire how far the bad effects of this deficiency have been mitigated in practice, or to what extent the moral beliefs of mankind have been vitiated or made uncertain by the absence of any distinct recognition of an ultimate standard, would imply a complete survey and criticism of past and present ethical doctrine. It would, however, be easy to show that whatever steadiness or consistency these moral beliefs

它属于我们的理性成分,而非感知能力;它诉求的是道德的抽象教义,而非具体的感知。然而,即使是道德直觉派,也和道德归因派(一种道德伦理学派的称呼)一样,主张坚持道德的普遍准则是必要的。两派均认为,个体的行为是否道德,不是一个个体直觉感知的问题,而是一种准则在个体身上运用的体现。虽两派在很大程度上共同认可同样的道德准则,但在证明道德的证据和道德准则的权力来源问题上存在着分歧。在前一派看来,道德原理是先验的、显而易见的,除了理解一些术语的含义外,无需个体再予以认可和接受。而后一派则认为,是非和真假标准须在观察和经验中获得。不过,双方都声明,道德必定从原理中推理而来;直觉派与归因派一样坚信道德伦理学的存在。然而,他们都很少去尝试列举出可作为这门学科前提的一些先验性原理,更无暇去将林林总总的原理整合成一种基本原理,或称道德义务的共同基础。他们不是把一些稀松平常的伦理规矩视为某种先验的道德权威,就是将一些毫无号召力可言、不可能受到普遍认可的泛泛之词照搬为道德箴言。而要圆他们的那些说法,就应当有一种根本性的原理或法则来作为一切道德规范的基石;倘若同时存在数种这样的原理或法则,就应当有一种明确的优先排列顺序;并且一旦各种原理之间出现冲突时,在其中起决定性作用的第一原理或法则应当是不言自明的。

这种缺乏所导致的不良后果在人类实践中已然存在了何等的久远?或者说由于缺乏对一个终极标准的明确认可而导致人类的道德信仰在多大程度上变得败坏或不确定?要探究这一问题,就意味着需要对过去和现在的道德教义进行彻底的审视和批判。然而,我们比较容易明白的是,人类道德信仰的稳定性和连贯性

have attained, has been mainly due to the tacit influence of a standard not reorganised. Although the non-existence of an acknowledged first principle has made ethics not so much a guide as a consecration of men's actual sentiments, still, as men's sentiments, both of favour and of aversion, are greatly influenced by what they suppose to be the effect of things upon their happiness, the principle of utility, or as Bentham latterly called it, the greatest happiness principle, has had a large share in forming the moral doctrines even of those who most scornfully reject its authority. Nor is there any school of thought which refuses to admit that the influence of actions on happiness is a most material and even predominant consideration in many of the details of morals, however unwilling to acknowledge it as the fundamental principle of morality, and the source of moral obligation. I might go much further, and say that to all those *à priori* moralists who deem it necessary to argue at all, utilitarian arguments are indispensable. It is not my present purpose to criticise these thinkers; but I cannot help referring, for illustration, to a systematic treatise by one of the most illustrious of them, the *Metaphysics of Ethics*, by Kant. This remarkable man, whose system of thought will long remain one of the landmarks in the history of philosophical speculation, does, in the treatise in question, lay down an universal first principle as the origin and ground of moral obligation; it is this: 'So act, that the rule on which thou actest would admit of being adopted as a law by all rational beings.' But when he begins to deduce from this precept any of the actual duties of morality, he fails, almost grotesquely, to show that there would be any contradiction, any logical (not to say physical) impossibility, in the adoption by all rational beings of the most outrageously immoral rules of conduct. All he shows is that the *consequences* of their universal adoption would be such as no one would choose to incur.

其实往往受到某种人们并没有意识到的标准的潜在影响。尽管某种公认的基本原理的缺失令伦理道德不足以引导人类的现实情感走向神圣化,但由于人类的情感,无论是爱或是憎,都深受那些被认为会左右人类幸福之事物的影响,故“功利原理”,或如边沁^[1]近来所称的“最大幸福原理”,一直以来在道德教义的形成过程中起着举足轻重的作用,即使在那些对这一原理的权威性嗤之以鼻的人看来亦复如此。任何一种思想流派,不论它多么不愿承认这一原理为伦理道德的基本原理和道德义务的根源所在,也都不会拒绝承认行为对幸福的影响是最具实质性的、甚至在诸多具体道德问题上是最主要的考虑因素。我不妨进一步说,对那些热衷于争辩的先验派伦理学家来说,功利主义的观点是不可或缺的。在这里,我无意去批判这样的思想家们;然而,出于解释的需要,我不得不提及他们中最负盛名的智者之一康德,以及他所写的论文《道德的形而上学》。康德无疑是伟大的,他的思想体系将永远成为哲学历史上的一座丰碑。他在这篇论文中定义了一条普遍意义上的基本原理来作为道德义务的来源和依据,即“如此行为,使你的行为所依循的准则,能使全体理性人采为行动的法则。”但康德从这一原理出发推断实际的道德义务时,却没有能够向世人表明(这几乎是荒唐的):倘若全体理性之人共同采纳了最为无耻的不道德行为准则呢?这与他的话是否矛盾?并在逻辑上(且不说身体力行方面)是否根本就不可能?而他向人们表明的仅仅是没有人会去选择承受这样一种普遍认可所带来的

[1] 边沁(1748~1832),英国哲学家、思想家,功利论的创始人,提出“最大幸福原理”。

On the present occasion, I shall, without further discussion of the other theories, attempt to contribute something towards the understanding and appreciation of the Utilitarian or Happiness theory, and towards such proof as it is susceptible of. It is evident that this cannot be proof in the ordinary and popular meaning of the term. Questions of ultimate ends are not amenable to direct proof. Whatever can be proved to be good, must be so by being shown to be a means to something admitted to be good without proof. The medical art is proved to be good, by its conducing to health; but how is it possible to prove that health is good? The art of music is good, for the reason, among others, that it produces pleasure; but what proof is it possible to give that pleasure is good? If, then, it is asserted that there is a comprehensive formula, including all things which are in themselves good, and that whatever else is good, is not so as an end, but as a mean, the formula may be accepted or rejected, but is not a subject of what is commonly understood by proof. We are not, however, to infer that its acceptance or rejection must depend on blind impulse, or arbitrary choice. There is a larger meaning of the word proof, in which this question is as amenable to it as any other of the disputed questions of philosophy. The subject is within the cognisance of the rational faculty; and neither does that faculty deal with it solely in the way of intuition. Considerations may be presented capable of determining the intellect either to give or withhold its assent to the doctrine; and this is equivalent to proof.

We shall examine presently of what nature are these considerations; in what manner they apply to the case, and what rational grounds, therefore, can be given for accepting or rejecting the utilitarian formula. But it is a preliminary condition of rational acceptance or rejection, that the formula should be correctly understood. I believe that the very imperfect notion ordinarily formed of its meaning, is the chief obstacle which impedes its reception; and that could it be cleared, even from only the grosser misconceptions, the question would be greatly simplified, and a large