

The Guiding Significance of the Happiness Concept of Ancient Greek Philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, etc.) for Modern Citizen Life

Yutong Xu*

Mulgrave School, V6L 1G9, Canada

*joliexu2008@gmail.com

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explore the guiding significance of the ancient Greek philosopher's view of happiness to modern citizen life. This paper reveals the application value in modern society by deeply analyzing the happiness concept of ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and Socrates. In terms of research methods, this paper adopts the combination of literature research and theoretical analysis, and deeply digs into the connotation and characteristics of the ancient Greek philosopher's view of happiness; Combining it with the actual situation of modern citizens' life, this paper discusses its application prospect in the fields of family education, school education and workplace life. The research shows that the happiness view of ancient Greek philosophers has far-reaching guiding significance for modern citizens' life. They emphasize the importance of spiritual satisfaction, moral cultivation and self-awareness, and provide valuable action guides for modern people to pursue a happy life. At the same time, these views on happiness show modern value in promoting personal happiness and social harmony, which is helpful to build a better and more harmonious modern society.

Keywords: Ancient Greek Philosopher, Concept of Happiness, Modern Citizen Life, Guiding Significance, Social Harmony.

1. Introduction

As the cradle of western philosophy, ancient Greek philosophy laid a solid foundation for the development of later philosophy with its profound thoughts and unique insights [1]. In the history of western philosophy, ancient Greek philosophy is like a bright pearl, shining with wisdom. It influenced the philosophical thinking in the Middle Ages and provided rich ideological resources for the rise of modern philosophy [2]. Since Thales put forward that "water is the origin of all things", ancient Greek philosophers have taken it as their duty to explore the nature of the universe, the existence of human beings and the meaning of life [3]. Their philosophical thinking covers many fields, such as ontology, epistemology, ethics and so on, which provides endless research topics and inspiration for later philosophers [4].

Among many ancient Greek philosophers, Plato, Aristotle and Socrates' views on happiness are particularly striking [5]. Socrates takes "know yourself" as his motto, emphasizing the pursuit of inner happiness through reflection and introspection. Plato constructed the blueprint of an ideal country, and believed that happiness lies in the pursuit of truth and virtue and the unity of soul and idea [6]. Aristotle put forward the concept of practical wisdom, thinking that happiness is a kind of good life and a goal for people to constantly pursue and improve themselves in practice [7]. These philosophers' views on happiness were widely discussed at that time, and had a far-reaching impact on later ethics and philosophy of life [8]. Studying these ancient Greek philosophers' views on happiness is of great guiding significance and practical value to modern citizens' life. In the fast-paced modern life, people are easy to get lost, pursue external material enjoyment and ignore the real inner needs [9]. The ancient Greek philosophers' view of happiness

reminds us that true happiness lies not in how much wealth and reputation we have, but in inner satisfaction and spiritual richness [10]. Therefore, an in-depth study of these views of happiness can help us re-examine our lifestyle and values and find the way to real happiness.

The research purpose of this paper is to reveal the inherent logical relationship and ideological value by systematically sorting out and analyzing the happiness views of ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and Socrates, and to provide philosophical basis for modern citizens to guide their lives. The expected result is to form a systematic and in-depth research system of ancient Greek philosophers' view of happiness, which will provide useful philosophical enlightenment and guidance for modern citizens to pursue a happy life.

2. An Overview of the Happiness View of Ancient Greek Philosophers

In the bright starry sky of ancient Greek philosophy, Plato, Aristotle and Socrates are undoubtedly the three most dazzling stars (see Figure 1). They each have their own unique life experiences, leaving a deep mark on their philosophical thoughts, and their understanding of happiness also has their own characteristics.

Plato was born into an aristocratic family in Athens. He was deeply influenced by Socrates, but he went out of his own way in philosophy. His theory of ideas holds that the real world is only the shadow of the world of ideas, and the real truth and perfection exist in ideas. In the pursuit of happiness, Plato emphasized the pursuit of truth and virtue. He believes that only when the soul is in harmony with the idea can people achieve true happiness. This kind of happiness is not material satisfaction, but spiritual sublimation, which is the practice and pursuit of wisdom, courage, temperance and justice.



Plato

Aristotle

Socrates

Figure 1. Plato, Aristotle and Socrates

Aristotle, a student of Plato, criticized and surpassed the teacher in philosophy. He put forward the theory of entity, which holds that the world is made up of concrete entities, not Plato's idea. On the view of happiness, Aristotle advocated the theory of virtue happiness. He believes that happiness is a kind of good life, and it is the goal that people constantly pursue and improve themselves in practice. Virtue is the key to happiness, and people should cultivate their own virtues (wisdom, justice, courage, etc.) to achieve the realm of happiness. Aristotle emphasized that happiness is an internal state, not an external gift.

Socrates, a philosopher who left no works, passed down his thoughts through Plato's dialogues. "Know yourself" put forward by him is a famous saying in the history of ancient Greek philosophy and the core of his philosophy of life. Socrates believes that people are unhappy because they lack a real understanding of themselves. Socrates leads people to examine their own hearts and find their true selves through constant rhetorical questions and questions. In Socrates' view, the road to happiness is the process of knowing oneself, and it is to achieve inner harmony and satisfaction through in-depth understanding and reflection on oneself.

Table 1. Conceptions of Happiness Among the Three Greek Philosophical Giants

Philosopher	Brief Life Experience	Philosophical Thought Characteristics	Understanding of Happiness
Plato	Founder of the Academy in Athens	Theory of Ideas	Happiness lies in the pursuit of truth and virtue
Aristotle	Tutor to Alexander the Great	Empiricism and Logic	Happiness is the combination of rational activity and virtue
Socrates	Street Sage, Founder of the Socratic Method	Ethics and Self-Knowledge	Happiness lies in knowing oneself and living a just life

By analyzing the happiness views of these three philosophers, we can find the internal relations and differences between them (as shown in Table 1). Both Plato and Aristotle emphasize the importance of virtue in happiness, but Plato pays more attention to the combination of soul and idea, while Aristotle emphasizes the embodiment of virtue in practice. Socrates is different from them. He pays more

attention to the pursuit of happiness by knowing himself. Although their views on happiness have their own emphases, they all reflect the emphasis on spiritual life and the pursuit of internal satisfaction.

3. The Point of Convergence between the Ancient Greek Concept of Happiness and Modern Citizen Life

Modern citizens live in an era of extremely rich material and information explosion, and also face unprecedented challenges (as shown in Table 2). In this context, the ancient Greek concept of happiness provides us with a mirror to re-examine our lifestyle and values.

Table 2. Challenges Faced by Modern Citizens in Their Lives

Aspect	Current Situation Description	Resulting Issues
Material Conditions	Extreme abundance of material goods	Spiritual emptiness dilemma
Information Environment	Information explosion	Information overload, choice paralysis, etc.
Prevalence of Individualism	Emphasis on individual freedom and rights	Weakening of community ties, alienation in interpersonal relationships
Lifestyle & Values	Changes in lifestyle, diversification of values	Need to reexamine lifestyle and values

Plato's ideal world provides a spiritual sustenance for modern people. In today's complicated material world, people often feel confused and uneasy. Plato's theory of ideas reminds us that besides the immediate material world, there is a more real and perfect world of ideas worth pursuing. This ideal world is not an unreachable fantasy, but our inner yearning and pursuit of truth, goodness and beauty. By pursuing the truth and virtue in the world of ideas, modern people can find a spiritual satisfaction that transcends material things and alleviate spiritual emptiness.

Aristotle's virtue ethics plays an important role in modern moral construction. In modern society, moral decline and distorted values occur from time to time. Aristotle's theory of virtue happiness emphasizes that happiness is realized by practicing virtue. This enlightens us that to build a

harmonious and orderly society, we must attach importance to moral education and moral cultivation. By cultivating citizens' virtues, such as honesty, justice and responsibility, we can improve the moral level of the whole society and provide strong moral support for the stable development of modern society.

Socrates' "Know yourself" is of great significance to the growth of modern individuals. In modern society, the prevalence of individualism makes people pay more attention to self-realization and development. Real self-realization is not blindly pursuing personal desires and interests, but finding real life goals and values through in-depth understanding of oneself. Socrates' philosophical thought reminds us to constantly examine our hearts, understand our strengths and weaknesses, and make more wise choices and decisions. Through this process of self-knowledge, modern people can achieve more comprehensive and healthy personal growth.

4. The Concrete Guiding Significance of the Ancient Greek Concept of Happiness to the Life of Modern Citizens

After thousands of years of precipitation, the ancient Greek concept of happiness still shines with wisdom and provides valuable guidance for modern citizens' life. Based on this concept, we can put forward a set of modern life guides to help people find the true meaning of happiness in a complicated society.

How to balance material pursuit and spiritual satisfaction is a big problem facing modern people. Plato's idea tells us that true happiness does not come from material accumulation, but from inner enrichment and harmony. Based on this, we should learn to nourish our hearts while pursuing material life. For example, we can improve our spiritual realm through reading, art appreciation and meditation, so that our hearts can be truly satisfied and peaceful. See Table 3 for details:

Table 3. Specific Ways to Enhance Spiritual Realm and Their Benefits

Method	Description	Benefits
Reading	By reading books, broaden horizons, enrich knowledge, nourish the soul	Enhance thinking ability, reduce stress, increase happiness
Art Appreciation	Appreciate art works, such as paintings, music, dance, etc., feel the power of beauty	Stimulate creativity, cultivate sentiment, enhance aesthetic experience
Meditation	Practice meditation, relax the body and mind, enhance inner peace and focus	Enhance self-awareness, reduce anxiety, improve quality of life

Table 3 lists the specific ways to improve the spiritual realm, and also explains the possible benefits of each way, helping people to understand more comprehensively and

choose the way that suits them to nourish their hearts.

Cultivating virtue and realizing personal happiness are closely linked, which is the core of Aristotle's ethics. A person's moral character determines his behavior and interpersonal relationship, and then affects his happiness. We should pay attention to cultivating our own virtues such as kindness, justice and courage, and gradually shape our noble personality through the practice of daily behavior. In this way, we can not only gain respect and trust in interpersonal communication, but also feel real happiness and satisfaction in our hearts.

Socrates' philosophical method emphasizes the importance of self-knowledge. By constantly examining ourselves and reflecting on our actions and thoughts, we can more clearly understand our strengths and weaknesses, and then promote personal growth in a targeted manner. This process of self-knowledge helps us to improve ourselves, and at the same time, it can make us more leisurely in the face of life challenges.

These guidelines have broad application prospects in the fields of family education, school education, and workplace life, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Application Areas and Positive Impacts of Guidelines for Enhancing Spiritual Realm

Area	Application Description	Positive Impacts
Family Education	Parents guide children to read, appreciate art, practice meditation, and nurture spiritual growth	Enhance parent-child relationship, improve children's overall quality, promote family harmony
School Education	Schools offer relevant courses or activities to promote students' spiritual realm enhancement	Increase students' interest in learning, cultivate innovative thinking, enhance campus cultural atmosphere
Workplace Life	Working professionals utilize spare time for spiritual cultivation, improving work efficiency and quality of life	Reduce work stress, enhance professional competencies, strengthen team cohesion

In the family, parents can guide their children to establish correct values and cultivate their virtue and spiritual pursuit. School teachers can pay attention to students' all-round development, not only imparting knowledge, but also paying attention to their spiritual growth. Employees in the workplace can pay attention to their moral cultivation and spiritual satisfaction while pursuing career success, and realize the harmonious development of individuals and organizations. However, the implementation of these guidelines has not been smooth sailing. We may encounter challenges from social pressure, personal habits and educational environment. The related challenges are detailed in Figure 2:

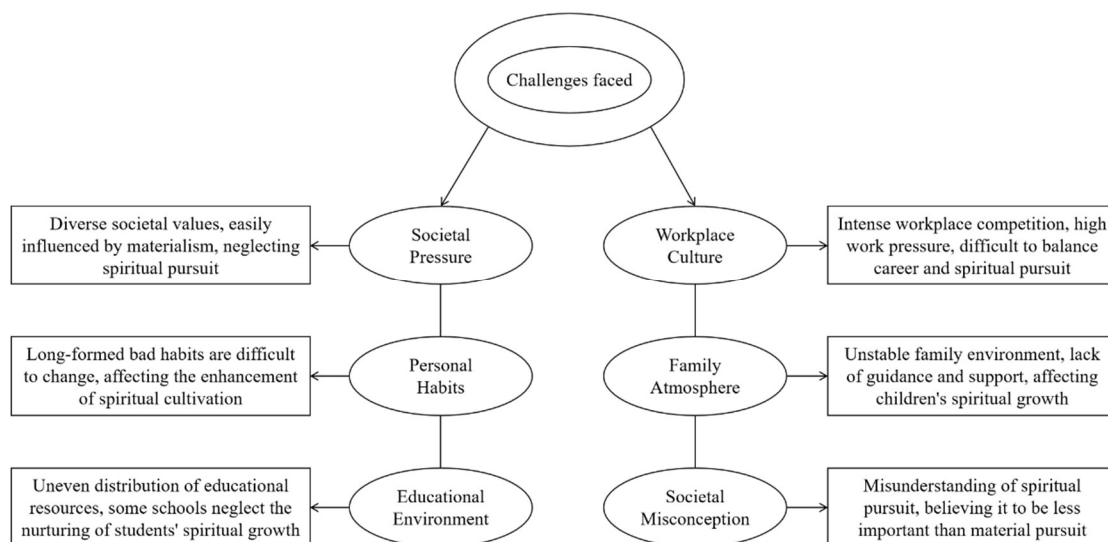


Figure 2. Challenges Faced in Implementing Guidelines for Enhancing Spiritual Pursuit

In order to cope with these challenges in Figure 2, we need to adopt active strategies. Strategies include strengthening social propaganda and creating a good atmosphere of advocating virtue and spiritual pursuit; Improve the education system and pay attention to cultivating students' comprehensive quality; Encourage personal self-reflection and growth, and form a positive attitude towards life. See Table 5 for the strategies and expected effects of coping with the challenge of improving spiritual realm:

Table 5. Strategies and Expected Outcomes for Addressing Challenges in Enhancing Spiritual Pursuit

Strategy Direction	Specific Measures	Expected Outcomes
Strengthen Social Propaganda	Foster a social atmosphere that advocates morality and spiritual pursuit, enhance public awareness	Increase society's emphasis on spiritual pursuit, form a positive social climate
Improve Education System	Focus on cultivating students' comprehensive qualities, strengthen education on spiritual growth	Enhance students' overall qualities, cultivate talents with noble character and spiritual pursuit
Encourage Personal Growth	Advocate for personal self-reflection, promote the formation of a positive life attitude	Strengthen individuals' awareness of self-improvement, promote personal comprehensive development and social harmony
Strengthen Policy Support	Formulate relevant policies, encourage and support the development and promotion of spiritual and cultural activities	Promote the prosperous development of spiritual and cultural activities, provide more spiritual nourishment for the public

Table 5 contains four main strategies, each of which defines specific measures and expected results, helping people to understand more comprehensively how to cope with and enhance the challenges of spiritual realm. Its purpose is to better promote the spread and practice of the ancient Greek

concept of happiness and broader spiritual culture in modern society. Through the above efforts, we believe that the ancient Greek concept of happiness will play a more active role in the life of modern citizens.

5. Conclusion

After in-depth discussion of the ancient Greek philosophers' views on happiness, we can find that the crystallization of wisdom after thousands of years has far-reaching guiding significance for modern citizens' life. The pursuit and understanding of happiness by ancient Greek philosophers is closely related to the inner world of individuals and the harmonious progress of society. They emphasize that spiritual satisfaction is higher than material pursuit, moral cultivation is the cornerstone of personal happiness, and self-knowledge is the only way to grow up. These views still shine in modern society, providing us with a guide to pursue a happy life. These views on happiness show modern value in promoting personal happiness and social harmony. On the personal level, they guide us to pay attention to our inner real needs and pursue a meaningful life instead of blindly pursuing external fame and fortune. On the social level, these happiness views advocate a kind of interpersonal relationship based on moral behavior, which is helpful to build a more harmonious and stable social order. When everyone can pay attention to their own moral cultivation and treat others with kindness and justice, the overall atmosphere of society will become more warm and harmonious.

With the continuous progress of society and the increasing openness of people's ideas, more and more people begin to pay attention to their inner world and spiritual pursuit. The happiness view of ancient Greek philosophers will provide us with valuable ideological resources and guide us to find our own way of happiness in the complicated society. These views of happiness will also become an important topic in the future research direction, attracting more scholars to conduct in-depth discussion and research. Here, we call on all sectors of society to pay attention to and practice these ancient Greek views on happiness. The government, schools, enterprises and every individual should work together to integrate these wisdom into our daily life. By cultivating virtue, pursuing spiritual satisfaction and self-awareness, we can jointly build a better and more harmonious modern society.

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