

Emotional Transcendence in Confucianism

Ming Yi

Zhaoqing University

Zhaoqing, China 526061

Abstract—Emotion is a form of psychological reaction shared by human beings. It determines the transcendental spirit shared by human beings. The emotional transcendence of Confucian culture in Chinese traditional culture is very obvious, and the cultural core of emotional transcendence is different in the performance and operation process of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoist cultural traditions. There is a difference between the emotional transcendence of Western cultural traditions and that of Chinese cultural traditions. The tendency of emotional transcendence in Confucianism has obvious contemporary value.

Keywords—Confucianism; emotional transcendence; multiculture

I. INTRODUCTION

Emotion is a unique form of psychological reaction shared by human beings. It determines the transcendental spirit. This kind of people's interaction between the self-consciousness and the objective world in the process of practice causes confusion and contradiction, promoting people to pursue the meaning world. People's pursuit of meaning gives more meaning and value to their own lives. It is a common ideological and behavioral activity of human beings. The basic motivation lies in the transcendental spirit shared by human beings. Both the Eastern and Western cultural traditions have unremittingly explored and pursued the meaning of life. This article explains the emotional transcendence tendency in Confucianism, and analyzes the performance and operation process of the cultural core of emotional transcendence in the Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoist cultural traditions. Finally, we can understand the contemporary value of Confucian emotional transcendence.

II. EMOTION AND EMOTIONAL TRANSCENDENCE

In terms of the connotations, the so-called emotions are more commonly used in a field of psychological science. Based on these objective and realistic relationships, Human beings are exposed to the objective reality in their own life movements. Emotion is the general term for the form of life experience and special forms of psychological reaction. (There are studies believe that animals and even some plants have emotions, and we won't talk about this topic in this article. Therefore, this paper won't adopt this view). Essentially, it is a concentrated, intensive, and prominent form of life. Emotional activities can influence human thoughts and behavioral processes through people's psychological cognitive activities, and have an important restrictive effect on the interaction process between human

beings and the objective reality of the outside world. Human emotions are complex, universal, hierarchical, and transcendent. The complexity of emotions means that emotional activities are the real life feelings of human beings, and they have complex ways of being. For example, emotions are both variable and invariant. Variable means that the presence or absence of emotions, strength, duration, and form are uncertain and changeable. This variability may be the result of both physical and psychological factors, or it may be the result of a large number of social factors. The invariability of emotion means that emotion is a peculiar form of psychology for human beings, and it follows certain basic laws of physiology and psychology. The universality of emotions means that there is a universal emotion with same nature and different name in human society. This universal emotion refers to the abstraction abstracted from the specific emotions of each individual. It is the emotions universally shared by human beings. For example, sympathy (known as mercy in ancient China), patriotism (there is also the idea of giving birth to life, killing themselves into the benevolence in ancient China). The emotion level indicates that the occurrence, development, trend and form of human emotions can be divided into different levels. One is the direct expression of life feelings, such as "love, anger, sorrow, happiness". And the other is more extensive and advanced expression of emotional image, such as curiosity, enterprise and so on. Emotional transcendence means that with the continuous improvement of human beings and the development of society, human emotions will continue to develop towards socially advanced emotions with stable, advanced and profound meanings, such as: sense of justice, responsibility, honor feeling and so on. The emotional transcendence is shared by human beings. However, it will have different performance operation process affected by factors such as nationality, geography, cultural traditions and so on. This article focuses on the emotional transcendence of Confucianism in the traditional culture of the Chinese nation.

III. THE PERFORMANCE OF EMOTIONAL TRANSCENDENCE IN CONFUCIANISM

Since Socrates' "I know that I am ignorant", people's philosophical thinking and the exploration on meaning and value of life has become one of the centers of thought of Western philosophers. The famous saying "knowing yourself" at the Temple of Delphi in ancient Greece not only symbolizes the strong desire of human beings to self-verify themselves, but also shows the confusion of human beings. The famous saying of Protogola, the philosopher of the

apologist school of the ancient Greek, "human beings are the scale of all things" declares the awakening of human self-consciousness, and makes human beings proud of themselves for the first time in front of nature. However, due to the rule of medieval theology in Europe, the status of man declined. Human beings were denounced as the slaves to God, and lost the self-consciousness and the ability to make the exploration. With the rise of the Renaissance, this situation has changed. Many Renaissance representatives have re-announced the liberation of mankind. As Shakespeare's saying, "human beings are the essence of the universe, the primate of all things". Petrarch believes that human thoughts replace God's thoughts. Dante believes that people can't live like beasts, should pursue knowledge and virtues. People regain the dignity and pride of life. With the development of capitalism, human beings have felt the extraordinary power of reason and science. However, the capitalist material civilization based on the shameless bloody plunder has caused the Westerners to fall into the spiritual crucifixion. Since the Renaissance, the loss of the Western rationalist tradition has freed Westerners from the dependence and pride of the soul, falling into the anxiety and struggle of the spiritual world. When Schopenhauer's "will to life" and Nietzsche's "will to power", hailed by Maupassant as the "greatest dream destroyer in the history of mankind", came into being, human beings' life was not full of joy and hope, but full of pessimism and negativity. With Schopenhauer's "life was a fake path" and Nietzsche's idea of "walking on the road that fate set for me", the mystical philosopher Kierkegaard's "choose yourself" already lose confidence and courage of "knowing yourself" on the Delphi Temple. The two world wars since the 20th century have pushed the rationalist crisis of capitalism and the confusion of the spiritual world to the extreme. In the history, we have always believed that the science and rationality are the powerful weapons of mankind to conquer the world. Killing each other caused by the world war has fallen into the paradox. It is undeniable that science and rationality have indeed played a huge role in helping humanity conquer nature. One of the manifestations is to expand human freedom, including freedom of movement, freedom of material consumption, etc. However, freedom often means the choice. Human beings are actually afraid of the freedom of choice. In the long history, whether it is moving forward or backward, people will feel helpless. The problems such as ecological deterioration, nuclear war, food crisis, terrorism make the choice extremely difficult. It is no wonder that Fromm wants to advocate "evading freedom." A magnificent blueprint of the western world's pursuit of man's own value reveals the deep confusion and perplexity of the western ideological circle.

IV. THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG EMOTIONAL TRANSCENDENCE OF CONFUCIANISM, BUDDHISM, TAOISM AND WESTERN MULTICULTURAL TRADITIONS

Traditional Chinese culture and Western religious culture have similar aspects in terms of emotional transcendence, and they are different in operation and performance. From the perspective of the value meaning, it is aimed at opening

up a path of value that makes life break through the limited and achieve the infinite. At this point, the emotional transcendence of traditional Chinese culture is similar to the Western religious spirit. However, the spiritual form of Chinese traditional culture is completely different from the "transcendence" intention of Western religious culture. There is no concept of God in Chinese traditional culture that transcends knowledge. There is no concept of the afterlife. The "天" (world) of Chinese traditional culture is not the "God" beyond the real world, and is one of the components of the system of "world and person". Therefore, the self-transcendence of "individual" in the emotional transcendence of traditional Chinese culture is not to achieve a higher principle beyond the secular, but to achieve "harmony between man and nature", that is, to advocate "harmony". Chinese traditional culture believes that "being close to human feeling and adapting to the rules". The "天道" here are actually "humanity", that is, the idealized harmonious relationship between human beings. If people can maintain "harmony", it is in line with "humanity". This is what Confucian believes people have the ability to think about the heaven and earth. The Western Christian culture is different from the "humanity and nature" advocated by traditional Confucian culture. The "天" in Western religious concepts refers to "God" and "the Creator". It is a transcendence that people can continue to yearn for, but cannot be reached forever. They don't believe the concordance between human beings and nature. In their opinions, there has an insurmountable gap between human beings and nature.

We have studied the comparison between the emotional transcendence tendency in Chinese cultural traditions and the emotional transcendence tendency in Western Christian culture. And then, we can have a look at the similarities and differences of emotional transcendence in the three cultures of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. On the transcendence path of life being upward, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism have opened up three different paths. Confucianism has opened up a humanistic road, paying attention to "human being". It regards the individual as the existence of humanity and nature in the world, and people can constantly surpass and pursue the realization of themselves. Confucianism opens up a path of humanity, and Taoism opens up a path of nature. Taoism believes that Confucianism educates people by means of poems, calligraphy, rites and music, which are artificial, resulting in many problems, including pretense hypocrisy and humanity restrictions. People should save their true life without being dragged and controlled by the outside world. People can go the simple and natural road. "Tao" of the Taoism is different from the "humanity" of Confucianism. Tao is an ultimate existence. It is a completely non-personalized concept, including all things in the world. And it is more extensive than the concept of heaven and God. In Lao Zi's opinions, Tao is not a passively identified existence, but an unrestricted source and original object of all things. Laozi uses the finite things, that is, the opposite of "Yes" to grasp the conceptual nature of the "Tao". Laozi believes that human beings are one part of the Tao. The best way for people to treat life is to be incompetent. In this way, life can have unlimited creativity and freedom from destructive

power. In this case, life will naturally return to the truth with following the natural laws. Buddhism regards the real world and the human world as the pain and troubles of the people. They believe the existence of personal life is the source of many mistakes in the world. This is very similar to Laozi's "I have great troubles due to my physical body". The Buddhists believe that it is absurd to accept the reality of the illusory appearance and to affirm the true existence of the individual because of all kinds of fainting. Therefore, people are required to constantly pursue purification and super-lift. People should learn the Buddhist nature in the heart, and cultivate the Bodhi of physical body, achieving the religious realm of perfection and sincerity.

In summary, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism actually reflect the desire of Chinese philosophy pursuing the perfect world of idealization and value. If people can't reach the artistic realm of Confucian emotional transcendence and the unity of human beings and nature, the emotional transcendence of Taoism, or perfect religious realm of the Buddhist, life will inevitably fall into a situation of sorrow, ignorance, and even confusion. In fact, Chinese philosophy has already had religious spirit at this time. The greatness of the religious spirit lies in bearing all the sufferings of the human world. In the existence of human rational life, there are inevitably many irrational elements, such as, limited life, helplessness in certain states, and the conscientious recourse after doing wrong things. In fact, these irrational elements have become the reasons for the limits and the tragic elements of life, that is, the reasons for the limits of Confucianism and Taoism, the hard work of Buddhism, and the original sin of Christian theology.

V. CONTEMPORARY VALUE IMPLICATION OF CONFUCIAN EMOTIONAL TRANSCENDENCE

High sense of responsibility and dedication, the establishment of a harmonious and beautiful human homeland, and opening up a road for each individual to realize the value of life and show the brilliance of life should exactly show the contemporary value of Confucian emotional transcendence.

Confucianism recognizes the human values and believes that everyone has the humanity heart. Everyone can have humanity heart, and this must be achieved by the tireless efforts and pursuits of the individual. No one can achieve the humanity relying on the power of God or others' help. This has caused everyone to be responsible for the society. Everyone is an active individual with independent spirit. Therefore, it has formed a strong sense of personal responsibility of the Chinese people. In addition, "labor is not only a means of making a living, but it is the first need of life", which highlights the value orientation of the Chinese people's dedication. A high sense of responsibility and dedication is of great positive significance to the cause of building socialism today. Under the conditions of market economy, in addition to mobilizing the enthusiasm of socialist builders with economic factors, it is necessary to make good use of the important spiritual power and intellectual support of people's sense of responsibility and

dedication, which will undoubtedly greatly promote the development of socialist modernization cause.

VI. CONCLUSION

As mentioned above, in the face of the limitation of human life and the tragedy, human beings have many problems that need to be solved together. These problems are related to the survival and development of human beings. Confucian culture consistently advocates the concept of "harmony". While guiding China to build a socialist harmonious society and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, it will inevitably have important universal significance for building a harmonious world and creating a beautiful human home. It will inevitably give rise to new theoretical brilliance in the world where various problems are frequent in new century. For everyone as an individual, this value of Confucian culture is also obvious. It has opened up a road of life value for everyone to walk and truly existed, and has opened up a road for people to make the promotion from the limited life to the eternal spiritual world. These ways have freed people from the entanglement of worldly trivial matters, and the frustration of life mediocrity. People's lives have no burden and no regrets, and finally achieving the perfection of the world.

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