

The “Affective Tone” Never Absence:

The Values and Functions of Emotion in the Philosophy of Whitehead

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Abstract: The contemporary philosophies of the humanism oppose the supremacy of reason by unreason so that the roles of emotion in philosophies are emphasized. The “anxiety” is discussed by the existentialism, and the states-of-mind of emotions as the existent structure of Dasein are analysed by Heidegger. In the late, Heidegger stressed the tone of emotion in his philosophy. In the circle of the contemporary western scientism, Whitehead is a philosopher who puts the emotion in his philosophy firstly. In the realism of process, he insists on the organism and holism of the pan-subjectivism and pan-empiricism. His philosophy wants to answer how the universe becoming in the way of concrescence by activities of positive prehensions and negative prehensions from the subjects of experience, and how the universe towards the orders of civilization of truth, goodness, beauty by guidance of God as poet. Thus the emotion is very important factor in his philosophy. It is embodied not only in his ontology which the prehensions of empirical subjects need the subjective forms including the emotion, but also in his epistemology which the empirical feelings with the “affective tone” for cognitive subjects are regarded as the basis of direct perceptions, and understanding things by the way of inter-subjectivity rather than the way of subject and object, then the things possess their own emotions, values and become the subjects of values, of ethic. That is why process philosophy provides the theoretical basis of the land morality, and the foot of environmental ethics. Therefore, four issues will be discussed as follows: (1) The Emotion Never Absence in the Ontology: The Prehensions of Actual Entities with the Subjective Forms; (2) The Emotion as the Status of Presence in the Epistemology: The direct Perception Based on Deep Prehensions of Causal Efficacy; (3) The Emotion without Ignored on the Axiology: the Actual Entities with The “Affective Tone” benefiting themselves, others and Whole Universe; (4) The Emotion Stressed in the Ethics: Respect and love for Others Regarded as the Rules of Environmental Ethics.

Keywords: Whitehead; process philosophy; emotion; affective tone; value; occasion; prehension; subject of experience