Dwelling in the Nearness of Gods: A Hermeneutical Turn in Modern Confucian Understanding of Religiosity

In this talk I argue that, as far as the problem of Confucian religiosity is concerned, there is an interpretative turn from Mou Zongsan’s moral metaphysics to Tu Weiming’s religious hermeneutics. Some concluding remarks are made: First, Tu’s hermeneutics is rooted in the ontology of self as interrelatedness, which is completely different from Mou’s theory of true self as transcendental subjectivity. Second, Tu’s hermeneutics of self can be better illuminated with the help of Heidegger’s notion of Dasein as Being-with (Mitsein). For Tu and Heidegger, self cannot be seen as something separate from community. This article also points out that the paradigmatic shift is evidenced in another similarity between the four categories of self, community, nature, and the transcendent in Tu’s hermeneutics on the one hand, and the four symbols of earth, sky, divinities, and mortals employed by Heidegger to interpret the meaning of dwelling, on the other. In such a primordial situation of dwelling, gods are not supposed to be intellectually known; they are rather to be neighbors in community.

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