Technology and Metaphor in Early Chinese Philosophy

Early China’s masters of philosophy frequently use metaphors and analogies to formulate their philosophical arguments. Often readers regard these as purely literary devices. In this lecture I will suggest a different approach and argue that figurative language belonged to the normal register of tools used to analyze and describe the world, including technical knowledge. I start from the premise that the technical (or “scientific”) and the philosophical (or moralistic and political) are not necessarily mutually exclusive and will show that metaphors can be interesting not only for their symbolical or referential potential but as a source of technical and social information. I will illustrate this with passages that deal with agriculture in Warring States and early imperial texts.

Second Lecture: Roeland Sterckx (胡司德) 2018-5-10 16:20

Place: West Campus Building 1201

Time: 2018年5月10日星期四16:20

Venue: South Campus Building 1201

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