

Dwelling in the Nearness of Gods: The Hermeneutical Turn from MOU Zongsan to TU Weiming

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Abstract This article argues 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.

Keywords TU Weiming · MOU Zongsan · Heidegger · Religiosity · Confucianism

1 Introduction

In this article I will investigate the contrasting conceptions of Confucian religiosity, or "Confucian religiousness," the phrase TU Weiming prefers to use, in MOU Zongsan's moral metaphysics and Tu's religious hermeneutics. Before proceeding, I shall first explain the title of this essay. "Dwelling in the nearness of gods" is a phrase I took from Heidegger's "Letter on Humanism," where he translates Heraclitus' fragment *ēthos anthrōpōi daimōn* as "Man dwells, insofar as he is man, in the nearness of god." According to Heidegger's reading, "ethos" in the fragment means "abode," "dwelling place," or "the open region in which man dwells." Radically different from the current understanding of ethics in terms of moral subjectivity, Heidegger interprets "ethos" as the existential life-world in which human beings

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live. Ethos is “the (familiar) place which is the open space for the presencing of god (the unfamiliar one)” (Heidegger 1977a, b, c: 234). It is in the everyday life-world, the ontological ground of Dasein, where one awaits the coming of gods. Gods are not *beyond* the life-world. They are *in* the life-world, near the place where man dwells. Inspired by Heidegger’s radical thinking, I intend to utilize this metaphor of “dwelling in the nearness of gods” as a means of reinterpreting Tu’s hermeneutics of Confucian religiosity. If the conclusions of this interpretative project are correct, as I believe my arguments will indicate, what emerges is a discontinuity within the seeming continuity from Mou’s metaphysics to Tu’s hermeneutics.

In his “Letter on Humanism,” Heidegger criticizes subjectivist humanism to the extent that even Neo-Confucian humanism would be included as one of his targets of criticism. Conversely, MOU Zongsan, and TU Weiming as well, in turn totally rejected Heidegger’s phenomenological hermeneutics. Despite the apparent conflict between Heidegger and the Neo-Confucians (Mou in particular), however, I try to find some common ground between Tu’s religious hermeneutics and Heidegger’s ontological hermeneutics. I argue that there is a subtle hermeneutical turn in Tu’s writings from Mou’s moral metaphysics. The lineage of modern Neo-Confucian thought from Mou to Tu is evidenced in the overlaps of their professional and academic lives at Tunghai University. In 1957, the young Tu began his undergraduate studies at Tunghai, whereas Mou had moved to this newly established Protestant university the year prior. Three years later, Mou left Tunghai for the University of Hong Kong. Since that time, Tu has often acknowledged his deep indebtedness to Mou’s influence (Tu 2002: 373).¹ As can be witnessed by Tu’s later writings, there is no doubt that Mou’s philosophy has played an important role in the development of Tu’s thought.

For the time being, my investigation will be mostly confined to Mou’s *Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy* (1971) and Tu’s *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiosity* (1989). The reason for my focus on Tu’s *magnum opus* is simply because it has been regarded as one of the most influential works on the subject. What may be unconventional is my emphasis on Mou’s *Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy*, instead of on his other mature works, like *Appearance and Thing-in-itself* (1975) or *An Essay on Highest Good* (1985). As we will see, Mou’s critique of Heidegger in *Intellectual Intuition* is decisive for deciphering the former’s understanding of religion. In the first section, I briefly review the onto-theo-logical trinity of Mind–Nature–Heaven found in *Mencius 7a1*, which is representative of the doctrinal context in which the meaning of Confucian religiosity was articulated in both pre-Qin Confucian and Song-Ming Neo-Confucian writings. In the second section, I shift my focus on Mou’s philosophical engagement with Kant and Heidegger with regard to the problem of God and intellectual intuition. Highlighted are Mou’s exegetical interpretation and philosophical arguments for intellectual intuition as instrumental to the possibility of transcendental knowledge. In the final section, I will attempt to bring Tu into dialogue with Heidegger and argue that Tu’s hermeneutics of religion can no longer be read through the lens of moral metaphysics.

2 Knowing Heaven and Serving Heaven

Before I articulate the problem of religiosity as it was interpreted in classical Confucian literature, I will first define the problem of Confucian religiosity as simply *that which deals*

¹ My bringing Mou into dialogue with Tu can be justified by reading Tu’s dedication to Mou in his *Centrality and Commonality*, where he describes his former mentor as “an original thinker and an inspiring teacher.”

with the existential and religious relationship between Heaven and man. Though the root metaphors contained in this formula still require a further “thick description” for the following analysis,² we will, for the sake of convenience, start with some meditations on the writings of Mencius. For early Confucians, the ultimate concern, known as “religiosity” today, was identified as the spiritual effort involved in finding the means to “know Heaven” (*zhitian* 知天) and “serve Heaven” (*shitian* 事天):

He who has fully realized all his mind–heart knows his nature. Knowing his nature, he knows Heaven. To preserve one’s mind–heart and nourish one’s nature is the way to serve Heaven. When neither a premature death nor long life makes any difference, with cultivated character he waits for whatever may happen—this is the way in which his destiny is established.³ (*Mencius* 7a1)

In this passage, the onto-theo-logical trinity of Mind (*xin* 心)–Nature (*xing* 性)–Heaven (*tian* 天) appears as the most fundamental Confucian dictum for the first time. First, the rich ambiguity of the “Heaven” metaphor, among others, calls for careful treatment. It was conceived in the Pre-Qin era alternately as the Creator, Nature, or the transcendental ground of being. This *theological* conception of Heaven as the Supreme Creator was derived from a primitive, yet truly authentic religious sentiment. Secondly, conceiving Heaven as *physis*⁴ (nature beyond good and evil) is well documented in both Daoist and Confucian classics, such as *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Xunzi*. In this line of thought we see the *cosmological* usage of the metaphor “Heaven.” Finally, there is the *ontological* impulse to conceive Heaven as the transcendental ground of existence. In this respect, it is plausible to construe the relationship between Heaven and human in light of the ontological difference between Being and Dasein in the Heideggerian sense.⁵

Sustaining this ontological and theological distinction between Heaven and human is essential to Mencius’ thinking. Heaven is Heaven, and human is human. This ontological difference cannot be simply reduced to the *immanent* relationship between Heaven and human only. As seen in the *Mencius*, Heaven is seen by human beings as the Transcendental Other, which can be *known* and *served* only, but not as that which can be self-cognized and re-unified with as the later Neo-Confucians have maintained. This transcendental distinction is clearly found in a conversation between Mencius and his disciple, WAN Zhang, about the Heavenly Mandate of Shun: “Heaven does not speak but reveals itself by its acts and deeds” (*Mencius* 5a5).⁶ In contrast to the finitude of human,

² When explaining the job of an ethnographer, Clifford Geertz proposes a “thick description” as a method of interpretation to deal with “a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render” (Geertz 1973: 10). For “root metaphors,” see Allan 1997:

³ I adopt James Legge’s translation with slight modification.

⁴ The reason I adopt the Greek concept of *physis* to render the Chinese “Heaven” is based on Heidegger’s hermeneutic exegesis: “What does the word *physis* denote? It denotes self-blossoming emergence (e.g., the blossoming of a rose), opening up, unfolding, that which manifests itself in such unfolding and preserves and endures in it, in short, the realm of things that emerge and linger on” (Heidegger 1959: 14).

⁵ Heidegger argues that “thus we think of Being rigorously only when we think of it in its difference with beings, and of beings in their difference with Being” (Heidegger 1969: 62). As one of the anonymous reviewers points out, this claim needs a lot of explanation to be made plausible. As explained later in this article, bringing Heidegger into consideration will help to loosen the metaphysical reading in Mou’s and Tu’s works.

⁶ D.C. Lau’s translation.

Heaven is conceived in this context as a Supreme Being watching over creatures from above. In the *Mencius*, Heaven is also taken as the transcendental ground of humanity. According to Mencius' distinction between the "small person" and the "great person," those who follow the lead of the senses become small persons, while those who follow the lead of mind–heart become great persons. As for the latter, Mencius further states that the faculty of thinking in mind–heart is endowed from Heaven (see *Mencius* 6.15). This signifies that moral sensibility and moral knowledge are to be characterized as being transcendently grounded in Heaven and cannot be naturalized. We find in the relation between mind–heart and Heaven an ontological clue to help explain how it is possible to *know* Heaven through the cultivation of mind–heart, *for only mind–heart is capable of knowing*.

Historically, the clue can first be traced to *The Doctrine of the Mean*, a text that is believed to have been handed down to Mencius from Zisi, the grandson of Confucius.⁷ Right in its the opening we find the fundamental metaphysical statement that [human] nature is conferred from Heaven (*tian ming zhi wei xing* 天命之謂性), meaning that human nature should be conceived as the transcendental ground without which human beings *qua* human beings become inexplicable. With the aid of this doctrinal connection, we now are able to fully understand the ontological trinity of Mind–Nature–Heaven in *Mencius* 7a1. According to this Confucian ontology, "mind" refers to the subjective aspect of human existence and "nature" refers to the objective aspect, whereas both mind and nature are transcendently grounded in Heaven. To put it in another way, Heaven is viewed as the *telos* and ground of humanity. Precisely in light of this ontology, *knowing* and *serving* Heaven becomes possible.

3 Intellectual Intuition in Metaphysics of Subjectivity

In Song and Ming Neo-Confucianism, learning to *know* and *serve* Heaven is seen as equivalent to the task of learning to be a sage. For Neo-Confucians, being a sage means being able to fully participate in the sacredness of Heaven, which is also identified as "Transcendental Creativity" or "True Integrity," in both the cosmological and moral senses. How to become a sage through self-cultivation thus becomes a central concern for all Neo-Confucians.

Following the major themes of Lu-Wang's (LU Jiuyuan 陸九淵 and WANG Yangming 王陽明) Learning of Mind–Heart, which calls for listening to the spiritual echoes of mind–heart where the objectivity of principle/rationality prevails, MOU Zongsan takes a strategic detour through Kant's critical philosophy in responding to the call of Heaven. The result was Mou's *Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy*, published in 1971. As Mou himself stated, his project would never have been realized if he did not read Martin Heidegger's *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* and *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Instead of following Heidegger's path, however, Mou found that Heidegger commits a metaphysical mistake which leads him in the direction of Kant's *immanent* metaphysics to establish a fundamental ontology. Mou contends that, on the contrary, what is truly worthy of appreciation is Kant's *transcendent* metaphysics in which the existence of the thing-in-itself, God, Free Will, and Soul can be justified through intellectual intuition.

⁷ The doctrinal continuity between *The Doctrine of the Mean* and *Mencius* is reflected in one essential statement, "Sincerity is the way of Heaven. The attainment of sincerity is the way of human" (*The Doctrine of the Mean* 20.18; *Mencius* 4a12).

Is it possible to fully justify the existence of thing-in-itself in Kant's philosophy? For Mou, Kant's answer is totally unsatisfactory as he does not recognize intellectual intuition as part of human nature. Mou emphatically states that if human beings do not possess intellectual intuition, then knowledge of the noumenal world becomes unattainable. As a consequence, the foundation of Chinese philosophy also collapses (Mou 1971: "Preface," 2–4). Concerning the problem of *knowing* Heaven, which is the same as knowing the noumena, one crucial step taken by Mou was to establish the metaphysics of self as the theoretical ground of intellectual intuition, *for without intellectual intuition, knowing Heaven is impossible*. According to Mou, the "self" as the subject of knowing is divided into two aspects. First, there is a self as the subject of empirical knowledge (*wenjianzhizhi* 聞見之知), or the self of reasoning and cognition. Mou variously refers to it as the "formal self," "logical self," or "framing self," for it appears as a self of cognition simply due to the constitutive function of concepts and categories. Second, there is self as the subject of transcendent/moral knowledge (*dexingzhizhi* 德性之知), which is the true self endowed with the potential for intellectual intuition.

Mou continues to elaborate the distinction of two selves. (1) Because the cognitive self (the subject of cognition) is neither the object of sensory intuition nor the object of intellectual intuition, it cannot be viewed either as appearance or thing-in-itself. It can be viewed only as a *transcendental* self in the epistemological sense but not in the metaphysical or ontological sense. It is, therefore, not a true self because, according to Mou, only a metaphysical self is a true self, whereas an epistemological subject merely serves as the condition of knowledge.⁸ (2) The true self can be viewed either as appearance or as thing-in-itself. As appearance, the true self is the object of sensory intuition. However, what can be intuited by the inner sense is not the true self itself but merely the changing process of mental states. The latter is transcendently determined as self only through the determination of the category of substance. On the contrary, true self as thing-in-itself can be known by intellectual intuition only. However, since for Kant human beings do not possess intellectual intuition, there is no way to affirm the existence of the true self. Kant contends that the true self, also referred to as "immortal soul" in the Christian tradition, is absolutely unknowable because it lies beyond our capacity for knowledge. Kant concludes that if someone claims to possess knowledge of the true self or immortal soul, then such a person has already fallen into the transcendental fiction (Mou 1971: 180–181).

How does Mou argue for intellectual intuition within the tradition of Chinese philosophy? In the Chapter "How is Intellectual Intuition Possible? On the Completion of Moral Metaphysics in Confucianism," Mou answers the question in two steps. In the first step, he demonstrates exegetically the affirmation of intellectual intuition in the Chinese tradition by citing several Neo-Confucian texts, ZHANG Zai's 張載 in particular. Following the first step of hermeneutical exegesis, Mou in the second step proceeds to offer his theoretical arguments for the possibility of intellectual intuition. Unlike the prevailing characterization of Zhang's philosophy as the metaphysics of vital force (*qi* 氣), Mou insists that Zhang never deviated from the true spirit of Confucian moral metaphysics, which can be seen in Zhang's distinction between transcendental knowledge (*dexingzhizhi*) and empirical knowledge (*wenjianzhizhi*) (Mou 1968: 437). According to this distinction,

⁸ Following Kant, Mou uses the notion of "transcendental" to mean the a priori condition of knowledge in the epistemological sense. For the distinction between the usages of "transcendental" and "transcendent" in Kant's system, see Mou 1975: 359–365. However, it should be noted that in many other places Mou also uses *chaoyuedi* 超越的 in the metaphysical sense.

transcendental knowledge about the Way of Heaven, which is Creativity itself, is grounded in the true self that is capable of realizing intellectual intuition through self-cultivation. For Kant, on the contrary, there is no possibility at all for human beings to know the thing-in-itself through intellectual intuition. For Zhang, however, the transcendental knowledge about the Way of Heaven is absolutely attainable through full realization of the true self, which is also called “original mind” (*benxin* 本心) in Zhang’s writings.

According to Mou’s interpretation, when the defiled obstruction of the senses is eliminated, the original mind is capable of universally nourishing and comprehensively illuminating the myriad things-in-themselves. Those things do not appear as *ob-jects* of the original mind. They are *e-jects* in the sense that there is no duality of mind and thing. As Mou puts it,

In comprehensive illumination and universal nourishment, myriad things do not appear as the object of cognition. They appear as things-in-themselves.... Therefore, in comprehensive illumination one knows everything and yet knows nothing. All things appear as things in themselves, *which are given in the original mind*, within the transparency of comprehensive illumination. They are not thought through categories, nor known through sensory intuition. What are thought through categories and known through sensory intuition are objects as “appearance.” On the contrary, what are transparently intuited are things-in-themselves. When they are transparently *intuited* by the original mind, they are *created* by the original mind, too. (Mou 1971: 187)

It is worth noting that the *e-jects* of intellectual intuition are also the *e-jects* of creation. What is intellectually *intuited* is also what is *created* by the original mind. The original mind is the transcendental subjectivity through and in which the Way of Heaven functions and manifests. Analytically speaking, the Way of Heaven is *known* by the original mind. As a matter of fact, however, the *knowing* of the original mind itself is nothing but the creative function of Heaven. Knowing Heaven thus is the self-knowledge of Heaven through the function of mind. This is Mou’s absolute idealism.

In addition to the above exegetic interpretation, Mou also proceeds to answer the theoretical question: How is intellectual intuition possible for human beings as the existence of finitude, since according to Kant, only God as the infinite being is qualified to possess this capability? Mou argues that the existence of intellectual intuition can be affirmed on the basis of morality. Following Kant, Mou defines the moral as that which accords with categorical imperatives issued by Free Will, which is also referred to in Confucian teachings as “original mind,” “original awareness,” “moral sensibility/creativity” (*renti* 仁體), and “transcendental nature” (*xingti* 性體). Mind is named for the subjective ground of morality, while transcendental nature is named for the objective ground. Both mind and nature are essentially the same as Heaven, the transcendental ground of being, which is in turn not different from God who knows and creates things-in-themselves with intellectual intuition. By the same token, and as witnessed in the Confucian tradition, “original mind” knows and creates things-in-themselves with intellectual intuition.

It is also important to note that the onto-theo-logical trinity of Mind–Nature–Heaven is taken to be the transcendental ground of morality and beings. As Mou says,

Although transcendental nature [*xingti*] is particularly shown in human moral behavior, it cannot be confined only in the moral realm without referring to the realm of being. Covering the whole universe, it is the source of all beings. It not only gives rise to human moral action, it also serves as the [ontological] ground of all beings,

including grass and trees. Hence it not only creates and sustains our morals, but also creates all beings and serves as the origin of all beings. It is therefore the principle of creation, the representation of creativity itself. (Mou 1971: 191)

Mou continues to point out that transcendental nature as universal creativity itself is not different from God, the highest sovereignty of being. In the Confucian doctrine of ontological trinity, human nature is transcendently endowed from Heaven and functions through mind–heart. In view of essence (*ti* 體), there is no difference in the trinity of Heaven, nature, and mind. Religious people may prefer to name Heaven as a personal God to whom they direct their prayers. Precisely for this reason, serving Heaven has been taken as the highest form of ritual in the Chinese religious tradition. In this respect, Confucian religiousness is best demonstrated in human’s relationship to Heaven as the transcendental ground of being. By the same token, the concept of immortal soul in Christianity is also affirmed in the Confucian notion of the true self. Both immortal soul and true self are central to Mou’s moral metaphysics. In short, Mou makes great effort to legitimize the metaphysics of God, Soul, and Free Will, by appealing to the Confucian trinity of Heaven, nature, and mind, in a way quite opposite to the spirit of Kant’s critical philosophy (Mou 1971: 201).

4 Hermeneutics of Confucian Selfhood and Religiousness

Now we examine Tu Weiming’s response to the call of the Transcendent. Without doubt, Tu follows Mou’s path in many aspects in his campaign for the revitalization of Confucianism. In this philosophical and spiritual enterprise, does Tu also inherit Mou’s moral metaphysics without reservation? Or does he take another route in elaborating Confucian religiousness? Before offering answers to these questions, we must first compare the two thinkers’ different conceptions of self.

Tu considers the Confucian self as a “center of relationships,” which is completely distinct from the Kantian self as an autonomous subject and from Mou’s self as transcendental subjectivity. Although Tu might like to place more weight on the notion of “center,” he cannot disallow the alternative reading which emphasizes the importance of “relationship.” If the reading of “self” as a center of *interrelatedness* is granted, as I suggest, then it becomes squarely opposed to the reading of “self” as an identity based on sameness (i.e., *idem*-identity) found in Mou’s thinking. For Mou, the true self is seen as an “unchanging core” of human subjectivity. According to Tu, on the contrary, the Confucian self should be viewed as an *ipse*-identity in which, as Paul Ricoeur points out, “the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other” (Ricoeur 1992: 2–3). This view of “oneself as another” is clearly echoed in Tu’s writing:

Indeed, since the Confucians perceive the self as a center of relationships rather than as an isolable individuality, the ability to show intimacy to those who are intimate is vitally important for allowing the closed private ego to acquire a taste for the open communicating self so that the transformation of the body can start on a concrete experiential basis. (Tu 1985: 176)

In that passage, we see that Tu rejects the interpretation of self as “isolable individuality.” On the contrary, what Tu deliberately reads into the Confucian notion of self as an “open

communicating self” reminds us of the Habermasian theory of communication which, instead of appealing to the individual subject in the Kantian sense, affirms that rationality can be realized only in a system of open communication.⁹

Following Tu’s conception of self as a locus of relationships, we come to understand why he puts so much emphasis on the idea of community as a crucial dimension in the constitution of Confucian selfhood. For Tu, Confucian religiousness arises from the boundless expansion of human sensitivity via community and state upward to Heaven. In this process of spiritual ascendance, community is not merely taken as mediator. Rather, it is conceived as part of the holistic dynamism of being. Although Tu does not explicitly explore the fundamental ontology of self as interrelatedness, his insight is open to the interpretation of the Confucian self as “being-in-community,” a notion which is close to Heidegger’s definition of *Da-sein* as “being-in-the-world.” In view of Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, self and community are not considered as two separate entities. Prior to the separation between individual and community, we *are* always already part of a community, because we *are* the locus of interrelatedness.

In comparison, Tu’s repeated emphasis on the fiduciary community as an “irreducible reality in ultimate transformation” was never seen in any of Mou’s reflections on Confucian religiousness. According to Tu, the Confucian way of being religious can be defined as “ultimate self-transformation as a *communal act* and as a *faithful dialogical response* to the transcendent” (Tu 1989: 94, 97). There are two points in Tu’s emphasis on the irreducibility of community. 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, the cultural diversity in the pluralistic world that Tu faces was never a serious issue for Mou, who lived in the rather simple-minded pathos of cultural nationalism. For Mou’s generation, to rise up to and overcome the challenge of the West was always the main concern. As a consequence, not much attention was paid to foreign religious traditions other than Christianity. On the contrary, Tu recognizes that the Confucian community, as it were, must see itself as merely one of the world’s many religious communities. Confucians should live together with Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Each group has its own distinct community and set of religious practices. For this reason, Tu also emphasizes the importance of religious dialogue, an idea not taken seriously in the generation of his mentor.

In the hermeneutical turn from Mou to Tu, another philosophical complication is in need of further elaboration. Tu himself may not be clearly aware of the fact that his hermeneutics of Confucian religiousness deviates from Mou’s path when he characterizes the self as the center of relatedness and emphasizes the significance of community. This can be seen in Tu’s reading of Mou’s *Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy*. In Tu’s reading, at least on the surface, we do not find any disagreement with Mou’s main thesis, especially regarding Mou’s criticism of Heidegger. Tu clearly admits that, in contrast to Heideggerian thought, the guiding principle of Neo-Confucian thought is “neither historicity nor temporality,” but “the (non-temporal) unfolding of humanity as the self-disclosure of ultimate reality through intellectual intuition of human beings” (Tu 1985: 163). In the article’s conclusion, Tu unequivocally defends Mou’s philosophical stance:

In Neo-Confucianism as well as in Heidegger’s thought, there is the necessity of developing an intrinsic relationship between the problem of man and a laying of the foundation of metaphysics. However, while Heidegger focuses on the finitude in man

⁹ Tu considers Habermas’ theory of communicative rationality as the same attempt to move “beyond the Enlightenment mentality” (see Tu 1998: 6).

and thus on the importance of *Dasein* as temporality, the governing perspective in Neo-Confucian thought is the realization of humanity in the absolute unity of man and Heaven. The central question for the Neo-Confucians is, then, How can I really know my true self? or, put in the context of the above discussion, How can I cultivate my capacity for intellectual intuition as a way of manifesting my true self and participating in the fundamental unity of the cosmos? To borrow from MOU Tsung-san, the question can be simply restated as the ontological possibility of intellectual intuition for human beings. (Tu 1985: 165)

For Mou, the possibility of intellectual intuition is predicated on the *vertical* trinity of Mind–Nature–Heaven thoroughly elaborated in the Neo-Confucian version of moral metaphysics. By contrast, Heidegger was devoted to disclosing the meaning of Being, a notion which is said to have been long forgotten in Western metaphysics. It is quite obvious that Mou and Heidegger take completely different stances toward metaphysics. For Mou, metaphysics is considered to be the ontological ground of existence. For Heidegger, on the contrary, metaphysics should be deconstructed in order to disclose the truth of Being.

In *Intellectual Intuition*, although Mou did not misinterpret the intent of Heidegger's deconstruction of Western metaphysics, he did criticize Heidegger for being wrongly preoccupied with thinking of facticity. What led to Mou's discontent was the fact that no idealist vision could be found in Heidegger's thought. For Mou, the Confucian mission was to resurrect *transcendent* metaphysics, a philosophy which had already been characterized by Kant as being dogmatic and by Heidegger as being onto-theo-logical in the negative sense. While Kant provides the rational foundation for the subject of knowledge and morality, Heidegger instead vows to break the spell of subjectivist metaphysics that had enchanted the whole of Western philosophy from Plato down to Nietzsche. On the contrary, Mou contends that the transcendental ground of being as affirmed in Confucian metaphysics should never be compromised by attempting to conceive of temporality as the ontological structure of *Dasein*. This explains why Mou rejects Heidegger's destruction of onto-theo-logy as "rootless" or "groundless" (Mou 1971: 353–354, 360).¹⁰

Heidegger's thinking might be more inspiring than Tu estimates for his hermeneutics. This is *the* point I want to make in this article. According to Heidegger, the ontological conditions of *Dasein* have been totally concealed in metaphysics, within Platonism and Cartesianism in particular. In Descartes' view, for example, the self is seen as the subject of cogito that is completely separated from the external world. Existence is represented in accord with the duality of subject and object. As Heidegger observes, it follows that the world becomes picture and human becomes subject in the sphere of representation (Heidegger 1977c: 132–133). As a result, modern technology as *framing*, which is embedded in representational thinking and subjectivism, leads to the domination of nature, a condition which can only be salvifically cured through the disclosure of the primordial situation of existence prior to the segregation between the self as the subject of cognition and the world as the object of representation. Heidegger names the primordial situation of human existence as "*Dasein*" or "being-in-the-world." *Dasein* is *being-in* in the first place. It is not the *subject* alone. It is always being-in the intimate relationship which is characterized by Heidegger as *ready-at-hand* or as one body without any conceptual bifurcation between subject and object (Heidegger 1962: sections 12–13; Polt 1999: 46–48). If we turn to Neo-Confucians, especially ZHOU Dunyi 周敦頤 and ZHANG Zai, we find

¹⁰ It is worth noting that in his later period Mou appreciates the paradoxicality of the "groundlessness" in his interpretation of Tiantai Buddhist metaphysics.

in their writings a similar quest for the primordial experience of oneness in the cosmos prior to any conceptual discrimination.

In this connection, Tu's conception of self as the center of relationships can be better illuminated with the help of Heidegger's notion of Dasein as Being-with (*Mitsein*). As Heidegger explains, "Being-with" is "an existential characteristic of Dasein even when factually no Other is present-at-hand or perceived" (Heidegger 1962: 156). This means that even when one exists alone one is always already Being-with in the world. It is worth noting that, as Richard Polt points out, Heidegger's "Being with" also refers to the communal dimension of being-in-the-world (Polt 1999: 60). Community is not seen as something separate from the self. On the contrary, the self should be conceived as being-in-the-community in the first place as community is also ontologically rooted in Being-with. Heidegger's discussion of community has been quite controversial where he discusses the *fate* of Dasein and the *destiny* of people. Dasein's "historicizing is co-historicizing and is determinative for it as destiny [*Geschick*]" (Heidegger 1962: 436). Whether or not Heidegger's strong statements such as "our resoluteness for definite possibilities" and "only in communicating and in struggling does the power of destiny become free" can be interpreted as evidence of his political involvement in Nazism, he did clearly stress the role of community in the constitution of Dasein's historicity.¹¹ In parallel, the similar notions of community and historicity can be found in Tu's hermeneutics. In many places, Tu repeatedly emphasizes that "one becomes fully human within a community" (Tu 1989: 97). As Tu explains:

The Confucians believe that normally it is desirable to establish fruitful communication with the transcendent through communal participation.... The preferred course of action is to integrate all levels of the community (family, neighborhood, clan, race, nation, world, universe, cosmos) into the process of self-transformation. The Confucians believe that this gradual process of inclusion is inherent in the project of learning to be fully human. (Tu 1989: 97)

For Tu, religion as ultimate self-transformation is to be realized through the "communal act" only, instead of through secular individualism. In this respect, Confucianism and communitarianism are perfectly compatible with one another. If Tu goes on to dig deeper into the ontological ground of the communal act, however, his hermeneutics will undoubtedly come even closer to Heidegger's own analysis of Dasein as Being-in-the-world and Being-with. It is precisely along these lines that we can see the possibility of a paradigmatic shift from Mou's metaphysics to Tu's hermeneutics.

This paradigmatic shift is also evidenced in another similarity between the four categories of self, community, nature, and the transcendent in Tu's hermeneutics and the four symbols of earth, sky, divinities, and mortals employed by Heidegger to interpret the meaning of dwelling. By tracing the etymology of the term in the Old Saxon and Gothic languages, Heidegger re-interprets "dwelling" to mean "to remain in peace," a usage that had fallen into oblivion, similar to the Chinese saying of "resting one's body and standing for one's destiny": "To dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its essence" (Heidegger 1977a, b, c: 327). Dwelling also means the stay of mortals, human beings that will die, on the earth and

¹¹ "Our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. Only in communicating and in struggling does the power of destiny become free. Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its 'generation' goes to make up the full authentic historicizing of Dasein" (Heidegger 1962: 436).

under the sky, awaiting the coming of divinities. The fourfold belong together in one in which mortals *are* dwelling. Heidegger goes further to tell us that the true meaning of dwelling is *to preserve*:

Mortals dwell in the way they preserve the fourfold in its essential being, its presencing...

Mortals dwell in that they save the earth...

Mortals dwell in that they receive the sky as sky...

Mortals dwell in that they await the divinities as divinities...

Mortals dwell in that they initiate their own essential nature—their being capable of death—into the use and practice of this capacity, so that there may be a good death.

(Heidegger 1977a, b, c: 328–329)

Surprisingly enough, the above passage of Heidegger finds its echo in the “anthropocosmic vision” in *The Book of Change*: “The great man shares with the virtues of heaven and earth, the light of sun and mood, the order of four seasons, and the fortune of ghosts and gods” (Chan 1963: 264). More surprising is the similar picture found in ZHANG Zai’s “Western Inscription” (Chan 1963: 497–498). For Zhang, Heidegger, and Tu, the way of *knowing* and *servicing* Heaven is to *dwell* in the midst of the fourfold, instead of realizing it through intellectual intuition.

5 Conclusion

Although I believe I have sufficiently demonstrated the philosophical parallels between Tu and Heidegger, I am by no means suggesting that Tu has actually completed his own hermeneutical turn. Rather, I have attempted to outline ways in which Tu could make that turn more feasible. It goes without saying that we still sense in Tu’s thinking a strong tendency toward the metaphysics of subjectivity.¹² Tu also never gives up his insistence on an inclusive humanism in which the self is regarded as the *center* of a concentric circle. This stance is contrary to Heidegger’s claim that a humanism embedded in the metaphysics of subjectivity would destroy the meaning of being.¹³ For Heidegger, humanism and subjectivism are two sides of the same coin in that both lead to the forgetting of the meaning of Being. On the other side, Mou and Tu insist that their version of humanism is open-ended in the sense that human beings are not isolated from Heaven. Humanity cannot be defined as, and therefore constrained within the limits of, the *humanitas* of *homo humanus*, for through self-cultivation humanity becomes open to the Transcendence of Heaven.¹⁴ Here lies the philosophical tension between Heidegger and modern Neo-Confucianism. Moreover, in responding to the problem of religiosity, while Mou and Tu appeal to the capacity of intellectual intuition in human nature, Heidegger shows us a path to dwelling “in the nearness

¹² This can be seen in Tu’s claim: “Confucians, as opposed to collectivists, firmly establish the ‘subjectivity’ of the person as *sui generis*. No social program, no matter how lofty, can undermine the centrality of selfhood in Confucian learning” (Tu 1985: 179–180).

¹³ According to Heidegger, the most popular form of metaphysics in the modern age is humanism in which “the *humanitas* of *homo humanus* is determined with regard to an already established interpretation of nature, history, world, and the ground of the world, that is, of beings as a whole” (Heidegger 1977a: 202). In other words, all forms of humanism are rooted in the traditional metaphysics as a science of beings as a whole. For that reason, humanism belongs to the understanding of beings, but not of Being.

¹⁴ I have examined this problem in Lin 2002: 45–56.

of gods.” As he says, “Let us also in the days ahead remain as wanderers on the way into the neighborhood of Being” (Heidegger 1977a: 224). For Heidegger, the human is not supposed to *intellectually intuit* gods or Heaven. All humans can do is to dwell near the place where gods live. This is exactly what “community” means. Gods are not supposed to be *intellectually known*; they are rather to be neighboring in community. This insight might be considered as the best response of Heidegger, and Tu as well, to Mencius’ two most fundamental questions: How does human *know* Heaven? How does human *serve* Heaven?

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