

Intercultural Interpretative Difficulties of Modern Chinese Intellectual Development: A Hermeneutical View

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Abstract

This study is constituted by three components. The first will examine how Chinese scholars and Western sinologists have characterized modern Chinese intellectual history and what directions they have proposed for future intellectual development in China. The second section will construct a hermeneutic model of intercultural understanding and discuss its implications for the evaluation of modern Chinese intellectual development. I will show that an understanding of modern Chinese intellectual development in hermeneutical terms can circumventing many of the entrenched and misleading dichotomies in the field. In the third section, I will investigate three intercultural difficulties that modern and contemporary Chinese intellectuals face in the study of their own society and tradition. The recognition of these intercultural difficulties — which is made possible by re-conceptualizing local intellectual development in hermeneutical terms — put into relief the plight and possibilities of local intellectual development in non-Western localities.

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