

Castle and Human World: When Kafka and Zhuangzi Are Talking About the Logic of Authority

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Abstract

Kafka is no doubt one of the most charming and enigmatic figure in the western world, just like Zhuangzi in Sinophone. Both of them seem to present us with a solitary soul that escapes from any rule of the political, speaking in an absurd and fantastic style. This plausible impression, however, can hardly remain if we further consider how Kafka sharply describes the villagers' behavior engaged with the untouchable authority in *The Castle*, as well as Zhuangzi's elaborate analysis of the danger of entering the political area in human world(人間世). To speak precisely, Kafka, in spite of the de-political impression, always endeavors to say something about the secret of authority in western culture, while Zhuangzi has always led us to facing the difficulties inherent in Sinophone way of political life. My goal here is to clarify the different ways in which Kafka and Zhuangzi reveal the operating logic of political authority, and further to shed some light on their unique illumination for thinking about contemporary politics in this wider context.