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A Heideggerian Interpretation of Risk Sports

Abstract

As extreme sports gain popularity, some scholars describe our society as a ‘risky society,’ while others believe that the drive for adventure actually stems from a foundational sense of safety. The purpose of this study is to interpret the value of extremely risky sports, and the focus is on the situation of towards-death that reveals the possibility of our ‘being here’ (or Dasein) either authentically or inauthentically.

Firstly, I use the care structure of Dasein to interpret how high-risk sports participants received the call of their own authenticity. Then, I describe the existential disposedness of ‘shì sǐ rú guī,’ a Chinese term that can be translated as ‘to view death as a return home’ (Lai 2011). Finally, I try to point out the similarities and differences between ‘shì sǐ rú guī’ and ‘being-towards-death.’

This study concludes with two points:

- (1) The feeling of being not at home in highly risky sports leads us into an anxiety mode and being individualized, that is, the retreat of ‘the they’ and the highlighting of ourselves. In contrast, ‘shì sǐ rú guī’ describes death as a feeling of being at home, and returning home becomes an existential call for us to gain a foothold in the world.
- (2) Both ‘shì sǐ rú guī’ and ‘being-towards-death’ point to our own death as the key to understanding our own most being, but the former analogizes death as a kind of ‘return home,’ while the latter places the priority on Daisen’s future temporality over one’s self-understanding. ‘Shì sǐ rú guī’ could be an oriental interpretation of ‘being-towards-death.’

Keywords: Being and Time, anxiety, extreme sports, dangerous sports.

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