Rationalism and Anti-Rationalism in Later Mohism and *Zhuāngzǐ*

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Introduction

Zhuāng Zhōu: "I'm flattered you think some of the jottings in that pile of notebooks they named after me basically get the Way right. Personally, I couldn't say whether I know which way is *the* Way or not. I just try to find my way along as smoothly as I can, without quite knowing how I manage it.

"I'm puzzled why you call me an 'anti-rationalist,' though.[1] I pointed out that any judgments we act on assume certain preconditions, which depend on the perspective we take and often shift over time. We'd be wise to treat our judgments as provisional, because the basis for them isn't fixed or absolute."[2]

A. C. Graham: "Of course. You urged us to attend to the situation and respond, rather than analyzing, following rules, or reasoning from general principles."[3]

Zhōu: "I did suggest it's best to stay flexible and not overthink things. But why does that make me an 'anti-rationalist'? How I could be 'anti' something I never heard of, which nobody in my day ever talked about? 'Rationalism' holds that reason is the chief source of knowledge. It contrasts with empiricism, which holds that experience is the main source of knowledge. Whether reason is a special source of knowledge just wasn't an issue for us back then."

Graham: "Maybe I'm using the word 'rationalism' differently from you. I'm referring to the ideal of 'bringing all knowledge within the scope of reason,'[4] paired with the conviction that 'analytic reason' or 'the posing of alternatives' gives us knowledge of objective reality.[5] You rejected attempts to identify the Way or guide action by *biàn* (distinction-drawing 辯) and clearly distinguishing *shì-fēi* (this/not 是非), right?"

Zhōu: "Indirectly, sure. The outcome of *biàn* is always conditional, provisional, and incomplete. It might be acceptable in a particular context, for particular purposes, but has no privileged or absolute status. But what's the connection to rationalism?"

Graham: "You forbid us from thinking about what to do, instead of simply responding to the situation spontaneously."[6]

Zhōu: "Why would I forbid people from thinking about what to do? Some of the stories I collected suggest we perform best by getting out of our own way, putting worries aside, and not self-consciously directing our actions with the heart or mind.[7] The idea is to act from a blank, focused state that lets our skills and creative knack for problem-solving engage with the situation.[8] But the same stories also depict people thinking about how to act.[9] Nothing mysterious here—anyone who plays a sport or a musical instrument knows what I'm talking about. While you're learning or preparing, you may need to do some thinking and visualizing. Once it comes to the actual performance, you just focus, loosen up, and act.

"But how does any of this make me an 'anti-rationalist'? It doesn't really concern whether reason is a source of knowledge or whether knowledge falls within the scope of reason."

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Graham: "Sure it does. You reject *biàn* as a source of authoritative answers to normative questions, and you reject it as a decision procedure or action-guidance procedure for concrete contexts. So you reject reason as a basis for knowledge of the Way and how to follow it."

Zhōu: "*Biàn* is a process of judging what is or isn't the same kind of thing, usually by reference to models, exemplars, or precedents.[10] It comprises mainly analogical reasoning and judgment, often based on perceptual comparisons of similarity. A commitment to *biàn* as a source of knowledge is no closer to rationalism than to empiricism. I question the authority of *biàn* because there are a plurality of potentially justifiable ways to distinguish things as similar or different, and I reject it as a decision procedure because often the most effective way to act requires novel, creative, context-sensitive responses not captured by preconceived models or familiar distinctions. That's not rejecting 'rationalism.'"

Graham: "*Biàn* employs reason to form judgments. So rejecting *biàn* is rejecting reason. You reject *biàn* as authoritative, so you qualify as an anti-rationalist."

Zhōu: "*Biàn* can include pieces of reasoning, of course. But confidence in *biàn* doesn't commit you to rationalism. There's a big difference between engaging in reasoning—which everyone does—and holding that reason is the fundamental source of knowledge—a view only some philosophers endorse. To hold that view, you probably need to have an explicit concept of reason, to be concerned with sources of knowledge, and to think there's something distinctive about reason that makes it a good foundation for knowledge. Rationalism emerges from a particular sort of discursive context. Did early Chinese philosophy provide such a context?"

Huì Shī and Rationalism

Graham: "It did! Your friend Huìzǐ was a rationalist. He used analytic thinking to argue that 'all division leads to contradiction and therefore everything is one.'"[11]

Zhōu: "That makes him a rationalist?"

Graham: "He reaches that conclusion by reasoning. He starts from the assumption that divisions exist, derives a contradiction, and so concludes that actually they don't exist and the cosmos is a unity. He uses reason to justify a view of reality that's very different from the world we observe."

Zhōu: "Your interpretation seems a bit hasty. He says things like 'Just as things are alive, they are dying' and 'The south has no limit yet has a limit.'[12] You take him to be offering a *reductio ad absurdum* against divisions between things, but the *reductio* isn't in the text. He might be implying only that distinctions can be drawn in a plurality of ways, some mutually incompatible. The implied argument isn't that distinctions generate contradictions, so distinctions are mistaken and monism is correct. It's that there are many scales or perspectives from which to deem things 'the same' or 'different.' From one of them, we can deem 'the myriad things all the same' or 'heaven and earth one unit.'[13] Maybe he considered this the perspective of the cosmos itself, or maybe he thought it just one more perspective, as defensible as any other.[14]

"Even if we accept your interpretation, it's hard to see how Huìzǐ's views amount to rationalism. He doesn't identify reason as a special source of knowledge. Certainly I didn't see myself as engaged with him in a 'controversy over the place of reason.'"[15]

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Knowledge and Change in Later Mohism

Graham: "Well, I mentioned Huìzǐ because you were friends. The clearest example of rationalism in Chinese philosophy is the later Mohists. 'They share with the Greeks the faith that all their questions can be settled by reason—in their own terms, by *biàn*.'"[16]

Zhōu: "*All* their questions, including questions like whether it's raining right now? By reason alone?"

Graham: "I should have said 'fundamental questions.' The point is that they aimed to establish Mohist teachings 'on impregnable foundations,'[17] grounding them in logical necessity and so giving them 'a certainty…invulnerable to time.'"[18]

Zhōu: "Why would they be so concerned with necessity and certainty? Earlier Mohists thought it enough to argue that their Way was followed by Heaven itself and that it conformed to the 'Three Models'—the precedent of the sage-kings, the stuff of people's ears and eyes, and beneficial consequences when applied in government policy and the penal code. A focus on timeless, necessary truths of reason seems out of place in Chinese philosophy.[19] Doesn't Chinese thought focus on a conception of the Way as immanent in a dynamic natural and social world?"

Graham: "Yáng Zhū's ethical egoism sparked a metaphysical crisis that convinced the later Mohists that justificatory appeals to Heaven were no longer cogent, because a criminal could argue it was Heaven's intent that he fulfill his naturally endowed criminal nature.[20] They sought new foundations for their ethics independent of the authority of Heaven. The search for such foundations raised worries about how temporal change undermined knowledge."[21]

Zhōu: "But arguably the early Mohist appeal to Heaven was more of an expression or illustration of their ethics than a foundational justification.[22] Heaven merely articulates their conviction that the right norms are those that impartially promote the benefit of all. It's not obvious they'd perceive a Yangist doctrine of fulfilling our individual nature as threatening, rather than simply misguided."

Graham: "They explicitly mention this threat. They say 'Expounding for a criminal Heaven's being right while his nature is criminal is singing Heaven's being wrong.'"[23]

Zhōu: "That's a single obscure line from a text you called 'an assemblage of mutilated scraps.'[24] There's no context and no indication this point was so unsettling that it prompted a revolutionary turn in Mohist philosophy."

Graham: "Still, they never mention Heaven again."

Zhōu: "We can't really infer much from that. In any case, what's puzzling here is your claim that the relation between knowledge and change became 'the deepest and most troubling of problems' for the Mohists.[25] I'd have said their deepest problem was how to explain and justify the basis for distinguishing kinds one way rather than another."[26]

Graham: "They lived in an age of rapid social transformation in which ancient authority was no longer an adequate guide to conduct."[27]

Zhōu: "But the Mohists as a philosophical movement just don't seem worried by change. Consider their 'Three Models.' They never claim to follow ancient ways, only to 'root' their teachings in the sage-kings' precedent. The other models—what people observe and what in practice benefits everyone—are explicitly empirical or pragmatic, not rationalist. The Mohists accept the

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observable, changing world as real. They welcome reform and innovation, provided it promotes the benefit of all."

Graham: "In Canon B10, they identify 'having passed' as a source of doubt."[28]

Zhōu: "Sure, but it's only one of four sources of doubt, along with accidental circumstances, inconclusive evidence, and causal overdetermination. Nothing they say calls attention to transience as especially troubling. A striking aspect of their epistemology is how unworried they are by any difficulties in attaining knowledge."

Graham: "Their explanation of perceptual knowledge shows a concern with time. Canon A5 indicates that perceptual knowledge requires the ability to describe a thing after having passed it. Canon B46 indicates that knowing 'differs from perceiving in that it continues after perception is past.'"[29]

Zhōu: "Their point is just that knowledge obtained from perception can persist without continued contact with its cause. They credit us with perceptual knowledge if, having 'contacted' a thing in some way (A5), such as by our sense organs (B46), we can describe it, even if we're no longer in 'contact' with it. In B46, they explain how perceptual knowledge can endure even when we no longer perceive the object. Suppose I know something by seeing it, using my eyes, by firelight. Just as we wouldn't say it's the fire that sees, the Mohists assert it's not the eyes that see either—it's I myself who does. So even when my eyes are no longer in contact with the object, I can still have perceptual knowledge of it, presumably by memory.

"Far from being anxious about temporal change, the Mohists seem confident that perceptual knowledge normally endures over time."

Graham: "I'm impressed. How do you know so much about the Mohists?"

Zhōu: "Many scholars back then were exchanging ideas about the kinds of topics that interested the Mohists. As you yourself showed,[30] the author of the *Zhuāngzǐ* 'Essay on Seeing Things as Equal' was familiar with later Mohist concepts and terminology."

Transience and Permanence in Later Mohism

Graham: "Still, I think the Mohists were concerned with transience, because it grounds their pivotal distinction between the temporarily 'staying' (*zhǐ* 止), in Canon A50, and the unending, the 'necessary' (*bì* 必), in A51.[31] The necessary is the eternal, which is not subject to temporal change and is beyond doubt, according to Canon A83. It contrasts with 'staying,' which endures for a period and then ends. Their conception of the necessary as eternal provides the basis for the rationalist justification of their ethics."

Zhōu: "I don't see a contrast between the transient and the eternal here. Canon A50 explains that all 'staying' has 'duration,' and A51 explains that what's 'necessary' is 'not ending.' 'Staying' and the 'unending' seem intertwined, not antithetical. The unending obviously has 'duration,' and some of what has 'duration' could be unending."

Graham: "If you look at its 'explanation,' A50 is about remaining something *x* and non-*y,* such as 'ox' and 'non-horse,' over a period of time. 'Staying' *x* comes to an end, as when an animal begins as a horse and ends as a non-horse."[32]

Zhōu: "'Horse' and 'non-horse'? That's *x* and non-*x,* not *x* and non-*y*."

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Graham: "Yes, that's a case in which something 'begins as *x* and ends as non-*x*,' so it's no longer *x* and non-*y*. That's why it's about transience."

Zhōu: "I don't understand. The text doesn't mention beginning as one thing and changing into something else. It seems to contrast a typical example of 'staying' with one of 'not-staying.' 'Staying' is illustrated by how two logically consistent terms, such as 'ox' and 'non-horse,' both fit a thing. 'Not-staying' is illustrated by how two logically contradictory terms, such as 'horse' and 'non-horse,' can never both 'stay' in the same thing. The text calls this 'not-staying that endures.'

"Since 'staying' requires duration, nothing instantaneous can count as 'staying.' So the text notes that even in the 'ox' and 'non-horse' example, if we consider just a single instant, 'ox' and 'non-horse' don't 'stay.' But otherwise they do 'stay.' There's no implication as to whether this 'staying' ends or not. It could last indefinitely."

Graham: "To explain 'not-staying that endures,' the text gives the analogy of a person crossing a bridge. The person will reach the other side. Similarly, duration comes to an end."

Zhōu: "That analogy is just a parenthetical example to illustrate the contrast between something that has duration and something instantaneous, like an arrow flying by a pillar. So I wouldn't read too much into it."

Graham: "We know 'staying' ends, because it contrasts with the 'necessary,' which is 'not-ending.'"

Zhōu: "This doesn't seem a strict contrast. Isn't 'not-ending' a subset of 'staying'? Among the things that 'stay,' some might eventually 'end' and some not."

Graham: "In argumentation, 'staying' can refer to settling a term's reference, such as by fixing its criteria of application.[33] So it pertains to relations between 'names'—words or terms—and objects. But 'the necessary' refers only to logical connections between names or causal ones between objects. It doesn't refer to relations between names and objects. So there's an important contrast."

Zhōu: "You're right that the Mohists use 'necessary' or 'must' (*bì*) in talking about logical relations, such as excluded middle. A51 suggests that *shì-fēi* (this/not) are 'necessary' (*bì*), probably insofar as anything must be either *shì* or *fēi*. A74 indicates that of two contradictory terms, such as 'ox' and 'non-ox,' only one can fit a thing and the other 'necessarily' doesn't fit. But A78 also uses 'necessary' of name-object relations. It states that any object 'necessarily' takes the completely general term 'thing.' In the case of 'kind' terms, such as 'horse,' having used 'horse' for an exemplar of the kind, we 'necessarily' use the same name of any similar animal."

Graham: "Actually, that part of A78 isn't about relations between names and objects."

Zhōu: "It isn't? The canon distinguishes three kinds of 'names'—'all-reaching,' 'kind,' and 'private'—by what they refer to. 'All-reaching' names refer to everything, 'kind' names to all similar things that constitute a kind, and 'private' names to a single individual."

Graham: "You're misreading the part about kind names, because you overlooked a quotation. The point is that using a kind name amounts to using the quoted phrase 'like the object.'[34] The text is referring to the necessary relation between using a kind name and saying 'like the object' of things of that kind, not the transient relation between names and objects."

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Zhōu: "Quotation? The text reads 'As to that which is [*yě zhě* 也者] like the object, one necessarily uses this name.'[35] Isn't the point that for all objects that are relevantly similar, such as all horses, we must use the same name, such as 'horse'? The 'Canons' usually indicate quotation by '*yuē*' ('say' 曰). There's no '*yuē*' here."

Graham: "'*Yě zhě* (也者)' indicates quotation. Every time it's used in the 'explanations' after a single word, that word is a quotation from the corresponding 'canon.'"[36]

Zhōu: "If it's just a single word each time, how do we know it's a quotation? The purpose of the 'explanations' is to explicate the corresponding 'canons,' so of course they repeat key terms from them. '*Yě zhě*' is a widely used topicalization device in classical texts, especially when discussing abstract concepts or resuming a topic mentioned earlier. The '*yě*' nominalizes its complement, which the '*zhě*' topicalizes. '*Yě zhě*' probably functions the same way here. If so, then A78 does refer to some name-object relations as 'necessary.' Of course, it isn't necessary that we call horses 'horse.' We could use another name. But once we dub them 'horse,' it's 'necessary' that we call all animals of that kind 'horse.'

"The 'explanations' of 'staying' and 'necessary' are obscure and lack context, so any interpretation is tentative. But I don't see a sharp contrast between transient name-object relations and eternal name-name relations. At least there's no reason to think this contrast is central to later Mohist thought."[37]

A Fourfold Division of Knowledge?

Graham: "There's important contextual material you're missing. Once we see that those two canons are about transience versus eternal necessity, we can see that the entire structure of the 'Canons' is organized around them. They are pivotal to the Mohist account of knowledge—a 'vision of universal knowledge organized in four disciplines.'[38] Two of these disciplines concern knowledge that is logically or causally necessary and eternal, in the sense identified in A51. Two concern knowledge that is transient, depending on the temporary 'staying' of names in objects, as indicated in A50."

Zhōu: "Four disciplines? The "Canons" look at best only partly organized. There are obvious series on knowledge, ethics, *biàn,* geometry, optics, mechanics, and other topics. But there's no conspicuous overall pattern, and many canons don't seem to fit into any discernable scheme. The very first two, for instance, are unrelated to each other and to the series of four that follows. Canon A1 introduces two technical terms—'minor cause' and 'major cause'—that never appear again."[39]

Graham: "Canon A80 is the key. It identifies four areas of knowledge, and on close inspection the canons divide into just these four areas."

Zhōu: "A80? The key to the overall organization is buried in one canon in the middle of the corpus?"

Graham: "You have to read carefully."

Zhōu: "Is this organizational framework announced anywhere? In a table of contents or a preface, maybe?"

Graham: "No."

Zhōu: "Are the different sections divided off? Are there headings indicating where they begin?"

Graham: "No."

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Zhōu: "Suppose I keep a research notebook. I write a note identifying different areas of knowledge. I write other notes about various philosophical and scientific topics. When I get interested in something, I write a sequence of notes about it. Wouldn't my notes tend to form groups corresponding roughly to the areas of knowledge I identified, without any deliberate organization?"

Graham: "I suppose."

Zhōu: "So even if some groups of canons fall into the four areas identified in A80, this observation could be explained without assuming they were deliberately organized into four disciplines. The clustering could occur just because the writers wrote sequences of canons on whatever topics caught their interest."

Graham: "Maybe, as a matter of mathematical probability. Here, though, we have writers aiming to give a systematic treatment of knowledge. So they'd probably use the four areas as an organizing principle."

Zhōu: "Why do you think their aim is a systematic treatment of knowledge?"

Graham: "Only such a treatment can meet the challenge of establishing Mohist doctrines on an indubitable, necessary foundation and resolve the threat to knowledge posed by temporal change."

Zhōu: "That's just what I've been questioning! I doubt they seek an indubitable foundation or worry about temporal change."

Graham: "Well, it's a holistic approach. The overall interpretation is justified by how plausibly it explains the parts. The interpretation of the parts is justified partly by how plausibly they fit together into a coherent overall interpretation."

Zhōu: "Then we need to consider how your hypothesis about the organizational framework helps explain the content of individual canons. What exactly is the organizing scheme?"

Graham: "The 'Canons' as a whole divides into a series of 'definitions' and one of 'propositions.' Both of these then divide into four disciplines, corresponding to the four objects of knowledge listed in A80. These are 'description' or 'discourse,' the study of how to relate names to objects; ethics, the study of how to act; the sciences, the study of objects; and 'disputation' or 'argumentation,' the study of relations between names.[40] The first two disciplines, 'discourse' and ethics, produce knowledge that is transient, enduring only as long as the names we use or the desires we affirm 'stay' in objects. The second two produce knowledge that is necessary and eternal—causally necessary, in the case of the sciences, and logically necessary, in the case of 'argumentation.'"

Zhōu: "Which canons fall under which disciplines?"

Graham: "Altogether, the canons run from A1 to A98 and B1 to B82. The 'propositions' begin at A88. 'Discourse' includes A1–6 from the 'definitions' and A88–B12 from the 'propositions.' Ethics includes A7–39. The sciences—geometry, optics, mechanics, economics—include A52–69 and B17–31. 'Argumentation' includes A70–75 and B32–82."

Zhōu: "Hang on, I'm trying to keep track of which canons go where. There's a jump here from A39 to A52, and another one from A75 to A88."

Graham: "Right. A40–51 are a different group. Those form a 'bridging' section that treats knowledge and change. Since the relation of knowledge to change is pivotal to the whole system, there's a special section in the middle for it."

Zhōu: "So there are actually five divisions, not four?"

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Graham: "Plus the appendix."

Zhōu: "The appendix?"

Graham: "Yes, A76–87 are an appendix to the 'definitions.' They list different uses of some key words."

Zhōu: "So there are actually six divisions, not four?"

Graham: "Six among the 'definitions,' yes, and four among the 'propositions.'"

Zhōu: "Four, one for each of the disciplines?"

Graham: "Not exactly. There's one for the sciences, one for 'discourse,' and one for 'argumentation.' There's also one for the 'bridging' section."

Zhōu: "None for ethics?"

Graham: "No, they didn't need one, because they'd already written about ethics elsewhere. A collection of fragments about ethics is preserved in the 'Greater Selection' (*Dàqǔ* 大取)."

Zhōu: "So your hypothesis is that the four areas of knowledge provide the underlying organizing principle. But you identify six, not four, thematic groupings among the 'definitions,' and two of these don't correspond to anything in the 'propositions.'"

Graham: "That's right."

Zhōu: "And by your count, 24 of the 87 'definitions' actually don't fit into the four-way scheme."

Graham: "I didn't say all the canons fit neatly into the four disciplines. I claimed that they form groups that run parallel through the 'definitions' and 'propositions,' and the four areas of knowledge provide an organizing principle that explains this."[41]

Zhōu: "But since there are no 'propositions' for ethics, they don't really run parallel, do they?"

Graham: "Here's an example. In the 'definitions,' A40–51 treat space, time, movement, and change, while in the 'propositions,' B13–16 treat space and time. Then, in the 'definitions,' the next group, A52–69, treat geometry, while in the 'propositions,' the next group, B17–31, treat optics, mechanics, and economics. See the parallels?"

Zhōu: "These could certainly count as parallels if other parts of the scheme also fall into place. If not, though, these might be just unsurprising instances of the writers exploring some interrelated topics and then returning to them again later. Also, the main parallel here is the two treatments of space and time in your 'bridging' sections, which don't fall into any of the four disciplines."

Graham: "Another supporting correlation is that each of the four disciplines aligns with a distinct source of doubt, as presented in B10—the 'accidental' for 'discourse,' the 'undemanding' for 'ethics,' 'having passed' for knowledge and change, and the 'coinciding' for the sciences."[42]

Zhōu: "Does B10 indicate that the sources of doubt apply to just those disciplines?"

Graham: "No."

Zhōu: "Couldn't there be multiple sources of doubt for judgments in different areas? The passing of time could create doubt about whether something we said in 'discourse' remained correct, for example. That something happened accidentally could undermine a finding in the sciences. The coinciding of several factors could raise doubt about whether someone acted ethically or just from self-interest."

Graham: "Maybe. But there are four sources of doubt and four disciplines, so this seems a reasonable correlation."

Zhōu: "But the correlation isn't exact. You have four disciplines but sources of doubt for only three. What produces doubt in 'argumentation'?"

Graham: "'Argumentation' concerns the necessary and eternal and so isn't subject to doubt."

Zhōu: "What exactly is 'argumentation,' and how is it different from 'discourse'?"

Graham: "'Argumentation' is what the Mohists called '*biàn*.'[43] It refers to arguing over alternatives, to decide which is '*shì*' (this) and which '*fēi*' (not)."

Zhōu: "How does 'argumentation' yield knowledge that's eternal and indubitable? A major theme of the 'Lesser Selection' (*Xiǎoqǔ* 小取) is that, since the methods of *biàn* are analogical and depend on semantics as well as logic, they're highly fallible, can't always be applied, and must be examined carefully."

Graham: "The 'Lesser Selection' isn't about 'argumentation' in this sense. It's about 'discourse.' It concerns transient name-object relations, not eternal relations between names.'

Zhōu: "The opening words of the 'Lesser Selection' expressly announce that it's about *biàn*. It begins, 'Now as to *biàn,* we use it to clarify the divisions between *shì* and *fēi*.'"

Graham: "As I reconstruct it, those aren't the opening words. In any case, '*biàn*' in that context refers to 'discourse,' while '*biàn*' in the 'Canons' refers to 'argumentation.' These are distinct disciplines."

Zhōu: "This text makes good sense as it stands, doesn't it? It doesn't seem to need 'reconstruction.' But as to your interpretation, if these are distinct disciplines, why do the Mohists call them both '*biàn*'?"

Graham: "Originally they used the word narrowly, but later they adapted it to include three of the four disciplines."[44]

Zhōu: "But earlier Mohist writings, such as 'Condemning Fate,' also use '*biàn*' in a broad sense. So I suggest the Mohists, early and late, probably used '*biàn*' roughly the same way all along. In Canon A74, they say that *biàn* is 'contending over "other,"' as when one side calls a thing 'ox,' the other calls it 'non-ox,' and exactly one of the contradictory terms fits. In B35, they say it's when one side calls a thing '*shì*' and the other calls it '*fēi*.' These passages indicate that *biàn* in the 'Canons' concerns name-object relations. In your treatment of 'discourse,' or name-object relations, you cite A70–71 to show the Mohists explain whether a name fits an object by comparing the object to a model (*fǎ* 法) of the kind of thing denoted by the name.[45] But A70–71 come from a series you label 'argumentation,' where they are part of an account of *biàn*. So when we examine the content of canons that treat *biàn,* the proposed distinction between 'discourse' and 'argumentation' collapses.[46]

Graham: "The two overlap, of course. But thematically one section of the 'Canons' tends to treat name-object relations, the other logical argumentation based on relations between names."

Zhōu: "These thematic generalizations seem questionable. The 'definitions' that supposedly treat 'discourse,' or name-object relations, actually treat 'cause' (A1), 'unit' (A2), and four terms related to thought and knowledge (A3–6). Of course, knowledge for the Mohists involves description, but these 'definitions' aren't directly about name-object relations. Among the 'propositions' about 'discourse,' A93–B2 could just as well be about 'argumentation,' since they

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mention arguing with an opponent and apply concepts introduced in the 'definitions' about argumentation, such as comparison with models.

"A31–32 are about name-object relations, but they're in the section you designate 'ethics,' not 'discourse.' That section also includes canons about 'life,' 'sleep,' 'dreaming,' and time (A22–24, 33). The 'bridging' section on 'knowledge and change' is mainly about space, time, and movement and doesn't actually mention knowledge.

"By far the largest group is B32–82, which are supposed to be 'propositions' in the discipline of 'argumentation' based on necessary, logical relations between names. Instead, they look like substantive discussions of a medley of topics. Some fall under the sciences (B43, B47, B56). Some are about knowledge (B41, B46, B50, B70). Many don't seem to fit into the four-way framework."

Graham: "They're thematically diverse. But these diverse issues are generally treated as resolvable purely by considering names, without observation of objects. So they fall under 'argumentation.'"[47]

Zhōu: "That's true of some of them, such as B35. It applies the principle of excluded middle to argue that in *biàn*, one of the two opposing claims must 'win.' But others concern name-object relations and the status of objects, not just knowledge of names. Some seem to present substantive theories, either about things, how we know them, or how language relates to them. Examples include B43 on the 'five phases,' B46 on perceptual knowledge, B47 on fire being hot, B66 on finding the right criteria for distinguishing different kinds, and B70 on knowledge by explanation. I don't see how these canons all concern knowledge of necessary logical relations between names."[48]

Graham: "The thematic cohesion within the divisions may not be obvious to the modern reader, who instinctively applies classifications from Western philosophy and science. This just shows that we need to read carefully, applying the Mohists' own fourfold classification from Canon A80."

Zhōu: "But the Mohists themselves might take A80 to refer to four dimensions or aspects of knowledge, not four distinct disciplines or fields. Nothing in A80 itself indicates they regard knowledge as organized into four areas, two dealing with the transient, two with the eternal."

Graham: "That's possible. But my proposal coheres with their classification and their distinction between the temporarily 'staying' and the unending 'necessary.'"

Zhōu: "Your interpretation may be internally coherent, but it doesn't explain what we find in the texts very well. I doubted whether A50–51 are about the transient versus the necessary. You claimed that the fourfold organizational scheme would clarify things. But I don't see clear thematic differences between the canons you assign to 'discourse,' the sciences, and 'argumentation.' 'Discourse' and 'argumentation' overlap so much in terminology and content that it's highly improbable the writers distinguished between one discipline devoted to transient name-object relations and another yielding eternal, necessary knowledge of names. The hypothesis about the fourfold organization doesn't support your interpretation of A50–51, it rests on it."[49]

Graham: "You need to see the overall patterns and the parallels to grasp the organizing principles."

Zhōu: "Well, I just don't see them as you do."

The "*A Priori*"

Zhōu: "Let's trace our way back to where we started. How does this elaborate interpretation show that the later Mohists are 'rationalists'?"

Graham: "Through their discipline of 'argumentation,' which investigates logically necessary relations between names, they develop a body of knowledge grounded in reason. They give an *a priori* account of their ethics that places it in the realm of the eternal, necessary, and indubitable."

Zhōu: "What's '*a priori*'?"

Graham: "It refers to knowledge that's justified independently of experience. It rests only on reasoning or rational reflection, along with understanding of the relevant language, concepts, or relations."

Zhōu: "Besides the four objects of knowledge, A80 identifies three sources of knowledge—hearsay, explanation, and personal observation. Knowledge by explanation (*shuō* 說) could conceivably include knowledge obtained by reasoning. But according to B70, knowledge by explanation also includes knowing a hidden object's color because someone explains it's the same color as an object we can see. That's not *a priori* knowledge. So in A80, where they list various aspects of knowledge, the Mohists don't seem to recognize *a priori* knowledge."

Graham: "Yes, but elsewhere they refer to knowing something in advance of observing it. How can we know something before observing it? By reasoning from its definition. So I propose this refers to *a priori* knowledge."

Zhōu: "*A priori* knowledge isn't knowledge of something in advance of observing it. It's knowledge for which observation is irrelevant—like knowing that anything green is colored."

Graham: "The Mohists might conceptualize it differently."

Zhōu: "What are their examples?"

Graham: "They give two. First, suppose there's a circular object on the other side of a wall. According to Canon A93, when we jump over the wall, the circle 'stays' as we expect it, because we can 'know beforehand' (*xiān zhī* 先知) things that 'follow from or exclude each other.' I suggest the example refers to *a priori* knowledge about the circle obtained from its definition."[50]

Zhōu: "Isn't this scenario like the one in B70? Both suppose there's an object we can't see. In B70, we're told it's the same color as a white object we can see. In A93, we're informed it's a circle. According to B70, if we know the color of the unseen object is like that of the white object we do see, then we know the color of the hidden object, because 'necessarily' it's white. B70 ties this point to Mohist philosophy of language. Using a name, such as 'white,' of something listeners don't know informs them the thing is like other objects they do know which are denoted by that name. Similarly, in A93, if the unseen object is called a 'circle,' and we know the word 'circle,' then we know before seeing it what it's like. This knowledge isn't independent of experience. It's from being told the object is a circle."

Graham: "My idea is that the example refers to inferring from the name 'circle' that the object will be round or have other features of a circle. That would be *a priori* knowledge."

Zhōu: "Then why mention jumping a wall? Why not just state that, since it's a circle, we know it's round?"

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Graham: "That's what I think the example implies. The text mentions 'following from or excluding each other.' Being round follows from being a circle."

Zhōu: "'Following from or excluding each other' could plausibly refer to a relation of logical consequence, which could be grounds for *a priori* knowledge. But it could also refer to inductive or analogical inference. The Mohists' own explanation of how we know what something called 'circle' will look like seems grounded in an implicit analogical inference."

Graham: "Consider the second example, then, from B57. If we deem a pillar round, then when we see it, there's no change from our thought of it. We 'know beforehand' a mental image of the round pillar. We don't know what its color or material will be, but we know what its shape will be like, from our understanding of what a pillar is and what round is."[51]

Zhōu: "So if we know the words 'pillar' and 'round,' we can visualize the shape of something called a 'round pillar' before we see it. Isn't this just knowledge of what 'pillar' and 'round' denote? Of course, in this scenario we could have *a priori* knowledge that, for instance, a round pillar isn't square. But a remark about being able to visualize an instance of a familiar kind of object before seeing it seems a weak basis for crediting the Mohists with a conception of knowledge independent of experience."

Graham: "Consider the example of a circle. They define 'same length' (A53) and 'center' (A54) and from these define 'circular' (A58) as 'having the same lengths from a single center.' From these definitions, one could know by reason alone what a circle is before seeing one. So I suggest this amounts to *a priori* knowledge."

Zhōu: "Reasoning from definitions could indeed yield *a priori* knowledge. But does this sort of reasoning play any role in Mohist theories? Their account of how we identify a circle seems to be that we check whether candidate circles match a relevant model, such as a concrete exemplar of a circle, a compass, or a mental image of a circle."

Graham: "That would be for transient name-object relations, falling under 'discourse,' whereas *a priori* knowledge pertains to eternal knowledge of names, falling under 'argumentation.'"

Zhōu: "But the example of identifying a circle by reference to a compass or exemplar is from A70, which comes under 'argumentation' in your fourfold division. So if your organizational scheme is correct, the Mohists' own treatment of how to identify a circle in 'argumentation' doesn't apply the conception of *a priori* knowledge you attribute to them."

'A Priori' Grounds for Ethics?

Graham: "Still, they do apply it to ground their ethics. They hold that the names of moral concepts have 'essentials' (*qíng* 情), or features expressed in their definitions, which determine whether the name fits a thing. A sage who understands these 'essentials' will desire and dislike certain things on behalf of all people *a priori*. By considering their 'essentials,' we can learn from the sage that these things are necessary, and thus they form an *a priori* basis for normative ethics."[52]

Zhōu: "The canons say all that?"

Graham: "No, that comes from some fragments I pieced together from the 'Greater Selection.' But this interpretation emerges once you see how the Mohists

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are concerned with necessary, eternal knowledge, use 'beforehand' (*xiān*) as a technical term for *a priori* knowledge, and use *qíng* as a technical term for the essential features that define a name."

Zhōu: "So far, you haven't convinced me they're concerned with eternal knowledge or have a concept of *a priori* knowledge."

Graham: "You're still struggling to see the big picture."

Zhōu: "We've talked about naming and argumentation, but you haven't said anything about *qíng* before."

Graham: "Throughout pre-Han philosophy, *qíng* has a precise meaning similar to the Aristotelian notion of 'essence.' The *qíng* of *x* is all that's conveyed in its definition, without with it would not be a genuine *x*, conceived of as something behind its form (*xíng* 形) and looks (*mào* 貌).[53] You should know this—I learned it from you! You once said the sage lacks the *qíng* of a person, and Huìzǐ asked in that case how you could still call the sage a 'person.'[54] His question implies that normally *qíng* are the essential features that determine whether something takes a certain name."

Zhōu: "That's odd. My interpretation of that conversation is the reverse of yours. Do you remember how I answered Huìzǐ?"

Graham: "You said 'The Way gives him the looks, Heaven gives him the form, how could we not call him a "person"?'"

Zhōu: "Exactly. I was invoking prevailing theories of naming. For the Mohists, 'form' and 'looks' are the basis for naming things like people. The 'Greater Selection' expressly mentions naming on the basis of 'form' and 'looks.'[55] The sage has the form and looks of a person, so the name 'person' fits him. *Qíng* has no role at all in later Mohist philosophy of language. It doesn't refer to the 'essentials' captured by a definition, because it is simply not part of their theory. The word '*qíng*' never occurs in any Mohist discussion of naming."

Graham: "How do you explain the passage about the sage having *a priori* knowledge of the 'essentials,' from which we learn what is necessary?"

Zhōu: "You agree that *qíng* can refer to the facts of a situation.[56] So that passage says, 'As to all things the sage desires or dislikes in advance on behalf of people, people necessarily on the basis of their *qíng*—their situation or constitution—obtain them.' The sage understands general features of people's situation and so, in advance of considering our particular circumstances, he has certain desires on everyone's behalf that we can feasibly satisfy. These are probably desires for the basic goods of Mohist ethics. The passage contrasts these with desires arising from people's contingent circumstances, which may or may not be feasible to fulfill.

"I wouldn't invest much in this—or any—interpretation, though, as the passage is isolated and corrupt."

Graham: "Well, your interpretation may still work for my purposes. The sage, the wisest of persons, starts from these desires and dislikes on behalf of all, which are given either '*a priori*' or 'in advance,' as you please. Working from this starting point, the Mohists establish the basic tenets of their ethics by reason alone. 'Benefit' and 'harm' are defined in terms of 'desire' and 'dislike,' and ethical terms such as 'benevolence,' 'right,' and 'filiality' are defined in terms of benefit and harm. The result is a systematic series of interlocking definitions that establishes *a priori* that the benevolent and the right are what will be desired on behalf of all by the sage—a rationalist foundation for Mohist ethics."[57]

Zhōu: "How do they get from the sage's desires and dislikes to 'benefit' and 'harm'?"

Graham: "They define 'benefit' as 'what one is pleased to get' (A26) and 'harm' as 'what one dislikes getting' (A27)."

Zhōu: "So actually they explain 'benefit' in terms of pleasure, not desire."

Graham: "It amounts to the same thing, but since you can't desire something you already have, they use 'pleased' instead of 'desires.'"

Zhōu: "But 'desires' and 'pleased' aren't the same thing at all. You can desire something yet find you're displeased to get it, and you can *not* desire something yet find you're pleased to get it."

Graham: "Still, the Mohists can move from here to define the other key ethical concepts. For example, they define 'benevolence' (*rén* 仁) as 'concern for units' and 'right' (*yì* 義) as 'to benefit.'"

Zhōu: "How does equating 'right' with 'benefit' follow from an *a priori* derivation? That looks like just a blunt statement of the Mohists' core ethical conviction. Do they argue that whatever the sage desires is right, the sage desires benefit for all, and therefore right is benefit?"

Graham: "No, not exactly."

Zhōu: "What about benevolence? How do they move from benefit and harm to 'concern for units'? Through a definition of 'concern' (*ài* 愛) and one for 'unit' (*tǐ* 體)?"

Graham: "Right. They define 'unit' as 'a division from a whole.'"

Zhōu: "How about 'whole' and 'concern'?"

Graham: "We can make a good guess at the definition of 'concern.' It would be something like 'desiring benefit and disliking harm to the person, on the person's own behalf.'"[58]

Zhōu: "A guess?"

Graham: "The 'Canons' don't include those definitions. They omit words that appear in the titles of the ten core Mohist doctrines. For instance, 'worthy' (*xián* 賢), 'aggression' (*gōng* 攻), and 'fate' (*mìng* 命) are also missing. Probably there was another text, now lost, that defined these important terms."[59]

Zhōu: "Is there any evidence such a text existed?"

Graham: "No, but these terms are conspicuously absent from the 'Canons.' Since the Mohists aimed to produce a systematic account of ethical knowledge, they wouldn't have omitted them. They must have been treated in another text."

Zhōu: "Wait a moment. The content of the 'Canons' turns out not to corroborate your interpretation of their purpose, but instead of revising your interpretation, you postulate a lost text that supports it? That's a textbook example of an *ad hoc* rescue."

Graham: "Isn't it strange that there are no canons on 'fate,' 'concern,' and so forth?"

Zhōu: "We don't know enough about the 'Canons' to draw conclusions about what's strange or not. You assume the Mohists must have treated these topics because they were engaged in a systematic project with a particular aim. But maybe there was no systematic project or overarching aim. Maybe the 'Canons' are a haphazard collection of notes. That's what they look like."

Graham: "Well, as I said years ago, 'my explanations will not always convince others as easily as myself.'"[60]

Are the Mohists Rationalists?

Zhōu: "Going back to my original question, suppose we accept your theory that the 'Canons' present a tightly wrought system of interdefined ethical concepts. Would the result really be a brand of 'rationalism'? After all, the texts don't explicitly mention a concept of reason or of knowledge grounded in reason. On your interpretation, their ethics is grounded in the sage's desires on behalf of everyone. Nothing suggests these desires arise from reason. The reasoning part concerns the relation between concepts such as 'benefit,' 'concern,' and 'benevolent,' not the sage's foundational attitudes of desire and dislike."

Graham: "My idea was that the sage's desires and dislikes are independent of experience. He has them 'in advance' of any contingent circumstances."

Zhōu: "That doesn't entail they're based on reason. They could simply express basic, bedrock values."

Graham: "But the *a priori* nature of the system provides a rationalist argument that the sage—the most knowledgeable of persons—desires the benevolent and the right on behalf of all.[61] This argument gives an authoritative justification for Mohist ethics by grounding it in necessary, eternal relations between concepts."

Zhōu: "I don't see that. Earlier Mohists claimed the sage-kings cared about and promoted the benefit of all. On your reconstruction, the later Mohists claim that a sage would desire and dislike certain things for all, on the basis of general knowledge of the human condition. Both claims appeal to the exemplary attitudes of ideal moral agents as fundamental models by which to support Mohist views. How does the later approach provide a more convincing justification than the earlier one? Both remain vulnerable to critics who dispute the Mohist view of benevolence and right or the status or attitudes of the sages."

Graham: "You don't see any advantage to their project of classifying knowledge, identifying a realm of necessary, indubitable knowledge, and building an *a priori* ethical system? This is among the greatest achievements of Chinese philosophy."

Zhōu: "The hypothesis that they're engaged in such a project just doesn't correspond well to what we see in the texts. Their supposed 'rationalism' seems a projection of your own philosophical concerns, not something there in their writings."

Graham: "But surely there's something distinctive about later Mohist thought. I propose it's their rationalism."

Zhōu: "They're meticulous and methodical. They develop interesting, plausible theories to explain knowledge, language, and argumentation by appeal to analogical pattern recognition. They're optimistic that *biàn* can clarify and resolve all sorts of epistemic, semantic, ethical, and political issues. They're confident the world is organized into regular, coherent patterns by which to distinguish things into kinds and identify a beneficial, sustainable Way. They identify and apply logical norms such as non-contradiction and excluded middle, but are mainly interested in semantics and informal logic. Their theories and methods are a distinctive, impressive achievement, but they don't add up to a species of 'rationalism.'"

Anti-Rationalism or Expertise?

Graham: "But it's their rationalist theorizing that inspired your own incisive anti-rationalism."[62]

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Zhōu: "That's what perplexes me. You call me an 'anti-rationalist' and suggest I mounted an 'assault on reason.'[63] I don't see that I did."

Graham: "But you reject Mohist ethics, don't you?"

Zhōu: "Mainly because of their dogmatic confidence that a single, determinate value—the benefit of all—is sufficient to model the Way. I ridicule their dogmatism, narrowness, and epistemic optimism. None of this has much to do with 'reason' or 'rationalism.'"

Graham: "Still, you advocate the antithesis of rationalism, so you're an anti-rationalist."

Zhōu: "What's the antithesis of rationalism?"

Graham: "Spontaneity. You hold that we can coincide with the Way only by attending to the total situation and responding by means of an inexpressible knack, without analyzing, posing alternatives, reasoning from first principles, or following rules."[64]

Zhōu: "How is that 'anti-rational'? Suppose while driving home I see a group of children playing soccer. The ball rolls into the road and one of them darts after it. I immediately brake to avoid hitting her. I don't consider alternatives, invoke rules, or deliberate from first principles. Still, in this scenario braking is rational, isn't it? When we're talking about action, 'rational' refers to our conduct being justified by or consistent with relevant considerations—reasons for or against doing one thing or another. Obviously, there are good reasons to avoid hitting the child."

Graham: "Yes, but your action isn't guided by analyzing, posing alternatives, or reasoning. It's a spontaneous response."

Zhōu: "Of course, I don't engage in an explicit process of reasoning. But let's not confuse explicit reasoning with being rational or conforming to reason. My braking is still rational. As I see it, what you're calling 'anti-rationalism' doesn't really address 'rationalism,' the doctrine that reason is the basic source of knowledge. Nor does it reject 'rationality,' understood as a normative relation between our actions and reasons for or against them. It seems to be the view that explicit reasoning or deliberation grounded in inflexible rules is an ineffective process for guiding action. But that view needn't entail rejecting the norms of rationality or denying that reasoned deliberation can help us find our way in difficult situations."

Graham: "Still, reason can't provide the wisdom needed to act adeptly. The fitting course—the Way—meanders, shifting direction in varying conditions. We miss it if we analyze, follow rules, or rigidly adhere to explicitly formulated codes.[65] Isn't that your view?"

Zhōu: "As we encounter it, the Way often twists and shifts, sure. Flexibly adapting to what we find generally serves us better than stubbornly following a fixed, predetermined model."

Graham: "Right, so I credit you with the view that we can coincide with the Way by ceasing to draw distinctions and just using our spontaneous aptitude, our 'potency' (*dé* 德), to respond appropriately to particular situations."[66]

Zhōu: "But doesn't all action involve drawing distinctions? When I brake for the child, I distinguish between the child and an open road. When Cook Ding carves up an ox, he distinguishes between the meat and his fingers. When the whitewater swimmer navigates the rapids, he distinguishes between water and boulders."

Graham: "It's all right to make fluid distinctions that vary with circumstances. Thinking goes wrong when we make rigid distinctions that mislead us into judging things are permanently what we temporarily find it convenient to name them.[67] That's why you forbid us from thinking about what we ought to do. To avoid being misled by rigid distinctions, we should simply respond with spontaneous action or spontaneous approval or disapproval."[68]

Zhōu: "Hold on, that doesn't follow. Your main point is that adept action issues from an intelligent, fluid responsiveness. But thinking can be fluid and responsive, while spontaneous reactions can be biased, inflexible, and blind to the facts. Consider people who are spontaneously racist, sexist, or homophobic."

Graham: "Well, I don't mean to saddle you with the view that we should simply do whatever comes spontaneously. The good is the spontaneous reaction in fullest awareness of how things are patterned."[69]

Zhōu: "So the stance you attribute to me really isn't a rejection of rationality. Nor does it endorse impulsive, spontaneous responses. The crux is actually what you call 'awareness of how things are patterned.'"

Graham: "Yes, awareness is the capacity to take things into account in choices. Changes in awareness produce inclinations that are spontaneous, in that they are not chosen but caused by our awareness."[70]

Zhōu: "That sounds like a contradiction. Fuller awareness increases our capacity to notice factors relevant to making choices, which causes us to form inclinations that are not choices after all? Also, if the inclinations are caused by awareness of factors outside us, then are they really 'spontaneous'? 'Spontaneous' usually refers to how thought and action issue from the agent, rather than being caused by external factors."

Graham: "Look at your own example—it illustrates what I call a spontaneous reaction in awareness of things. By braking to avoid the child, you spontaneously reflect the objective situation, your motions deriving not from you as an individual but from Heaven—forces of nature beyond our will—working through you."[71]

Zhōu: "What you're calling 'spontaneity' seems to be just immediate, non-inferential responses. These might appear to be independent of reason, intellect, or intention, directly triggered by factors outside the agent. But in a case like braking to avoid hitting someone, actually they're the outcome of practiced, expert agency. Much thought and training might have been involved in acquiring the capacity for such responses. In the driving example, I'm capable of this sort of automatic, reflexive response only because I'm an experienced driver who is paying attention to what he's doing, is familiar with the possibility of kids stepping into the road, and values those kids' lives. My response isn't a mere 'reflection' of the situation, the product of external forces working through me. 'Spontaneous' doesn't seem an informative description of it, either. Really it's expertise or virtuosity, as displayed in intelligent, adaptive agency."

Graham: "I guess in the end that's basically what I'm trying to get at. "

Zhōu: "Well, if the view you're attributing to me is just that following the Way lies primarily in an uncodifiable, adaptive virtuosity, rather than in identifying and applying explicit, fixed models, I can accept that."

Graham: "Hm…You've got me thinking. Maybe reason versus spontaneity is another of the dichotomies we need to leave behind in order to find the Way."[72]

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Zhōu: "Maybe it is! As you said, let's set aside rigid, permanent distinctions in favor of open, fluid ones. Aren't rationalism versus anti-rationalism and reason versus spontaneity precisely the sort of artificial distinctions we should give up?"

Graham: "You know, I once said that understanding Chinese philosophy doesn't depend on swallowing my or anyone else's line of thought. What it does depend on is philosophizing for oneself."[73]

Zhōu: "Thank you for inspiring us to do just that."[74]

NOTES

[1] A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao* (La Salle: Open Court, 1989), 7, 176.

[2] Chris Fraser, "Skepticism and Value in the *Zhuangzi*," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 49.4 (2009), 439–457.

[3] Graham, *Disputers,* 186.

[4] *Disputers,* 7.

[5] *Disputers,* 194–195.

[6] *Disputers,* 189.

[7] William Hung, ed. *A Concordance to Zhuāngzǐ*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, supplement no. 20. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 4/23ff., 4/43–44.

[8] Chris Fraser, "Heart-Fasting, Forgetting, and Using the Heart Like a Mirror: Applied Emptiness in the *Zhuangzi*," in *Nothingness in Asian Philosophy,* J. Liu and D. Berger, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 197–212.

[9] *Zhuāngzǐ,* 4/29–30, 4/44–53, 4/56–64.

[10] Chris Fraser, "Distinctions, Judgment, and Reasoning in Classical Chinese Thought," *History and Philosophy of Logic* 34.1 (2013), 1–24.

[11] Graham, *Disputers,* 176.

[12] *Zhuāngzǐ,* 33/71–73.

[13] *Zhuāngzǐ,* 33/72, 33/74.

[14] See Chris Fraser, "School of Names," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2012 Edition), ed. E. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/school-names/, section 5.1.

[15] Graham, *Disputers,* 183.

[16] *Disputers,* 142.

[17] *Disputers,* 142.

[18] A. C. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1978), 22.

[19] Jane Geaney, "A Critique of A. C. Graham's Reconstruction of the 'Neo-Mohist Canons,'" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119.1 (1999), 1.

[20] Graham, *Later Mohist,* 15–23.

[21] Graham, *Disputers,* 141.

[22] Chris Fraser, *The Philosophy of Mozi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), chapter 4.

[23] Graham, *Later Mohist,* 245.

[24] *Later Mohist,* 100.

[25] *Later Mohist,* 33; *Disputers,* 141.

[26] Chris Fraser, "Mohist Canons," in Edward Zalta, ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 Edition), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/mohist-canons/>, sections 6.1 and 7.1.

[27] Graham, *Later Mohist,* 33.

[28] *Later Mohist,* 33; *Disputers,* 142.

[29] *Later Mohist,* 33; *Disputers,* 140.

[30] A. C. Graham, "Chuang-tzu's Essay on Seeing Things as Equal," *History of Religions* 9.2–3 (1969–1970), 137–159.

[31] Graham, *Later Mohist,* 299; *Disputers,* 142–143.

[32] *Later Mohist,* 299; *Disputers,* 143.

[33] See canons A78, A96, A97, and B1.

[34] Graham, *Later Mohist,* 38, 141.

[35] 若實也者必以是名也.

[36] *Later Mohist,* 140.

[37] See Geaney, "A Critique," 4–8.

[38] Graham, *Disputers,* 137.

[39] Christoph Harbsmeier, review of *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 43.3 (1980), 617–619.

[40] Graham, *Later Mohist,* 30, 230; *Disputers,* 139.

[41] *Disputers,* 138.

[42] *Disputers,* 139.

[43] *Disputers,* 167.

[44] *Later Mohist,* 31, 476.

[45] *Disputers,* 148.

[46] See Geaney, "A Critique," 3 and 7–10, and Chris Fraser, "Introduction: *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science* after 25 Years," in A. C. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2003 reprint edition), xxviii–xxix.

[47] Graham, *Later Mohist,* 399.

[48] See Geaney, "A Critique"; Harbsmeier, 618; and Fraser, "Introduction," xxvi–xxvii.

[49] See Geaney, "A Critique," 11.

[50] Graham, *Disputers,* 144.

[51] Graham, *Later Mohist,* 429.

[52] *Later Mohist,* 248; *Disputers,* 144–145.

[53] *Later Mohist,* 179.

[54] *Later Mohist,* 180–181. The reference is to *Zhuāngzǐ* 5/55–60.

[55] *Later Mohist,* 472.

[56] *Later Mohist,* 179.

[57] *Disputers,* 146.

[58] *Disputers,* 145.

[59] *Later Mohist,* 236; *Disputers,* 138.

[60] *Later Mohist,* xiii.

[61] *Disputers,* 146.

[62] *Disputers,* 7.

[63] *Disputers,* 176.

[64] *Disputers,* 186.

[65] *Disputers,* 188.

[66] *Disputers,* 188.

[67] *Disputers,* 190.

[68] *Disputers,* 189.

[69] *Disputers,* 209.

[70] *Disputers,* 383.

[71] *Disputers,* 190–191.

[72] *Disputers,* 190.

[73] *Disputers,* ix.

[74] I am grateful to Roger Ames and Carine Defoort for comments that inspired a completely new version of the final section.