A Logical Perspective on the Parallelism in Later Mohism
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(1) Granet and Graham’s Views on Parallelism and Correlative Thinking

According to Marcel Granet, the Chinese language is inherently inappropriate for logical analysis and precise scientific discourse. He thinks that, “A language made for poetry and composed of images rather than concepts is not only not an instrument of analysis. It also fails to constitute a rich heritage of the work of abstraction which each generation has been able to achieve.” Based on his observation, he describes the Chinese language as one working through musical and picturesque symbolization, and concludes that, “In this case, one must admit that when language cannot translate the operations of thought, these operations must proceed beyond language.”

It seems that Granet’s understanding of the Chinese language has a strong implication of linguistic determinism and that he commits to a thesis that thinking can go beyond language. Christoph Harbsmeier provides solid evidence to demonstrate that the classical Chinese language is not lacking grammatical forms and has rich resources for logical thinking. I think Harbsmeier is right in criticizing Granet’s non-analytic perspective on the classical Chinese language. Although he agrees that there is an analytic aspect of the language, he still accepts Granet and A. C. Graham’s dichotomy between logical and correlative thinking. Here, I don’t agree with their dichotomy. I think there is no argument by analogy or correlation which cannot be conceptually expressed and logically articulated. To make a demarcation between analytic and correlative thinking as incommensurable or untranslatable is to commit to a mystical view of language. I have provided detailed arguments to demonstrate their failure of making this dichotomy. Here I don’t want to continue the discussion on this issue.

Graham thinks that making correlation is the major mode of Chinese thinking and such correlation is naturally represented in sets of parallel expressions. Both Graham and Harbsmeier think that the tendency to parallelism is characteristic of correlative thinking and of philosophical criticism of correlations. They regard the parallelism in the chapter of Xiao-qu (小取 Minor Illustrations) of the Mozi (墨子) as philosophical criticism of correlations. Graham also claims that the parallelism and its criticism belong to two levels of thinking: The first-level is correlative whereas the second-level analytic. I think they provide a wrong picture for us to understand the mou (侔 parallel) argumentation in the text of Later Mohism (後期墨家). The mou
argumentation or what most scholars translate as “parallelism,” “parallel thinking” or “paralleling inference” is not a sort of thinking which differs essentially and radically from the rational or logical thinking. Instead, the mou argumentation provides pretty good examples of logical thinking as understood in Western logic. It is not the case that based on some kind of rational thinking the later Mohists criticize another kind of non-rational, correlative thinking. There is only one kind of rational thinking, not two levels of thinking in the sense that one is used to criticize the other. A logical analysis of parallelism in the last section of this article will demonstrate that parallel inference is an analytic one which is not a kind of non-rational thinking or the so-called “correlative thinking.”

(2) Two Different Views on Parallelism: Graham vs Hansen

In the Western world, Graham is the first scholar to give a comprehensive interpretation of the parallelism in the Mohist Canons (墨經) or Mohist Dialectical Chapters (墨辯) (in a wide sense, it includes Da-qu (大取 Major Illustrations) and Xiao-qu). In regard to the characteristics of parallelism, he mentions that,

The Ta-ch’ü [Da-qu], and still more the Hsiao-ch’ü [Xiao-qu], also showed a shift of interest from the name to the sentence and to the deduction of one sentence from another. The Chinese never analyzed deductive forms, but the Mohists noticed that the formal parallelism of sentences does not necessarily entitle us to infer from one in the same way as from another, and they developed a procedure for testing parallelism by the addition or substitution of words.

I think Graham is right to say that the parallelism in question is about the deduction between sentences. Unfortunately, however, he does not provide any explanation of the procedure implicitly expressed in the Mohist Dialectical Chapters for testing the valid kind of inference of parallelism. It may be one of the reasons why Chad Hansen is not satisfied with Graham’s interpretation and explanation. In contrast to Graham’s interpretation, Hansen thinks that, “they are not plausibly treated as deductive forms since the Mohist is at pains to show that they can ‘go wrong’.” He regards the analysis before the section of parallel examples that underlines the direction of argument in Xiao-qu as the final warning. So he claims that:

The point of the Mohist analysis will not be to prove that these techniques and forms of inference are correct, but to show their limits - to deny their universal validity. And the cause of the restricted applicability of these techniques is that
they rest on the functions of language which are subject to vagaries. The examples quite painstakingly establish this skeptical conclusion with regard to the most formal of the techniques - the marching of phrases or sentences.

Based on this defeatist or destructive view and his mass-like interpretation of the terms in parallel sentences, Hansen concludes that, “I read the tone of Hsiao Ch’u [Xiao-qu] as being defeatist. In spirit, the Mohists seem to have joined hands with Chuang-tzu [Zhuangzi 莊子]. Language is capricious, arbitrary, and merely conventional.”¹⁰ I think this view is not only very unique, but also too radical. Here, in addition to my disagreement with Hansen’s translation and interpretation of the text, I think his explanation and analysis are not supported by the text and cannot be used to support his conclusion about the characteristics of Chinese language and thinking. In general, Hansen is right to say that, “From a [traditional] Chinese point of view, the role of language is to guide behavior,”¹¹ but he is not right in attributing to the later Mohists a linguistic skepticism in the sense that they can be understood as believing the unstability of language and thus rejecting the validity of logical inference of parallelism.¹²

Elsewhere I have provided a detailed logical analysis of the paralleling inference in the Mohist Dialectical Chapters and a constructive rather than defeatist interpretation for Xiao-qu and other relevant chapters; this will be discussed briefly in the last section.¹³ This article aims at demonstrating that, at the methodological level, the Chinese thinkers, including the later Mohists, are less symbolic and syntactic sensibility and not interested in what Rudolf Carnap called the “formal mode of speech” and argue that they tend to express their ideas in the “material mode of speech” which may help them build up their semantic and pragmatic sensibilities in philosophical thinking, especially in the thinking of parallelism.¹⁴

(3) The Problems of Hansen’s Defeatist Interpretation

Hansen thinks that there is a conflict of view on parallelism between the Confucians (儒家) and the later Mohists. He elaborates his argument in the following long passage:¹⁵

Rectification of names may be seen as an attempt to preserve the rule-based moral judgments and the algebraic inference rule (which indicates that both are regarded as intuitively correct). The rectification of names solution would be to preserve the rule by altering the semantics of the terms: a king is not an ordinary fellow, a
thief is not a man, [a] brother is not a handsome man (see p. 130). The dialectically inclined Mohists thought that one-name-one-thing was not the way language actually worked and was unattainable as a goal of language. As long as someone could imagine a moral counterexample, the theory could in principle force the denial of any conceivable “X is Y” (X Y yeh) sentence. The ideal rectification of names goal leads to problems in cases where the terms in the equational sentence are analytically related, as we shall see in discussing the white-horse issue. In any case, the redrawing of semantic boundaries was not necessary. The Mohist instead rejected the inference rule.

According to Hansen’s view, the Confucians’ solution by means of the rectification of names (zheng-ming 正名) is to preserve the rule of parallelism by altering the semantics of the terms. Hansen quotes a passage from the Mencius (孟子) (2: 15) as an evidence to support his view. His own translation is as follows:16

The King said, “Is it all right for a minister to murder his king?” Mencius said, “He who injures righteousness is a destructive person. Such a [destructive] person [can-zei-zhi-ren 殘賊之人] is a mere fellow. I have heard of killing a mere fellow [zhu-yi-fu 誅一夫] Chou [Zhou 紂] [the supposedly wicked ruler], but I have not heard of murdering the ruler [shi-jun 弑君].”

The above translation not only omits a sentence (賊仁者謂之賊) but also distorts the real meanings of the key terms in the passage. It seems to me that, even though we accept Hansen’s translation, it would not be helpful for him to make his conclusion. He thinks that Mencius’s idea is that: “killing King Chou [Zhou] was not killing a ruler, but killing a common fellow.” [Sentence 1] and speculates that, “He consistently should have held that killing Chieh [Jie 桀, the same kind of wicked ruler as King Zhou] was not killing a man, but killing a thief.” [Sentence 2] “But the Confucians (or at least their Dialectician allies) would have used rectification of names to make this judgment consistent with the inference principle. They would then be forced to conclude that thief is not man.” [Sentence 3]17 Based on these three sentences, it seems that Hansen can interpret Mencius as claiming that, “a common fellow is not a person/man.” Nevertheless, according to his own translation, Hansen undoubtedly agrees that, “Such a [destructive] person is a mere fellow” (殘賊之人謂之一夫). It implies that, some kind of “person/man” can be understood or identified by Mencius as “mere/common fellow.” Here the trouble is: based on Hansen’s translation, on the one hand, even though, in some sense, Zhou (or Jie) can be interpreted by Hansen as a thief, he is still a person/man, no matter whether he can be identified as a destructive thief.
person/man or not. On the other hand, based on Hansen’s analysis, Zhou (or Jie) is not a person/man, but a thief or mere/common fellow. Here, a contradiction will be derived. That is: according to Hansen’s view, “a thief or wicked ruler is a mere/common fellow” and “[a] thief is not [a] man;” so, “killing a thief or wicked ruler is killing a mere/common fellow” and “killing a mere/common fellow is not killing a person/man.” But, on the other hand, based on Hansen’s translation, although “a destructive person/man is a mere/common fellow,” we cannot refute the fact that “a destructive person/man is still a kind of person/man.” So, saying that “killing a destructive person/man is killing a mere/common fellow” is consistent with saying that “killing a destructive person/man is killing a person/man.” In other words, we can say that: “a thief or wicked ruler as a specific destructive person/man is still a person/man” and “killing a thief or wicked ruler as a specific destructive person/man is still killing a person/man” These are contradictory to Hansen’s view that: “a thief is not a man” and “killing a destructive person/man, including a thief or wicked ruler, is not killing a person/man.”

In addition to the inconsistence between his view and translation, Hansen seems not to notice that Mencius has made an important distinction between “shi” (弒 regicide [to kill one’s ruler]) and “zhu” (誅 execution [to decapitate or behead]) in the passage. Based on this distinction, I think there is no ground to guest that, in order to observe the paralleling inference, Mencius would be forced to conclude that, “[A] thief is not [a] man/person” or that, “King Chou [Zhou] or King Chieh [Jie] is not a man/person [but a mere/common fellow].” According to Mencius’s view, Zhou did not do what a ruler should do and thus was not qualified to be a ruler or was not entitled to occupy the place of leadership and to have the name of “ruler.” So he calls Zhou “yi-fu” (一夫). It means that Zhou is a single man or one man only, i.e., a dictator without support from the people. The meaning of the term is not the same as that of “mere/common fellow” as translated by Hansen. So, what Mencius claims is that “the execution of a dictator” is not equivalent to “the regicide of a ruler.” The former is legally and morally appropriate whereas the latter is not legally and morally permissible. Here Mencius is trying to rectify the name of “ruler” and clarify the equivocal terms of “killing in terms of execution” and “killing in terms of regicide.”

Hansen seems also not to notice the following passage mentioned by Mencius
about the legitimacy of killing people:

Suppose that there is someone who kills a man [sha-ren 殺人], and that one asks me, “May this man be put to death?” I will answer him, “He may.” If he ask me, “Who may put him to death?” I will answer him, “The chief criminal judge [shi-shi 士師] may put him to death.” (Mencius 4: 17)

It is obvious from the passage that what the chief criminal judge can put people, including murderers and thieves, to death. So, for Mencius and other Confucians, there is no need to exclude murderers or thieves from the class of people and then to assert that killing people or kings are not allowed but killing thieves, wicked rulers or mere fellows are all right.

When there seems a conflict between the later Mohists’ ethical principle such as jian-ai (兼愛 universal love) and some (counter-) examples of the paralleling inference, how can they solve the problem? Hansen’s answer is to appeal to an interpretation of some examples as in an intensional or opaque context, and thus he regards this as the main reason for the later Mohists to reject the inference rule. So he makes the following point in a long passage:20

The end purpose of the attack on the reliability of “sentence matching” is apparently to disfuse attacks on the Mohist view that “to kill a thief is not to kill a man.” They saw their opponents’ attack on this view as being based on the application of the inference rule in question to the identity sentence, “Thief is man,” which Mohists accepted. We have a way of formulating their view that has been common to the earlier examples. “Thief is man” is based on the ming “name” shih “stuff” level of semantics. Kill thief and kill man are phrases conveying actions (intsents or purposes). The identity of the formal designation of a term in such a phrase does not make the intentions expressed by the phrases identical. This way of explaining the failure of the inference is confirmed by the last two examples, which overly introduce propositional attitudes (hating and wishing). One must note in passing that if the Mohist did indeed have some notion of the intention, sense, or idea of a term as opposed to its extension or denotation, this would have been a natural place for it to have been employed. But the Mohist does not offer any such analysis. The first example in this segment is a classic fallacy of division. It seemingly has nothing to do with purposive i “intent.” The exposition does not give any special diagnosis of the breakdown of the inference, it simply observes that the inference fails in such cases. Sentence matching is,
accordingly, not a totally reliable rule, and Mohists should not be criticized for violating it in asserting that “kill thief” is not “kill man” while accepting “thief is man.”

I don’t think Hansen is right to interpret or identify the sentence “[A] thief is [a] man,” as an equation or identity sentence. I think there is no real problem about the failure of substitution between “killing [a] thief” and “killing [a] man” in the so-called intensional context, and thus no real problem of referential opacity. For the Mohists, the two tokens of “killing” in “killing a thief” and “killing a man” are not expressed as the same concept. Mozi has made a distinction to explain why killing people or killing people through military attack is unjust or not righteous and killing a thief or executing a dictator is just or righteous in the following dialogue:21

Those warlike lords attempt to defend their views by reproaching Master Mozi: “You regard offensive warfare as unrighteous and unprofitable, but is it really so? In ancient times, King Yu (禹) attacked Youmiao (有苗), King Tang (湯) attacked Jie, and King Wu (武) attacked Zhou, yet all of them were later honored as sage kings. How can you explain this?” Master Mozi said: “You neither clearly aware the class (lei 類) of what I said to refer to nor understand the reason (gu 故) behind it. What the sage kings did was not ‘to attack’ (gong 攻) but ‘to punish/execute’ (zhu 誅).”

Mozi thinks that no matter how serious the crime made by a thief or warlike lord they should be punished or executed. But punishment or execution is not the same thing as murder or killing an innocent. So the later Mohists are consistent in claiming that “killing a thief or dictator [by execution]” is not “killing a man [by murder].” The two tokens of the term “killing” here are not the same concept and also not appeared in an intensional context; they are different concepts appeared in an extensional context. It is obvious that the paralleling inference requires that the adding terms, such as “killing” and “loving,” in the concluding sentence should be used as the same concept. Since the relevant terms used in the above sentences cannot meet this requirement, so the sentences embedded with these terms cannot constitute a valid argument as that in the paradigmatic example of “A white horse is a horse; to ride a white horse is to ride a horse.” in which the two tokens of “ride” mean the same. However, this and other pairs of sentences are not used by the later Mohists as counter-examples to discredit the validity of the paralleling inference but as anomalies to remind scholars to be careful in using parallelism, to have ample attention to the semantic ambiguity and pragmatic deviation of terms appeared in the relevant
sentences, and to suggest them not to use these terms in forming their paralleling inference.

Similarly, both tokens of the term “love” in “to love a thief is not to love a man” are also ambiguous. Mozi believes that, “He who loves others will be loved by others, he who benefits others will be benefited by others.”22 For the Mohists, the term “jian-xiang-ai” (兼相愛 universal love) entails “jiao-xiang-li” (交相利 mutual benefit). On the other hand, they also believe that, “As the thief loves only his own family but not those of others, he steals from other families to gain profits for his own family … What is the reason? It is because they do not have mutual love.”23 In other words, there is no universal or mutual love between the thief and other people because the thief does not care for the others’ benefit. What kind of love the thief has is what the Mohists call the love of “bie-shi” (別士 discriminative person)24 or simplified as “bie-ai” (別愛 discriminative or selective love), which is different from the concept of “jian-ai.” So a thief would not be considered by the Mohist as a target person of universal or mutual love. For the later Mohists, although it is the case that, “a thief is a man/person,” they can claim that, “to love a thief is not to love a man/person” (in terms of mutual love) and “not to love a thief is not equivalent to not to love a man/person” (in terms of mutual love). If the consequence of loving a thief is not to have mutual benefit and one still wants to love the thief, then what one has is not universal or mutual love but some kind of discriminative or selective love. This may be one of the main reasons why the later Mohists mention that, “The claim that ‘the sage has love without benefit’ is only the words of Confucians.”25 In other words, this idea of “love” cannot be accepted by the Mohists. So, here we have two kinds of “love” which cannot be understood as the same concept. It is obvious that the paralleling inference requires the adding words to be the same concept; otherwise, they cannot constitute a valid argument. If my interpretation is right, then it is not correct to treat the relevant terms as in an intensional context. Even though we accept Hansen’s interpretation, he still cannot explain why the two adding words in the concluding sentence are different concepts, no matter whether the sentence is in an intensional context or not. Besides, although Clark is the superman, the sentence “Mary believes that the superman is strong” can be true while the sentence “Mary believes that Clark is strong” can be false. In this regard, the term “strong” is not ambiguous and “Clark” and “the superman” are co-extensive. However, in the above paralleling inference, there is ambiguity in the two tokens of “love” and the terms “thief/robber” and “person/man” are not co-extensive. In other words, “A thief is a person/man” is not an equation or identity statement. So it is not reasonable to claim that the later Mohists really think that the key terms in the concluding sentence of the
paralleling inference are in an intensional context. In this regard, Hansen provides only one very weak explanation for his intensional claim:26

A thief is a person because of the way the world is. These terms must be allowed to overlap. But the guidance in the phrase *killing thief* differs from that in *killing people*. So the *dao*, which has “kill thieves” and “do not kill people,” is consistent.

If Hansen were right, he would have to formulate the sentences as follows: “Thieves are men/people. The guiding *dao* of killing thieves [or the guiding *dao* implicitly embedded in the behavior of killing thieves] is not that of killing men/people [or the guiding *dao* implicitly embedded in the behavior of killing men/people].” If it were the case, I would ask the following question: if these two *daos* are different, do the two tokens of the term “killing” perform as the same concept? I think the only answer is that: the term is ambiguous. If we treat the two tokens as meaning the same concept and, for the sake of argument, follow Hansen’s analysis, the above parallel sentences should be formulated as: [According to the *daos* described by the Mohists] “The Mohists believe that killing/loving thieves is not killing/loving men/people.” This complex sentence is really in an intensional context. Because this belief-sentence may be true though its component sentence “killing/loving thieves is not killing/loving men/people” is false. Based on this formulation, we can still maintain the regularity of logic for sentences in the extensional context and need not to impose to the Mohists an awkward view that they do not accept the validity of an inference which all of us accept today. Again, for the sake of argument, if Hansen’s view were right, what he could conclude is nothing but that the Mohist rule of inference is only applicable to sentences in the extensional context, a trivial view we all can accept.

If we follow Hansen to regard both the former (i.e., “A thief is a man.” [1]) and the latter (i.e., “To kill a thief is not to kill a man.” [2]) of the parallelism as acceptable and do not accept that there is ambiguity in the two tokens of the key term, we will derive a contradiction from this pair of sentences. That is, a contradictory sentence, “one kills and does not kill a man/person,” will be derived. The logical forms of these sentences are as follows:

\[ [1] \forall x (Tx \rightarrow Mx) \]
\[ [2] \forall x \{ Mx \rightarrow [\exists y (Ty \& Kxy) \rightarrow (\forall y (My \rightarrow \neg Kxy))] \} \]
If there is really a man (say, \(a\)) in the domain of discourse who kills a thief (say, \(b\)) (i.e., “Ma” and “(Tb&Kab)” are true), from [1], the following sentence can be derived:

\[ [3] \exists y (My \& Kay) \]

On the other hand, from [2], the following sentence can be derived:

\[ [4] \forall y (My \rightarrow \neg Kay) \]

Nevertheless, [4] is equivalent to the following sentence:

\[ [5] \neg (\exists y (My \& Kay)) \]

So, with the relevant existential import, from [1] we have [3]; while from [2], we have [4] or [5], which is contradictory with [3]. That is to say: based on [1] and [2], if a thief is a man and if a specific man (\(a\)) kills a specific thief (\(b\)), then the specific man both kills someone and kills no man.27

Some other seeming counter-examples of parallel inference mentioned by Hansen are about the concepts of “serving” (parents versus others) and “loving” (a brother versus a handsome man). He thinks that, “serving parents” and “serving man” are distinct kinds of obligations, and different patterns of behavior count as fulfilling each rule. Just fulfilling the rule “serve parents” does not satisfy the rule “serve man.” Similarly, there are two different “acts” of loving - loving someone romantically (because he is handsome) versus loving a brother.28 I think there are two points relating to this treatment. The first point is that to accept (Hansen’s view) that the phrase love handsome man is used to convey a different i intention than love brother is not amount to putting the phrase of a sentence in an intensional context. Here, Hansen seems to confuse the “\(t\)-intension” with the “\(s\)-intension.”29 The second point is that to have two different “acts” of loving means that the token of “love” in the phrase “to love a brother” and that in the phrase “to love a handsome man” are two different concepts. Similarly, “shi-qin” (事親) means “fostering parents with respect and grateful” while “shi-ren” (事人) means “providing service to others /people.” So the problem here is not about referential opacity in a non-extensional or non-transparent context, but about the ambiguity of terms. Furthermore, “Her brother is a handsome man” is not an identity statement but a statement of predication. So, in this regard, there is no problem of substitution and thus no problem of referential
opacity after substitution, i.e., it is not a problem which leads to avail the principle of substitution in an intensional context. If, for the argument’s sake, we accept that it is a problem of referential opacity, then we should accept that there is also the same problem in the pair of sentences: * “Her brother is a man; her loving her brother (with a-intention) is not her loving a man (with b-intention).” But the Mohists’ idea of “universal love” implies loving all people, including herself, her brother and other men. So they do not accept to add the word “not” in the above parallelism. If it is understood as not comparable to the case of “loving a handsome man,” one has to explain what the difference is between these two cases. I think the only highly probable answer is that the two concepts of “love” in the case of “loving a brother” and “loving a handsome man” are different; so they cannot constitute a valid argument as that in the paradigmatic case.

Other examples mentioned by Hansen also cannot be used to support his view. In regard to the question why we cannot say that “riding a [wooden] carriage is riding some wood” though “a [wooden] carriage is [made of] wood” and that “entering a wooden boat is entering some wood” though “a [wooden] boat is [made of] wood,” his answer is that, “the intentions conveyed by the phrases are not fixed or determined by the stuffs the terms used in the phrases denote.” In other words, “Intending to ride wood is distinct from intending to ride a carriage” and “Intending to enter a boat is different from intending to enter wood (whatever that intention might be!).”30 I totally disagree with Hansen on this point. It is not only because we cannot know what kinds of strange intentions behind, but also because he does not notice that there are two different concepts of “riding” and “entering” in the relevant sentences, respectively. It is obvious that the term “riding” (cheng 乘) in “riding a carriage” means taking a vehicle for transportation, but the term “riding” in “riding wood” means straddling. The meaning of the term “entering” (ru 入) in “entering a boat” is also different from that in “entering wood.” In addition to meaning “penetrating,” another popular sense for the latter is “going into a coffin” or “going to die.” So the real problem here is not about referential opacity, but the ambiguity of terms. All these examples are clearly not the proper use of parallelism. We can easily and clearly identify these anomalies based on our semantic sensibility or linguistic intuition. This may be one of the main reasons why the later Mohists use the word “wu-nan” (無難 no difficulty) to describe the situation in understanding these anomalies. They do not think that most of the paralleling inferences are not acceptable or reliable, but remind scholars to aware whether the relevant terms are used pragmatically in different ways (duo-fang 多方), whether what they refer to are not of the same semantic class (or of co-extension) (shu-lei 殊類), and whether the reasons or causes behind their usage are
different (yi-gu 异故) (Xiao-qu: 3). So the later Mohists suggest that scholars should not often use this kind of inference without a careful reflection on the semantic ambiguity and pragmatic deviation in usage. However, there are paradigmatic examples that scholars can use as valid inferences. So they assert that it is correct to use the sentences of “mou” in the area of what it arrives (辭之侔也，有所至而正)(Xiao-qu: 3).

(4) A Constructive Interpretation

As implicitly indicated in the chapter of Xiao-qu, most of the examples of the mou argumentation share the same grammatical form, i.e., “A is B; CA is CB.” It looks obvious that the first part of the sentence (form) is a premise and the second part a conclusion. The later Mohists are very cautious to say that not all the examples of the same grammatical form are acceptable. So they classify various examples into different types: examples of some type are permissible while those of other type are not. They do not provide any formal criteria to explain why some but not the other are permissible except some correct paradigmatic examples and some incorrect examples as anomalies for comparison. It seems that they first appeal to people’s linguistic intuition or semantic sensibility and then to their reflective thinking on the comparison for discerning the permissible from the impermissible. They do not have the consciousness that the demarcation can be disclosed by sentence-form, especially by logical instead of grammatical form. In other words, their approach to the problem of validity is not strictly formal or syntactical. It may be one of the reasons why they do not and cannot express their problems in Carnap’s “formal mode of speech.” Instead, their expressions rely heavily on the “material mode of speech.”

Based on people’s first-level linguistic intuition with the Mohists’ second-level examination, the later Mohists provide some schematic examples for the justification of the validity of mou argumentation. These can be classified into five cases:

Of cases in general, there is a case that this [former proposition] is affirmed and that [latter proposition] is asserted [是而然 shi-er-ran], or that this [proposition] is affirmed but that [proposition] is not [or cannot be] positively asserted [是而不然 shi-er-bu-ran], or that this [proposition] is disaffirmed but that [proposition] is asserted [or cannot be negated] [不是而然 bu-shi-er-ran], or there are cases that one [parallelism] is distributed but another [parallelism] is not distributed [一周而不一周 yi-zhou-er-yi-bu-zhou], or that one [proposition] is affirmed but another is disaffirmed [or vice versa][一是而一非 yi-shi-er-yi-fei]. (Xiao-qu: 4)
The first type of parallelism is that the former proposition “A is B” is affirmed and the latter proposition “CA is CB” is asserted. It is the basic schema of the valid mou argumentation. The first example mentioned in the chapter of Xiao-qu is used to make a valid parallel inference. This is one of the paradigmatic examples of parallelism:

(1) “A white horse is a horse; to ride a white horse is to ride a horse.” (Xiao-qu: 5)

As mentioned above, its grammatical structure is “A is B; CA is CB.” But its logical deep structure is more complicated. Let us use the one-place predicates “S,” “P” and “M” stand for the concepts “white horse,” “horse” and “man,” respectively, and the two-place predicate “R” for the concept of “ride.” This argumentation can be formulated into the following form:

Form I: \[ \forall x (Sx \rightarrow Px) \]

\[ \therefore (\forall x) \{[Mx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Sy \& Rxy)] \rightarrow [Mx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Py \& Rxy)]\} \]

As we can prove, the parallel reasoning of (1) (and the Form I) is valid. However, the later Mohists do not and cannot use a kind of formal approach to formulate the argument; they make their right judgment by their linguistic intuition, on the one hand; and by comparing the normal examples with some anomalies, on the other. The anomalies can be found in the second, third and fifth types of parallelism, i.e., the case that the former proposition is affirmed but the latter proposition cannot be asserted; the case that the former proposition is disaffirmed but the latter proposition is asserted or cannot be negated; and the case that sometimes both sentences can be positively asserted and sometimes both sentences can be negatively asserted. Almost all the examples of these three types cannot be used to form valid arguments. The main reason is that their key terms are either semantically ambiguous or pragmatically deviated. The first case shows that we can make an inference from an affirmed or affirmative premise to an asserted or assertive conclusion. When comparing the first case with the second, third and fifth cases, we can demonstrate that it is not permissible to infer from an affirmed premise to an asserted conclusion for the second case, to infer from a disaffirmed premise to a negated conclusion for the third case, and to use the key terms like those in the examples of the fifth type to make valid arguments. Why the examples of these types of parallelism can be considered as anomalies of the first type? The later Mohists never give a clear answer in the chapter of Xiao-qu, except providing some general ideas which is implicitly appealing to people’s linguistic intuition and asking for careful comparison. For example, the two tokens of the key words “ride” and “enter,” respectively, in the following parallel
sentences are clearly ambiguous:

(2) “A carriage is wood; but to ride a carriage is not to ride wood.”
(3) “A boat is wood; but to enter a boat is not to enter wood.” (Xiao-qu: 6)

Based on our linguistic intuition, everyone can know without further reflection that the deadly metaphorical meaning of the second occurrence of “ride” and “enter” is obviously different from the literal meaning of the first occurrence of “ride” and “enter,” respectively. Therefore, we can judge that the relevant parallelism cannot be obtained and an assertive conclusion in (2) or (3) cannot be maintained. However, some examples are not so easy to judge merely based on linguistic intuition. For example, in terms of grammatical structure, the following parallel sentences look like each other:

(4) “Huo (獲) is a man; to love Huo is to love men/a man.” (Xiao-qu: 5)
(5*) “Thieves are men/people; to love thieves is to love men/people.”

But, why the later Mohists reject (5*) at the beginning of the passage on the parallelism of the second type or case by stressing their assertion of the example (5) “Thieves are men/people; to love thieves is not to love men/people.” (Xiao-qu: 6)? I think the main reason is that the concept of “love” mentioned by the Mohists is conditioned by their philosophical idea. According to Mozi’s idea of “jian-xiang-ai” (universal mutual love) or “zhou-ai” (周愛 distributive love), the consequence or condition of love is having mutual benefit (jiao-xiang-li). Since thieves cannot contribute to mutual benefit, they are not qualified to love or to be loved by others. If we still use the term “love” in “loving thieves” or “to love thieves,” it does not mean “jian-xiang-ai,” but “bie-ai” (discriminative love) or “ti-ai” (體愛 partial love) which is seriously criticized by Mozi himself. So, the reason behind the assertion of (5) and the rejection of (5*) is that the first token of “love” means “bie-ai” or “ti-ai” while the second token of “love” means “zhou-ai” or “jian-xiang-ai.” In other words, they cannot be formulated as the same two-place predicate “R”: the logical symbol for the second token should be “R2” if that assigned for the first token is “R1.” For a similar reason, at the end of the passage on the parallelism of the second type or case, when the later Mohists claim that, “to kill thieves is not to kill men/people,” they are conscious that the two tokens of “kill” have different meanings. As reflected in the words of Mozi’s teaching, it is obvious that “killing people” is morally impermissible; it amounts to “murder.” Nevertheless, “Killing thieves” means to punish bad guys by taking off their life, which may not be morally prohibited.
Sometimes the later Mohists explicitly provide explanation for the anomalies in the text other than the chapter of Xiao-qu. One of the most significant examples is in the Canon B39 and Canon B53:

*Canon B53 (經下): A gou [狗] is a quan (犬); it is impermissible to say that to kill a gou is not to kill a quan. The reason for explanation is given under “identity.”

*Explanation B53 (經說下): Gou: A gou is a quan; it is permissible to say that [to kill a gou is] to kill a quan. Just like [the type-identity of] twin thigh.

This example (i.e., “A gou is a quan; to kill a gou is to kill a quan.”) shares the same grammatical structure and a similar logical form with (1) (except that (1) is expressed with implication sign as its main connective while this example is expressed with equivalence sign as its main connective.). The parallel reasoning of this example can be validly proved as well. However, the following example indicates a different reasoning:

*Canon B39: If you know this is a gou, to say of yourself that you do not know this is a quan is a fallacy. The reason for explanation is given under “identity.”

*Explanation B39: If knowing a gou is identical with knowing a quan, it is a fallacy. If they are not identical with each other, there is no fallacy.

As we know, in an intensional context, although “gou” is “quan” are the different names of the same thing, we cannot say that knowing something is a gou implies knowing something is a quan. The author of Canon B39 seems not aware that the sentence is in an intensional context and thus treats the example as a case in an extensional context as that in Canon B53, so s/he thinks that to disaffirm the conclusion is a fallacy. It seems that the author of Explanation B39 notices that, in an intensional context, it is fallacious to say that knowing something is a gou does not imply knowing something is a quan if the two types of knowing are identical. If the two types of knowing are not identical, even though a gou is a quan, it is not fallacious to say that to know that something is a gou is not to know that something is a quan.

I think most of the examples in the second type are related to the problem of ambiguity, except the examples about “many thieves” and “no thieves” whose problem can be solved in terms of their logical syntactic structure of quantification. On the other hand, the problem of most examples in the third type is pragmatic rather
than semantic. Let’s look at the following examples:

(6) “Being about to die prematurely is not dying prematurely; but to stop someone being about to die prematurely is to stop her/him dying prematurely.”
(7) “The claim that there is a fate is not that there is a fate; but to reject the claim that there is a fate is to reject that there is a fate.” (Xiao-qu: 7)

The former example is about the usage of the phrase “be about to” (qie), a state of action which is possible but has not yet actually happened. The first sentence of the parallelism presents a common sense view that a possible action is not an actual action. From this sentence, however, we cannot draw the conclusion that to stop a possible action is not to stop an actual action. Because, being an action in an actual state presupposes a prior state which is possible but has not yet happened. So, when we stop an action in its prior state, we also stop the action in its subsequent state. The latter example is about the distinction and relation of a state of affair and a propositional attitude of it. It is clear that the state of affair that there is a fate is not the same as a claim of the state of affair. However, to reject the claim is simultaneously to reject the state of affair. Because, to reject the claim is not only to reject the claim as a claim, but also to reject what the claim claims, i.e., the state of affair. In general, before constructing a parallelism, we have to know the pragmatic use and logical function of these key words; otherwise, we may commit some kind of fallacy.

According to the later Mohists, a term in a sentence is distributed if every member of the extension designated by the term is discussed in the sentence. If not every member of a term in a sentence is discussed in the sentence, the term in the sentence is not distributed. In the parallelism of the fourth type, the example of distribution is counter to the example of non-distribution. For a particular object of horse, the non-distributive case can be expressed by the following example:

(8) “That s/he rides horse[s] does not require her/him to ride all horses without exception before being deemed to ride horse[s]; s/he rides some horse[s], and by this criterion is deemed to ride horse[s].” (Xiao-qu: 8)

It can be elaborated as “This is a horse; to ride this [particular object/horse] is to ride [some] horse[s].” Its grammatical form is the same as that in the first case (“A is B; CA is CB.”); its logical form can be formulated as follows:
Form II: \[ (\forall x) \{ [Mx \rightarrow Rxa] \rightarrow [Mx \rightarrow (\exists y)(Py \& Rxy)] \} \]

If we talk about “riding white horses,” as in (1), instead of “riding this [particular object/horse],” it can also be recognized as an example of non-distributed case. The logical form of the example is the same as Form I mentioned above. Both Form I and Form II use existential quantifier to show that “riding this [particular object/horse]” and “riding white horses” do not require “riding all horses,” “riding some horses” is qualified to call “riding horse[s].”

In comparison, the distributive case can be expressed by the following example:

(9) “That s/he does not ride horses does require that s/he rides no horses at all; only then is s/he deemed not to ride horses.” (Xiao-qu: 8)

Its grammatical form is “A is B; ~CB is ~CA.” For a particular object of horse, it can be elaborated as:

(10) “This is a horse; not to ride horses is [i.e., implies] not to ride this [particular object/horse].”

Its logical form can be formulated as follows:

Form III: \[ (\forall x)(Sx \rightarrow Px) \]
\[ \therefore (\forall x) \{ [Mx \rightarrow (\forall y)(Py \rightarrow \sim Rxy)] \rightarrow [Mx \rightarrow \sim Rxa] \} \]

If we talk about “riding white horses” instead of “riding this [particular object/horse],” it can be elaborated as follows:

(11) “A white horse is a horse; not to ride horses is [i.e., implies] not to ride white horses.”

Its logical form can be formulated as follows:

Form IV: \[ (\forall x)(Sx \rightarrow Px) \]
\[ \therefore (\forall x) \{ [Mx \rightarrow (\forall y)(Py \rightarrow \sim Rxy)] \rightarrow [Mx \rightarrow (\forall y)(Sy \rightarrow \sim Rxy)] \} \]

Both Form III and Form IV use universal quantifier to show that “not to ride
horses” is distributed; it includes “not to ride this [particular object/horse]” and “not to ride white horses,” etc.

Although “Huo is a man; to love Huo is to love a man.” (4) has a similar logical form as that of the non-distributed example of (8) mentioned above (i.e., Form II), a variation of (4), (i.e., 4A): “Huo is a man; to love men is to love Huo.”, is permissible while a variation of (8), (i.e., 8A): “This is a horse; to ride horse(s) is to ride this [particular object/horse].” is not. Why? I think this is because the logical role played by the term “love” is different from that played by the term “ride.” The special use of the term “love” can be recognized in the distributed case of the example “That s/he loves people/men requires her/him to love all people/men without exception, only then is s/he deemed to love people/men.” (12) (Xiao-qu: 8) Based on this, the distributed character of a variation of (4), i.e., (4A), can be expressed in the following form:

Form V: Ma

\[ \therefore (\forall x)\{[Mx\to(\forall y)(Mxy\&Rxy)]\to[Mx\to Rxa]\} \]

In contrast, the logical form of (8A) is:

Form VI: Pa

\[ \therefore (\forall x)\{[Mx\to(\exists y)(Py\&Rxy)]\to[Mx\to Rxa]\} \]

It is obvious that Form V is a valid argument form while Form VI is not.

The non-distributed case of the example “That s/he does not love people does not require that s/he loves no people at all; s/he does not love all without exception, and by this criterion is deemed not to love people.” (13) (Xiao-qu: 8) can have the following form for “not loving Huo” (another variation of (4), i.e., (4B)):

Form VII: Ma

\[ \therefore (\forall x)\{[Mx\to\neg Rxa]\to[Mx\to(\exists y)(Mxy\&\neg Rxy)]\} \]

Besides, there are two contrasting kinds of parallelism: Most examples of the fifth type of parallelism are about these two kinds of parallelism. The examples “The ghost-soul of a man is not a man; the ghost-soul of your elder brother is your elder brother.” (14) and “Sacrificing to a man’s ghost-soul is not sacrificing to a man; sacrificing to your elder brother’s ghost-soul is sacrificing to your elder brother.” (15)
(Xiao-qu: 9) are invalid arguments with negative premise and positive conclusion. In contrast, the examples: “If you inhabit somewhere in the state you are deemed to inhabit the state; when you own one house in the state you are not deemed to own the state.” (16) and “The fruit of the peach is a peach; the fruit of the bramble is not a bramble.” (17) (Xiao-qu 9) are invalid arguments with positive premise and negative conclusion. Both these examples of parallelism cannot be formulated into valid argument forms. I think it can be explained by some semantic or pragmatic reasons. For example, the key words “inhabit” and “own” in (16) have different pragmatic characteristics in the sense that the former has the characteristic of transference in spatial category while the latter does not have. Just like the case that “I have a pain in my foot,” but “I don’t have a pain in my shoe” though “my foot is in my shoe.” On the other hand, “I have a house in LA” entails “I have a house in USA.” It is because “have a pain in X” and “have a house in X” used in the context of spatial relation (i.e., relation of physical or mental space) play different roles in terms of their pragmatic convention.

In general, the later Mohists provide permissible models of parallel inference through the examples of the first type and demonstrate the validity of the examples through their comparison with the examples of the second, third and fifth types. The permissible models are found from linguistic intuition while their validity is justified by reflective thinking through their comparison with the anomalies in the other types. Furthermore, they distinguish the distribution and non-distribution of terms through the two kinds of examples of the fourth type and they also disclose the invalidity of the contrasting versions of parallelism of the fifth type in terms of semantic or pragmatic reasons. These schematic contrasts further help people know how the semantic or pragmatic role of various usages of terms is played in different kinds of parallelism.

4 A. C. Graham, Yin-Yung and the Nature of Correlative Thinking (Singapore: The Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986), 25; and Christoph Harbsmeier, op. cit., 104, 262.
5 The detailed arguments against the thesis of incommensurability between these two kinds of thinking can be found in Yiu-ming Fung, “Davidson’s Charity in the Context of Chinese Philosophy,” in Davidson’s Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy: Constructive Engagement, edited by Bo Mou (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006), 117-162.
Graham thinks that the tendency to parallelism, including those appeared in the chapter of Xiao-qu of Later Mohism, is characteristic of correlative thinking. It seems to me that it is definitely a misunderstanding of the Mohist parallelism. See A. C. Graham, *Yin-Yang and the Nature of Correlative Thinking* (Singapore: The Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986), 25.


This is a distinction that assumed great importance in the work of Rudolf Carnap, particularly in his *Logical Syntax of Language* (Kegan Paul, 1934). In the material mode of speech objects and their relations are the topic; in the formal mode, language itself is mentioned. The distinction thus corresponds to the use/mention distinction. But for Carnap the background is the "quasi-syntactical sentence," in which features disguised as properties of objects are actually syntactic in character. Thus "five is a number" is the material mode of what can be put in the formal mode as "'five' is a number-word." Revealing the statement as basically syntactic in character removes the appearance of a deep logical or metaphysical truth. The above description of the distinction is mainly selected from *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 143.


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Chad Hansen, *Language and Logic in Ancient China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 131. Hansen treats all sentences of the form "XY yeh [ye]" as an equation. He says, "I use equation as a grammatical form. But it could be argued that sentences of this type are indeed equations and not classic subject-predicate assertions. The second term would be regarded as implicitly quantified existentially so that the logical form would be 'horse is identical with some animal.' Or, to capture the part-whole structure of the mass-stuff ontology, 'horse is identical with part of animal.' I suspect that, contrary to Frege, English nominal predications are also equations. According to his analysis, the formal structure (* A is B; A is not-C; therefore B is not-C*) of the argument (* "Yellow-horse is identical with part of horse; yellow-horse is not identical with part of white-horse; therefore white-horse is not identical with part of horse."*) indicates 'a simple and common deductive fallacy.' (op. cit., 161) I think his interpretation and analysis are definitely wrong. Let's put aside his inaccurate translation, Hansen's treatment is certainly inconsistent with other passages in the "Dialogue of White-Horse" (Bai-ma-lun). For example, Gongsun Long asserts that, "if white horse is horse, the search for both should be the same." If we follow Hansen to treat the antecedent as * "white horse = (part of) horse," the consequent cannot be obtained. But if we treat the antecedent as "white horse is identical with horse," the consequent can be maintained with a good sense. In other words, if we treat the sentence "bai-ma-nai-ma-ye" (白馬乃馬也) not as an identity statement of mass-stuffs (i.e., * "white horse=(part of) horse."), but as an identity statement of entities or classes (i.e., "white horse is identical with horse."), and interpret the first two sentences about "qiu-ma" as predicating expressions, we can interpret it as a sound argument with an application of Leibniz's law. (求馬，黃、黑馬皆可致。求白马，黄、黑马不可致。使白馬乃馬也，是所求一也，所求一者，白者不異馬也。) Furthermore, Gongsun Long also asserts that, "to claim that, 'having horse is different from having yellow horse,' is to treat yellow horse as different from horse and thus to treat yellow horse as non-horse." The final assertion that, "to treat yellow horse as non-horse," is obviously inconsistent with Hansen's treatment of the sentence (* "yellow horse is identical with part of horse") in his first premise. (以有馬為異有黃馬，是異黃馬於馬也。異黃馬於馬，是以黃馬為非馬。) Besides, according to Hansen’s idea of equation, if we treat the first sentence below as * "one horse-stuff=(part of) four-feet-stuff," we should also treat the second sentence as * "two horse-stuff=(part of) four-feet-stuff." But why the later Mohists make a negative expression for the latter? (馬四足者，一馬而四足也。非馬則非四足。) (Xiao-qu: 9) If we accept Hansen’s interpretation of equation and assert that "an area of a square wood is identical with part of a square wood," we would be forced to assert that * "an area of a square is identical with part of a square." But why we, including the later Mohists, cannot accept the latter. (方之一面，非方也，方木之面，方木也。) (Da-qu: 24) Moreover, to interpret the simple sentence in the parallelism as equation instead of...
predication, we will have some radicul sentences such as * “the ghost of one’s brother is [identical with part of] one’s brother.” (兄之鬼兄也) (Xiao-qu: 9) Moreover, in the Mencius, the first sentence of the passage, “All are equally men, but some are great men, and some are little men.” (Mencius 11: 15) (鈞是人也，或為大人，或為小人。) cannot be treated as equation. If we treat the sentence in this way and translate it as * “everyone=(part of) man-stuff,” then * “some man-stuff=(part of) great-man-stuff” and * “some other man-stuff=(part of) little-man-stuff” do not make sense for the adverbial use of “jun” (鈞) which is used to modify individual entity distributively. For a holder of stuff ontology, like Hansen, s/he cannot accept the valid argument that, “All white-horse-stuffs=(part of) horse-stuffs’ & ‘All horse-stuffs ≠ (part of) white-stuffs’ / ∴ ‘All white-horse-stuffs ≠ (part of) white-stuffs’.” It is because the conclusion is not in accordance with stuff ontology. Such a holder would not accept the conclusion as true. So, even a holder of stuff ontology cannot accept the relevant sentences as equations. For the later Mohists, the argument should be formulated without stuff-ontology as follows: “All white horses are horses, all horses are not white things; therefore all white horses are not white things.” The later Mohists can accept this argument as valid though they do not regard it as sound because the second premise is not true.

16 Chad Hansen, Language and Logic in Ancient China (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 75.
18 Hansen claims that, “The doctrine of rectification of names characteristically deals with exclusive distinctions, as opposed to inclusive relationships among names. The word man is simply not appropriately applied to a thief or to a person who allows his sister-in-law to drown. If the word thief applies to a person, the word man or king or gentleman should not - since moral rules attach to one and not the other of these descriptions. Thus the moral version of rectification of names inclines toward a formula to be found in Kung-sun Lung [Gongsun Long] - one-name-one-thing.” (Language and Logic in Ancient China (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 76.) I think it is not right to assign Mencius the conclusion that, “King Zhou is not a man.” In addition to the counter-arguments mentioned in the main text of this article, we can also find other evidence from the Mencius. For example, Mencius mentions that “[King] Shun is a man; I am also a man.” (舜，人也；我，亦人也。) (Mencius 8: 28) and that “Therefore all things classified into the same kind refer to things of the similar features. Why skeptical of [this similarity] when mentioning human beings? The sage and I are of the same kind.” (故凡同類者，舉相似也，何獨至於人而疑之?聖人與我同類者。) (Mencius 11:7) Here, the “I” is used as a first-person name for all the things classified into the same kind, including good kings such as Shun and bad kings such as Zhou. Moreover, Confucius (孔子) regards thieves who bore holes in the wall to steal (chuang-yu-zhi-dao 窩窬之盜) as little men (xiao-ren 小人) (Analects 17: 12)(論語) and Mencius regards this class of people (chuan-yu-zhi-lei 穿窬之類) as people who are also have a mind which cannot bear to see the sufferings of others (人皆有所不忍) but cannot extend his mind. (Mencius 14:7)
19 Xunzi (荀子) has a similar view in the Xunzi 18: 2. With respect to the meaning of “rectification of names” in Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi’s thought, I use John Searle’s ideas of “institutional fact,” “status function” and “deontic power” to explain the naming in the socio-political system of ancient China. See the chapter four of my book manuscript, titled “Philosophy of Language and Logic in Ancient China,” forthcoming.
22 Mozi 14: 3.
23 Ibid.
24 Mozi 16: 4. Another similar distinction made by the later Mohists is that between “ti-ai” (partial love) and “zhou-ai” (comprehensive love).
25 Da-qu: 15. Besides, in the Canon Explanation B43, the later Mohists claim that, “And we know that to make benefit for others is to love others.” In the Canon Explanation B75, they also claim that, “love and benefit are not understood as in the relation of inside and outside; and what is being loved and what is being benefited are also not in the relation of inside and outside.”
27 The derivation from [1] to [3] can be proved as follows:
The derivation from [2] to [4] can be proved as follows:

\[ 1. (\forall x)(Tx \rightarrow Mx) \quad \text{Assumption} \]
\[ 2. (Tb \& Kab) \quad \text{Assumption} \]
\[ 3. (Tb \rightarrow Mb) \quad 1, \text{ UE} \]
\[ 4. Tb \quad 2, \text{ Simplification} \]
\[ 5. Mb \quad 3,4, \text{ MP} \]
\[ 6. Kab \quad 2, \text{ Simplification} \]
\[ 7. (Mb \& Kab) \quad 5,6, \text{ Conjunction} \]
\[ 8. (\exists y)(My \& Kay) \quad 7, \text{ EI} \]

This is the same form as the conclusion of Form I. The first formulation can be found in James D. Carney, *Introduction to Symbolic Logic* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), 122.

A formal proof of this argument and the others can be found in the chapter ten of my book manuscript, titled “Philosophy of Language and Logic in Ancient China,” forthcoming.