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Jane Geaney

University of Richmond, jgeaney@richmond.edu

A CRITIQUE OF A. C. GRAHAM'S RECONSTRUCTION OF THE "NEO-MOHIST CANONS"

JANE M. GEANEY

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

A. C. Graham's *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Sciences* (1978) is the only Western-language translation of the obscure and textually corrupt chapters of the *Mozi* that purportedly constitute the foundations of ancient Chinese logic. Graham's presentation and interpretation of this difficult material has been largely accepted by scholars. This article questions the soundness of Graham's reconstruction of these chapters (the so-called "Neo-Mohist Canons"). Upon close examination, problems are revealed in both the structure and the content of the framework Graham uses to interpret the Canons. Without a more reliable framework for interpreting the text, it seems best to remain skeptical about claims that the Canons represent evidence for the study of logic in early China.

THE NEO-MOHIST CANONS ARE COMMONLY thought to be the closest thing to logic in ancient China. A. C. Graham's reconstruction of this almost unintelligible text has been hailed as "the single most important study on Chinese logic ever published."[1] Graham suggests that the Canons also contain the germs of Chinese science, destined to be undeveloped due to poor preservation of this text. Sinologists have used Graham's reconstruction not only to understand Neo-Mohist logic and science, but also to elucidate methods of argumentation and technical terminology throughout ancient China. This article questions whether we can in fact rely on Graham's reconstruction. According to Graham, an "organizing principle must be identified if the items [in the Canons] are to be read in context."[2] But the organizing principle Graham selects for reconstructing the text is questionable. The organizing principle determines the order and the themes that provide the context for interpretation. If it is called into question, we lack the necessary context for interpreting the Canons. Given the countless questions about line-breaks and emendations of characters in the Canons, it is by no means easy to determine, on a case-by-case basis for each Canon, whether it is possible to reject Graham's organizing principle for the Canons as a whole but still to retain his translation (or even, in many cases, his deci-

sion about what counts as the beginning and ending of a "Canon" and an "Explanation"). Although Graham's reconstruction is a monumental achievement and we may have nothing better to use in its place, I fear that we do not yet have a reliable source of Neo-Mohist thought.

In what follows I shall first identify two general problems with Graham's proposed restructuring of the Canons: the fact that there are two apparently similar sections that Graham believes refer to distinctly different disciplines, and the fact that there are gaps in his construction of the Canons into supposedly parallel halves. Next, I shall question Graham's contention (fundamental to his restructuring of the Canons) that the Mohist divides the world into an eternally necessary realm and a transient, non-necessary realm. Graham contends that in the eternal realm knowledge is necessary, whereas in the transient realm procedures for knowledge are merely consistent, and that neither realm spawns epistemological questions. This separation of a necessary, atemporal realm from a non-necessary, temporal realm does not seem grounded in the thought of ancient China. And the intelligibility of Graham's reconstruction is not compelling enough to justify his theorizing that the Neo-Mohists invented such a world-view. If it is the case that the Mohist raises no epistemological questions, perhaps it is not because he believes knowledge is necessary (as Graham argues), but because, as elsewhere in ancient China, there is no drastic separation between realms such that skeptical questions might be raised concerning their reconnection.

Briefly, Graham's presentation of the history of the neo-Mohist Canons is as follows. The Canons were written sometime around 300 B.C. Unfortunately, when a complete text of the book called *Mozi* was assembled for the

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[1] In the biographical note on Graham in *Epistemological Issues in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Hans Lenk and Gregor Paul (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 185.

[2] A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argumentation in Ancient China* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1989), 138.

DEFINITIONS

1. A 1–6 reason, unit, knowing
2. A 7–39 conduct and government
—   A 40–51 spatial and temporal conditions of knowing
3. A 52–69 geometry
4. A 70–75 disputation

(A 76–87 Appendix: 12 Ambiguous words)[3]

PROPOSITIONS

A 88–B 12 consistent description procedures

B 13–16 spatial and conditions of knowing
B 17–31 problems in optics, mechanics, and economics
B 32–82 problems in disputation

Han imperial library (in the last century B.C.), the Canons (which make up *pian* 40 and 41 of the *Mozi*) had already been separated from their Explanations (which make up *pian* 42 and 43). Moreover, the sections Graham calls "Expounding the Canons" (which he abbreviates as EC) and "Names and Objects" (which he abbreviates as NO) had become fragments, respectively called "Bigger Pick" 大取 (*pian* 44) and "Smaller Pick" 小取 (*pian* 45), the lead characters (the first word of each Canon repeated as a heading) had been incorporated into the text. What Graham considers to be the text's five divisions (if they exist at all) were not marked. To make matters worse, before the end of the Sui dynasty (581–618), a text of the *Mozi* consisting of only the first thirteen chapters began to circulate. For about a thousand years thereafter no one read the complete text, although it survived in the Daoist Patrology. Eventually, the complete text was reprinted in what is known as the "Lu edition," based on the Sung Daoist Patrology (1552), and the "Tang edition," based on the Ming Daoist Patrology (1553). The first modern commentary on the *Mozi* was not written till the mid-1700s, and it was only in 1894 that Sun Yirang 孫詒讓 wrote his great commentary on the text.

Even after Sun Yirang's commentary, the Canons remained notoriously difficult to interpret. Graham proposes an outline that is intended to make the Canons intelligible. This outline splits the Canons in half, then splits each side into five parts in order to create a context from which to interpret each Canon. (Graham refers to these five parts as "sections" one through four, with the third section being a bridging sequence; see chart below.) The Canons were traditionally divided into "Parts" A and B. Graham calls this break "arbitrary" and divides the text at Canon A 88. Everything before that he refers to as "definitions" (A 1–87) and everything after as "propositions" (A 88–B 82). With his new arrangement, Graham believes that what he calls the "definitions" and the "propositions" can be seen to follow five more or less

parallel sections with corresponding themes. This results in the model, *supra*, for the Canons.

This model makes it possible for Graham to circumscribe the topic of each of the Canons within one of the five sections. Accordingly, the fivefold order behind the Canons (a few pieces of which are actually absent from the Canons) is something like this:

1. Description = relating names to objects (transient).
2. Ethics = explaining how to act (transient).
—   Bridging sequence, on change.
3. Sciences = explaining objects (eternally necessary).
4. Disputation or Logic = explaining names (eternally necessary).

As a result of this order, Graham claims that, with the exception of the final section on logic, for every Canon there is enough of a context to establish "its general theme."[4]

However, in many ways these themes that are supposed to provide the context for interpretation are forced. Specifically, Graham himself admits that *to us* there appear to be two sections whose theme is logic (that is, in Graham's wording, "the realm of names"). But this, instead of causing him to question his theme-arrangement, prompts him to speculate that the Mohist "must be looking at logical problems from a different viewpoint which it would help us to locate."[5] Rather than search for a peculiarly Chinese approach to logic, we might instead reexamine Graham's division of the text and the parallel themes that lead him to such speculation.

In an attempt to distinguish between the two sections that both resemble "logic," Graham admits that the first section he identifies, which he calls "description" (names and objects[6]), "shares most of its terminology with the

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[3] A. C. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics, and Science* (Hong Kong: Chinese Univ. Press, 1978), 230.

[4] Ibid., 229.

[5] Ibid., 231.

[6] This section, "names and objects," is to be distinguished from a later *pian* of the Canons that Graham calls "*Names and objects.*" In a later publication Graham no longer uses "description" for the relation of names and objects, but "discourse" instead; see his *Disputers of the Tao.*

fourth discipline, disputation proper ['logic' or 'names only'].["7] In spite of this common terminology, Graham insists that there must be a difference between the two sections—that is, that the Mohists believe there is a difference between the "realm of names and objects" and the "realm of names." (Significantly, this difference involves the temporal nature of the two realms, as we shall see below.) Yet, Graham admits that this difference "emerges distinctly only in the two sequences of propositions" (i.e., in two of the sections on the side of what Graham calls the "propositions" half of the Canons). He notes that "the difference . . . is clear enough in the propositions but remains nearly invisible in the definitions."[8] However, he *also* maintains that in the propositions, where the distinction is supposed to "emerge distinctly," "the Mohist seems especially concerned with the fundamental terms which the first discipline *shares* with the rest, first of all the word *ku* 故 'reason'."[9] In other words, in the definitions half, Graham is unable to point to *any* difference between description and disputation. Moreover, in the propositions half, instead of the difference emerging distinctly," the *shared* terms emerge. Yet Graham does not permit this to invalidate his division of the two halves—the definitions and the propositions. Nor does it make him doubt what he claims to be the "parallelism of general themes" that seems to be his main justification for splitting the Canons just at that particular point, and referring to the two divisions as definitions and propositions. Instead, he relies solely on the following characterization of the first and fourth sections of the propositions for evidence that one of them is about names *and* objects (description) and the other is only about names (logic): he calls the first section "a close-knit sequence laying down procedures for deciding what is so of *objects*" and the last section "a series of miscellaneous propositions shown by *logical* ['names only' or 'disputation'] analysis to be admissible, self-refuting, consistent, unnecessary, inadmissible unless a condition is fulfilled" (emphasis added). Because what is at issue is precisely whether or not the first section is about "deciding what is so of *objects*" (as opposed to names only), this characterization of Graham's actually amounts to a claim that the first section is "a close-knit sequence" and the fourth is "a series of miscellaneous propositions."

There is no doubt that the fourth section is a miscellaneous series. In contrast to it, the first section may seem "close-knit." But that is unrelated to the question of whether the first section is about "description" (names and objects) or the fourth is about "logic" (names). The fourth section, which Graham says is about names, contains items B 52 (which appears to be about supporting weights from hairs) and B 62 (which has something to do with the relation of a spherical object and being upright). Graham notes that these "are the only problems of B 34–82 which connect with the mechanics sections (B 25–29)." But B 52 and B 62 are not the only Canons whose subject matter seems incongruous with a section that is supposed to be concerned with disputation (names). B 60, for instance, seems to use a metaphor of hoeing to make a point about progress. B 69 appears to be about leading and following, using the metaphor of singing and borrowing someone's coat. B 65 seems to be about the tallying of wood and stone squares. B 56 also seems to be out of place in a section on "disputation proper." It appears to concern the submerging of a bramble in water. It reads:

> B 56 荊之大, 其沈淺也, 說在具.
> [荊]. 沈荊之具也, 則沈淺非荊淺也.
>
> c. The extension of the bramble is because its submergence is shallow. Explained by: what we use.
> e. In the case of the thing we use to submerge the bramble, that its submergence is shallow is not because the bramble is shallow.[10]

According to Graham's interpretation, "B 56, like B 55, deals with a problem of causation."[11] Presumably this explains its presence in the logic (names) section, although Graham often notes that causation is characteristic of the sciences (objects), rather than logic. Ironically, without noting the implications of the placement of B 56 in a section on disputation (names), Graham takes it as a test case for the importance of context in interpreting the Canons. He writes:

> B 56 is almost unique in that it has no apparent relation with other sections and does not contain a single important word found elsewhere in the corpus. It is of interest as an especially *vivid reminder of the extent to which the understanding of Classical Chinese depends on context.*[12]

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[7] *Later Mohist Logic*, 262.

[8] Ibid., 232.

[9] Ibid., 262, emphasis added. Graham concludes that "what seems to have happened is that the Mohist took advantage of Division 1 to dispose of terms fundamental to all four disciplines, such as *gu* 故 'reason' and *zhi* 知 'know'" (p. 232).

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[10] All translations are Graham's unless otherwise noted.

[11] *Later Mohist Logic*, 427.

[12] Graham adds: "My own interpretation has the advantage over most that it involves no emendation to the body of the

In addition to these problems with Graham's proposed explanation for the order of the Canons, there are gaps in the purportedly parallel structure of the definitions and the propositions. The "ethics" section of the definitions lacks a corresponding section in the propositions. Moreover, Graham says that nine Canons placed between the definitions and the propositions compose an appendix on "ambiguous words." These too lack a corresponding section in the propositions. Amidst both the definitions and the propositions Graham notes another section, which he calls a "bridging sequence." It includes eight Canons from the definitions (A 40–52), and three from the propositions (B 13–16). The only evidence offered that this is a separate section is that the last two of these Canons in the definition section discuss the words, "staying" and "necessary." Graham thinks these two terms constitute a bridge between the "transcience" belonging to the sections on names and objects and on ethics and the "eternity" belonging to the section on names and that on objects.

> Of the two bridging sequences on knowledge and change, the sequence of definitions ends with *zhi* 止 'staying' (A 50), the temporary validity of names fitting transient phenomena in the first two arts, and *bi* 必 'necessary' (A 51), the unending certainty of judgments in the last two.[13]

Graham's characterization of these sections as either "transient" or "eternal" creates more problems than it solves. In his ordering of the Canons, each of the four sections represents a different discipline of study (the names section is logic; the objects section, science; the names and objects section, description; and another section that involves both names and objects is referred to as ethics). Graham's characterization of these sections as eternal or transient leads him to argue that the study of names is closer to the study of objects because these operate according to necessity, whereas the study of names

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Canon or Explanation (although I do transfer the illustrative gloss at the end to B 57)."

[13] *Later Mohist Logic*, 30. Here and in other quotations Graham's Wade-Giles romanizations have been altered to *pinyin*. Incidentally, the number of Canons in these sections is also not "parallel." In the bridging sequence there are more Canons from the definitions than from the propositions. In the sections on "names" and on "names and objects" the opposite occurs. For names and objects, from the definitions there are six Canons (A 1–6); from the propositions, there are nineteen (A 88–B 12, excluding A 89–92). For names, from the definitions there are five Canons (A 70–75); from the propositions there are fifty (B 32–82).

and objects resembles ethics because it aspires only to consistency.[14]

Graham notes that there seem to be connections between the Mohist's view of names and the Mohist's view of objects. He writes:

> . . . two geometrical terms are applied to propositions in *Names and objects*, to designate what seems to be the pause and the phrase-position (NO 9; illustrations of 'a priori' demonstration are taken from the geometry of the square and the circle (A 90, 93, 98); several times in sequences on ethics, change, and disputation one notices other verbal or material connexions with sections on optics (A 47, 48) and mechanics (A 21, B 52, 62).

To some extent, Graham seems to attribute the connections between the discipline of names and the discipline of objects to a social situation in which the same people work in both areas.

> The sections on optics and mechanics surely reflect social conditions comparatively rare in history until the 16th century in Western Europe, where the Scientific Revolution soon followed, the explosive situation when men with speculative minds are in close contact with men who work with their hands.[15]

Graham also attributes this similar use of terminology to interrelations in the subject-matter. However, what he cites as the connection in the subject-matter seems to amount only to a connection between the eternal relations *within* the names section and the eternal relations *within* the objects section. The similarities in these relations do not extend to the discipline of "the relation of names to objects" (description). In this view, when separated from one another, the relations of names and objects are "eternal," and necessary knowledge is possible both within the realm of names (logic) and within the realm of objects (science).

Graham suggests that when relating names to objects (in description), our capacity for certainty of knowledge is reduced to the (minimal) requirement of consistent procedures. "As long as we are *describing* the realm of

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[14] On the other hand, Graham asserts that the study of names is no closer to the study of names and objects than to any other of the disciplines. He writes, "If we have correctly identified the underlying principle of classification, the last of the four arts [logic] is no closer to the first [description] than to either of the others." *Later Mohist Logic*, 31.

[15] Ibid., 8.

changing objects we are obliged only to follow *consistent* procedures, extending the name we apply to one object to every similar object."[16] It is not clear why knowledge would lose certainty in this way. At times Graham presents the matter as if the problem is "names fitting transient phenomena."[17] At other times, names themselves seem to be changing. When the Mohist tries to relate names and objects, Graham says, he encounters the difficulty of making the name stop (*zhi* 止) or confine itself to one thing.

In any case, Graham argues that, in keeping with "eternal" nature, the requirements for the relations in the discipline of names are stricter than in the "transient" discipline of names and objects (description). He states that the difference between the realm of names and the realm of names and objects is that "when we confine ourselves to the realm of names, these consistencies [consistent procedures for relating names to objects] reveal themselves as complementary relations which are necessary." To support this, he cites A 78 which he interprets as saying that when objects are referred to in quotation, their relation to names becomes necessary. "If we put the quotation device *yeh che* 也者 after 'like the object' we can say that "For 'like the object' one necessarily uses this name (A 78 [若實]也者, 必以是名也. Cf. A 31)."[18]

As part of the contrast between the necessary (*bi* 必) relations of logic and science and the non-necessary

relations of description, Graham contrasts the complementarity of "this/not this" (*shifei* 是非) to the non-complementarity of "what is so" (*ran* 然).[19] Again, he sees the difference as temporal: at least one reason why "what is so" lacks complementarity is that descriptive relations have only the temporary fixity of "stopping." In relation to objects, when a name does not "fit" (*dang* 當), it "errs" (*guo* 過). *Guo* implies "to pass beyond," which can be taken as either "to miss" or "to exceed." Graham explains *guo* as a technical term, and most of the examples he cites are related to knowledge persisting after the experience of the object is in the past. Although *guo* can be taken spatially (and Graham admits that there are "a few cases of passing in space"), Graham chooses to interpret it primarily in the *temporal* sense of "having passed."[20] He accounts for the use of *guo* in unfamiliar contexts in terms of the Mohist's "special concern with the problem of transient conditions of knowledge." Thus, he contends that the complementarity of *shifei* permits necessary knowledge, but owing to its transience the non-complementarity of *ran* cannot do the same.

At the most basic level, this argument about dividing the text in terms of the eternal (*shifei*) and the transient (*ran, zhi,* and *guo*) might at least derive from the occurrence of numerous references to *zhi* 止 and *ran* 然 in the section on names and objects (section A 88–B 12). But, of the eighteen occurrences of *zhi* 止 in the text (five of which are emendations), eleven fall outside the section

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[16] Ibid., 38, emphasis added.

[17] Ibid., 30.

[18] However, Graham adds, the necessary relations that characterize the register of names do not develop beyond complementary relations to more sophisticated logical implication. Names simply come in pairs whose elements follow or dismiss each other:

> Among pairs of names we sometimes find that X and Y "follow from each other" (*xiang cong* 相從, EC 3, A 93), or "dismiss each other" (*xiang qu* 相去), or that one of them cannot "be dismissed without the other" (*pian qu* 偏去 B 3, 4, 7), for example 'seeing' and 'appearing', 'length' and 'breadth' (B 4). The authors of the Canons, who have no conception of the proposition, think of all logical implication in terms of names of which at least one is the 'complement' (*ti* 嘀) of the other, after the analogy of 'elder-brother' and 'younger-brother', a pair in which "both are complements" (A 88). Wherever implication is two-way either member of the pair may be inferred from the other as its converse (*fan* 反, defined in A 73 as "If inadmissible then on both sides inadmissible"), for example that if one class of objects is called 'oxen' all other objects are non-oxen. (Ibid.)

[19] Graham explains that the necessity of causal change in objects resembles the necessary relations among names. He describes the unified world-picture of the four disciplines as "a cosmos of concrete and particular objects . . . located in space and changing through time, *interconnected by necessary relations like the logical relations between their names*" (emphasis added).

Graham describes a *gu* 故—a reason in the sciences—as a "complement that is either a necessary or a sufficient condition." "When in justifying descriptions or in the sciences we offer a 'reason' (*gu* 故), we are offering one of complements . . ." (ibid., 38). "In the sciences a *ku* is a cause, for example a wound or dampness as the cause of illness; a wound is 'why the thing is so'" (B 9 物之所以然); "dampness is a cause: it is necessarily required that what it does comes about" (A 77). [Canon A 77 says nothing about illness.] Graham then uses this understanding of *gu* 故—necessity in the sciences—to buttress the structure he sees in the Canons: "The necessity of causal relations accounts for the placing of the sequences on the sciences with those on disputation after the bridging sequences on knowledge and change, the definitions of which end with *bi* 'necessary'." *Later Mohist Logic*, 54.

[20] Ibid., 190–91.

in question—appearing in the names section, the objects section, and in the appendix on "ambiguous words." Moreover, in A 88–B 12 (the description section, which is purportedly about "what is so") there are clear uses of *shifei* 是非, and many more uses of *shi* 是 than there are of *ran* 然.

Of course, the context of these occurrences is as important as their frequency. In one of the most prominent occurrences of *shifei* in the description section (A 88), Graham takes the Canon to be a discussion of the difference between the "absolute" and the "relative"; hence, perhaps, a discussion of the difference between logic and description. As things that are "absolute," A 88 lists *heibai* (黑白) "black and white," *guijian* (貴賤) "dear and cheap," as well as *shifei* (是非) "being this or not being it" [Graham's translation], and *cunwang* (存亡) "present or absent."[21] Graham manages to interpret these pairs of opposites as contrasting with a set of "relative" terms that includes *jianrou* (堅柔) "hard and soft" *sisheng* (死生) "dead and alive," *qujiu* (去就) "departing and approaching," and *youwu* (有無) "having and lacking."[22]

Presumably, there is some difference between "dear and cheap" and "hard and soft" that makes the former pair "absolute" while the latter is "relative," hence about "what is so." We are referred to the text of B 30 and B 31, which seems to say that the price of commodities is fixed by supply and demand. B 30 says: "If the royal coin does not alter but the supply of grain does alter, when the harvest alters the supply of grain it alters the coin." B 31 says: "Whether the price is right or not decides whether the people want to or not. (For example, people in a defeated state selling their houses and marrying off their daughters.)" Somehow, instead of seeing these Canons as reflecting the *relative* value of coins and daughters, Graham discovers here that an exact price must mean only two alternatives (dear or cheap), and this is supposed to explain why "dear and cheap" is absolute. He writes: "If . . . we have only two alternatives, then one either is X or is not X . . . Commodities, since there is an exact and proper price fixed by supply and demand (B 30, 31), are either dear or cheap."

Graham adduces examples (often highly emended) in the "Explanation" to justify these categorizations. For instance, to explain why "having and lacking" is "relative," he appeals to the "explanation"—福*家, 良*智, 有無也.[23] (Graham takes *fu* 福 to be the same as *fu* 富 that appears elsewhere in *Mozi* meaning "wealthy." *Zhi* 智 is written with a heart signific, and emended from *nu* 怒; Graham associates it with the "native intelligence" referred to in *Mencius* 7 A/15.) Now, in spite of the fact that he has just classified being dear or cheap as "absolute," Graham concludes from this line that "having (there being) a rich family or an excellent native intelligence is no less relative than being rich." He fares little better in explaining "dead and alive" as a relative pair of items:

剣 [尤] *方*中, 死生也.

In the case of *a sword just striking* (?), 'dead and alive'.

Although two of the three characters in this explanatory phrase are emended, Graham manages to draw this conclusion,

> The example of this pair is unfortunately corrupt, but if we have emended it correctly it refers to the moment when life ends and death begins (cf. A 50) and should be read in light of Hui Shi's sophism 'The sun is simultaneously at noon and declining, a thing is simultaneously alive and dead.' (*Zhuangzi* ch. 33 (Guo 1102/3) 日方中方睨, 物方生方死).[24]

Even if it is appropriate to emend so radically, it is difficult to see why these very extended senses of each term "provided by the examples" would suffice to justify rigid classification into opposing categories.

Graham posits a distinction between *shi* 是 and *ci* 此 that also plays a significant role in his structuring of the Canons. He believes *ci* refers to particulars—things that are outside the purview of logic—and he claims that the Canons are quite strict in their usage of *shi* and *ci*, such that *shi* only means "the thing in question" whereas *ci* means "the instance here." Thus, because Graham presupposes that logic does not deal with particulars, he carefully translates instances of *shi* that appear in the section on names as "this thing in question" or "this thing as it

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[21] "Absolute" is Graham's reading of *jue sheng* 絕勝, literally, "to prevail decisively." He takes *jue* as "breaking off from the other" and *sheng* in the sense of "win in disputation." Ibid., 339–40.

[22] In contrast to *jue sheng*—taking *jiao* 交 as 'interplay' and *fang* 方 as 'depend on, be relative to'—Graham translates *jiao de fang* 交得方 as "relative." Ibid., 338–39.

[23] The asterisk indicates a character Graham has emended.

[24] Graham explains that *fang* 方 has been substituted for *you* 尤, because *zhong* 中 has been substituted for *zao* 早. *Zhong* has been substituted "on grounds of systematic corruption" and because *you* appears nowhere else in the Canons. It is worth noting that the reference to "the will of Heaven" also occurs only once, but Graham does not emend it on those grounds.

is judged to be." However, in the section on description, in one instance of *shi* (variously rendered elsewhere by Graham as "what it is," "of these," "a thing that it is," and "what we called it"), Graham translates *shi* as "this." His translation of 謂是則是固美, 謂也則是非美 reads: "If 'beautiful' is said of this, then inherently it is this that is beautiful; if it is said of another, it is not the case that this is beautiful . . . ."[25] Thus, even Graham cannot force the Canons to conform to a hypothetically rigorous distinction between *shi* and *ci*, a distinction that appears to have no basis outside of the Canons. Graham admits that *Names and objects*, a later text—which he claims is so analytically careful as to have distinguished the form of the sentence for the first time—does not follow the Canons in this strict treatment of *shi* and *ci*. He contends that it is because *Names and objects* uses the term *mou* 某 = "X" (although it does so only in one line) that *shi* and *ci* are no longer carefully distinguished. This leaves him free to alter the translation of *shi* in any occurrence in *Names and objects* to suit his own interpretation.

The distinction Graham proposes between *shi* as "this thing in question" and *ci* as "the instance here" seems to imply that logic can only include objects in the form of "the thing in question." Indeed, Graham's description of logic as "names only" suggests as much. His contrast between the Mohist's dispute over "converses" and the Western view of logical "contradictories" also makes this point, although indirectly. Graham says the difference is that in a "converse" (*fan*) one side may say something like "it is a dog" and the other must say "it is not a dog." Thus, "The point about *fan* is that if one kind of thing is an ox we can 'reverse' and say that all others are non-oxen, as contradictories only one is true, as *fan* both are true."[26] But there seems to be more to Graham's characterization of Mohist disputation than just that it is true on both sides. There is also some suggestion that Mohist logical converses differ from Western contradictories in that converses do not involve particular objects. Graham says: "Disputation is defined as 'contending over converse claims' (A 74), not, as a Westerner would have been inclined to expect, contending over contradictory statements *about the same things*."[27] Graham explains that for the Mohist, "in disputation we are not, for example, deciding whether to say of a *certain* man who loves some men that 'He loves men', but judging some such *question* as whether or not the love of some men is the love of men."[28]

However, in spite of this apparent contrast between "claims" and "things" (or "questions" and "a certain man"), the point ultimately does not seem to be that the difference between the Mohist's converses and the Westerner's contradictories is that the Mohist's converses are not "about the same things."[29] In fact, according to Graham's translation of *dang* 當 as "fit the fact," when the Canon says one side wins in disputation, it fits one particular fact—that is, in Graham's other terms, the "name" fits the "object." Thus, when Graham says "one man says *it* is this and the other that *it* is not," this "it" is a "same thing"—a fact/object to be fit—and in this sense the "names only" section also seems to be about relating names to objects. Indeed, Graham insists that the "it" about which claims of disputation contend is not the object as described (language) but the actual object ("in front of the eyes"),

> A crucial question is whether the thing proved in disputation to be necessarily an ox is conceived to be the thing as described or the actual object in front of our eyes. There can be little doubt that the latter is the right answer.[30]

Thus, having distinguished the necessary disciplines of "names" and "objects" from the merely consistent discipline of "relating names and objects," Graham begins to rejoin them—pointing to ways in which the "names" section is about relating to objects after all. (But if logic also relates names to objects, then what is the point in his calling one "names" and the other "names and objects," thereby strictly separating the two disciplines?) Graham asks:

> How far does he [the Mohist] go in divorcing the realms of fact and logic? He regards the logically inadmissible as necessarily mistaken in fact (B 71 "If what this man says is inadmissible, to suppose that it fits the fact is necessarily ill-considered"), and uses disputation to show that a claim does not fit the fact (B 35, 40) although not that it does. Of one name, 'thing', it is said that "any object necessarily requires this name" (A 78).[31]

Names are knowable because they have logical necessity (*bi* 必); objects are knowable because they have causal necessity (*gu* 固). And, assuming that by "facts" Graham

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[25] Graham reads *ye* 也 as *ta* 他 here.

[26] *Later Mohist Logic*, 169.

[27] Ibid., 39, emphasis added.

[28] Ibid., 38.

[29] Actually, the Canon Graham refers to for his definition of disputation as "contending over converse claims" is not explicitly about claims.

[30] *Later Mohist Logic*, 39.

[31] Ibid.

means the realm of names and objects, the relation of names and objects is knowable because in some ways (as in the above quote) these necessities overlap.

This overlap between the disciplines seems to account for Graham's contention that all Mohist knowledge is "necessary":

> The Mohist raises no epistemological questions, he has no doubts that whether by observation, report or explanation we can *know*, and that when we do 'we necessarily do know' (A 3). Presumably the relation between the animal I see and my knowledge of it is necessary in the sense that if it is not really there I do not know, merely suppose (*yi wei* 以為 cf. A 24).[32]

The kinds of knowledge Graham mentions here in the context of not raising epistemological questions (observation, explanation, and report) include both the necessary and the merely consistent disciplines.[33] Knowing by observation that a particular animal is an ox seems to belong either to description or to science. Knowing by explanation that it fits the standard for ox belongs to logic. Graham does not expound on how one can *know* that it is an ox by report, but a report does not suggest either science or logic. If knowledge is necessary even within the merely consistent discipline of names and objects, postulating a distinction between the disciplines seems unwarranted.

Another way that Graham tries to fill the gap he posits between the certainty of "names" and the temporary validity of "relating names and objects" is through the notion that an object can engender a name, which, when compared to a standard, takes on the necessity of complementary relations (like that of *shifei*). Graham finds evidence for this in two "obscure and corrupt passages."

From these difficult passages, he speculates that deeming something "X" involves a kind of "complement." (In this case, the "complement" is being "similar to the standard.") Like the complementary converse claims of disputation, these complementary relations are necessary.[34] According to Graham, one can infer this from passages A 39 and A 85:

> ... the Mohist conceived being deemed (*wei* 為) an X as the complement of being similar to the standard; the deeming is 'engendered' (*sheng* 生) by the object as we perceive it, but becomes necessary only when 'matured' (*shu* 孰 = 熟) by comparison with the standard. The word 'necessary' is 'said of cases where a complement is matured'. (A 51 謂*嫡孰者也).[35]

Moreover, by changing his terminology from "objects" to "facts," Graham adds certainty to the consistent procedures of description. Although he insists that the discipline still only aspires to consistency, in the *Names and objects* section the relation between names and objects becomes a relation between propositions and "facts."[36] The argument that seeks to establish a connection between "root" and "fact" is quite complex.

Canon A 86 lists four types of sameness. Graham identifies these "samenesses" with what is mentioned in

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[32] If the Explanation of A 3 is meant to assert that "when we know we necessarily do know," it certainly produces the assertion in an odd way. A 3 reads:

知, 材也. [知材]. [知]也者: 所以知也而必知. [若明].

> Graham takes this to say, "The 'intelligence': it being the means by which one knows, one necessarily does know. (Like the eyesight.)" This forces him to translate *zhi* 知 once as "intelligence" and once as "knowing" in the same sentence.
>
> A 24 is merely an instance of the expression *yi wei* 以為. It says, 夢, 臥而以為然也. Graham's translation reads, "*Meng* (dreaming) is supposing to be so while sleeping."

[33] Graham gets this list from A 82.

[34] *Later Mohist Logic*, 38.

[35] In Graham's text and the original *di* has no "mouth" radical. Graham takes the reference to "complement" in A 39 to mean the name "pillar" that is applied to the perceived object. Yet, it is not clear that even his greatly emended version of A 39 is concerned with "the object as we perceive it." Significantly, Graham does not attempt to explain what the example of serving a ruler has to do with objects of perception.

Moreover, A 85 may not be about "complement" either. The term "complement" is a part of a *double* emendation that is somehow related to "keep as it is," but even after the emendation the meaning of the phrase remains cryptic. Both *zhong* and *di* (the only reference to "complement" in this Canon) are emended from 早 'early' and 臺 'lookout, tower'.

In A 51 as well, *di* is an emendation—again for *tai*. Graham reads 孰 as *shu* 熟 'ripe, cooked', although he notes most editors have followed Bi Yuan in emending to *zhi* 執 'hold'. In the last line, Graham emends from *bi* 必 to *zhi* 止 because he finds *bi* "unintelligible in this context."

[36] *Later Mohist Logic*, 40. "Fact," is Graham's translation of *gu* 故. The use of this word may simply be Graham's attempt to indicate what corresponds to propositions in the way that objects correspond to names, but its effect is to lend an air of certainty to the discipline.

Names and objects (NO 6) as "sameness with the same name."[37] The "sameness with the same name" appears in NO 6 along with the "mysteriously" named "sameness of the same root"—同根之同 which are also four: 丘同, 駙同, 是之同, and 然之同). Graham calls these "sameness in being separated off," "sameness of the accessory," "sameness in being this," and "sameness in being so."

The first and second of these "sameness of the same root" are irrelevant to the connection Graham wants to make between root and fact. He remarks that they are not as important as the other two,[38] and identifies "sameness in being set off" 丘同 as "sameness in not being this or so." "Sameness of the accessory" 駙同 is more difficult for Graham to explain. To establish the meaning of *fu* 駙, he speculates in what follows about the significance of the color of horses, although the color of horses is not even mentioned:

> the only point of similarity and difference in Nos. 1–6 which is not a matter of being this or so is the difference between 'white horse' and 'black horse'. In "The horse is white" and "The stone is white" horse and stone would be the same in that being white is so of both of them; and the sameness would remain if we cut off the root of the sentences and attached it to horse and stone to make 'white horse' and 'white stone'. We may guess that this was the significance of *fu t'ung*.[39]

The word for "root," *gen* 根, does not appear anywhere else in the Canons or in *Names and objects*. To define it, Graham focuses on "sameness in being this" (是之同) and "sameness in being so" (然之同). Without further explanation it is asserted that "we may identify them in the light of the examples of 'being so if the one instanced is this' (乃是而然) in NO 4 and NO 13." But NO 4 does not establish any connection between *gen* and "this" or "so." It merely says:

> 一曰乃是而然, 二曰乃是而不然, 三曰遷, 四曰 . . .
>
> Of one, says [One says?] "if this then so." Of two, say "if this then not so." Of three, say "it shifts." Of four, say . . . [my translation].[40]

And NO 13 merely says:

> 夫物或乃是而然, 或是而不然, <或不是而然>, 或一*周而一不*周, 或一是而一—[不是] [. . .] 非也.[41]
>
> Of the thing in general, there are cases where (1) something is so if the instanced is this thing, or (2) is not so though the instanced is this thing, or (3) is so though the instanced is not this thing, or (4) applies without exception in one case but not in the other, or (5) the instanced in one case is this and in the other is not.

Thus, NO 4 and NO 13 do not provide much of a clue to the meaning of "sameness of the same root." Yet Graham proceeds to argue that identifying the "this" and "so" of the "sameness of having the same root" with NO 4 and NO 13 means identifying them with the various phrases in *Names and objects* that he has already determined to be about "this" and "so." Thus, he comes up with a list from NO 1, NO 11, and NO 14 of examples of what he regards as cases of "being this" and "being so." "A white horse is a horse," for instance, he holds to be an example of "being this," whereas "ride a white horse" he takes as an example of "being so." That is, any nominal sentence is a case of "being this" and any verbal or adjectival sentence is a case of "being so." He

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[37] Actually, A 82 lists 重, 具, 連, and 類; so only two of them are the same. Graham takes *ti* 體 as *lian* 連 (with some basis, since they are connected in A 82), and *he* 合 as *ju* 具, defining *he* as "sameness of properties such as hardness and whiteness composing one stone."

[38] Graham considers "sameness in being this" and "sameness in being so" to be important because they are "the only ones for which he [the Mohist] mentions corresponding types of difference," as if it were not possible that they might simply be the only kinds of "samenesses" whose corresponding types of differences *survived*.

[39] The text of Nos. 1–6 is particularly corrupt, consisting of rearranged fragments from "The Greater Pick" and "The Lesser Pick." (These are the names of the last two dialectical chapters from which *Expounding the canons* and *Names and objects* are reconstructed. "The Greater Pick" is a collection of fragments; "The Lesser Pick" is quite a bit more intelligible.) Thus, there is no reason to assume that Nos. 1–6 as reconstructed by Graham exhaust the set of options for ways of naming, as he himself acknowledges. Given the corruption of the text, it seems particularly difficult to argue for a definition of one character in NO 6 by correlating items that do appear in the preceding fragments as if these were the only possible items to be correlated.

[40] Graham's translation reads: "In the first case we say that if the instanced is this ['the stone'] something is so of it ['white'], in the second that though the instanced is this something is not so of it ['big'], in the third it has changed in place ['Ch'in horse'], in the fourth that it . . ."

[41] *Both* of these cases of 周 "apply without exception" are emendations from 害 "harm, obstruct," which Graham lists as being corrupt in this case.

then declares: "The root of the sentence then is the complement of the nominal or the main verb of the verbal sentence. We find this hypothesis further supported when we come to the description of the proposition in NO 10."

In discussing NO 10, Graham equates "sameness with the same root" with the object.[42] Graham's discussion of NO 10 is meant to buttress his claim that, according to the theory of description in the Canons, after applying one name to one object, one then "proceeds" (行) to similar objects. This "theory of description in Canons" appears to refer only to B 1, where the reference to "proceeding" is, however, actually not about objects. B 1 reads:

止類以行人. 説在同.
[止]. 彼以此其然也説是其然也. 我以此其然也疑是其然也.

Graham translates:

c. Fix the kind, in order to 'make the man proceed'. Explained by: the sameness.

e. The other, on the grounds that it is so of the instance here, argues that it is so of the thing it is; I, on the grounds that it is not so of the instance here, doubt that it is so of the thing it is.

B 1 contains the only use of "proceeds" that Graham refers to when he discusses "proceeding" in NO 10. He notes, "*Names and objects* has now arrived at the point which the corresponding series of Canons reached at B 1; having 'separated the roads' (A 97) we 'make the man proceed' (B 1), *from what is so of particulars to what is so of the kind.*"[43] Graham states that in NO 10 what proceeds now is not a name (though before it was "the man"), but rather a proposition. Moreover, he surmises, *Names and objects* must be talking about the "root" (although the term is not used) when it says of the "proposition":

NO 10 夫辭 TC 5B/2–6 以故生, 以理長, 以類行者也.

The proposition is something which is engendered in accordance with a fact, becoming full grown according to a pattern, and 'proceeds' according to the kind.

The condition of the text here is significant: it consists of two pieces. Graham has added the topic "the proposition." Yet he reads this as the *proposition* being broken into two parts.[44] One part is engendered "in accordance with the *gu* 故." The other completes it "according to the *li* 理."

From here on Graham presents no real argument. Instead he makes a series of connections.

> Then the first part engendered is precisely the part called the root (*gen* 根) in NO 6, the complement of a nominal sentence or a main verb of a verbal sentence. . . . Returning to the first of the six sentences we analysed under NO 6, the root will be 馬也 "It is a horse," which is judged true or false by comparison with the *gu*, the horse itself. This connects with the phrase in A 39 楹之生*嫡 "The pillar's engendering of the *ti* ('complement', not of course in the grammatical sense)," where we took the *ti* to be the name 'pillar' applied to the object.

Thus, through this series of tenuous connections Graham maintains that the mysterious "root" (of "sameness of the same root") is the part of a proposition that is engendered by facts. With facts engendering the propositions of names and objects, description becomes that much more certain in its procedures—again reducing the gap Graham posits between the eternally necessary realms and the merely consistent transient realms. By introducing these various bridges between realms, Graham unwittingly seems to undermine his argument that the Mohists separated them in the first place.

Overall, Graham's reconstruction may be questioned both in terms of structure and content. Structurally, Graham is well aware of "the extent to which the understanding of classical Chinese depends on context." If we cannot explain the order of the Canons, we have little solid basis for interpreting them. As Graham puts it, if the order of the Canons is random, then

> . . . our inquiries into the textual history, grammar, technical terminology, and stock illustrations would still not altogether dispel the suspicion that the study of the Canons involves too many imponderables for confident interpretation. In Chinese even more than in other languages, a passage without context in a document recognized to be corrupt gives too much scope for imaginative interpretation.[45]

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[42] In another context, Graham identifies the relation of properties in an object as a form of sameness with the same *name*— *he* 合. See Canon A 74.

[43] Emphasis added.

[44] That is, he does *not* read it as two things that are true to the proposition, if indeed the fragment is about the proposition.

[45] *Later Mohist Logic*, 229.

In other words, Graham's translation and interpretation *rely on* the way he divides the Canons into themes. There is an element of circularity in the whole procedure as Graham himself seems to admit. To the extent that we doubt the themes he has assigned to the various sections into which he breaks the Canons, we may doubt his determination regarding the content of the Canons. Of course the intelligibility of the final product provides some evidence in favor of Graham's restructuring of the Canons. However, this intelligibility seems inextricably linked to Graham's identification of the theme of each section and, more importantly, to his questionable theory regarding the temporal nature of each section. Graham's argument for the distinction between transient and eternal sides of the Canons is both incongruous with the world-view of ancient China and is founded upon tenuous connections in emended texts. Although he presents this as a gap between "names," "objects," and "names and objects," that distinction on close examination does not hold, leaving little ground for believing his explanation of the order of the Canons. Graham's reconstruction of the Canons may, in the end, be a case where proceeding from a faulty hypothesis leads to more confusion than not proceeding at all.[46]

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[46] This is especially true when that hypothesis is then applied to other texts that are not as indecipherable, which Graham does by using his order of the Canons to interpret the "Rectification of Names" chapter of the *Xunzi.*