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Mozi's Logic of Love

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ABSTRACT: Mozi (墨子, c. 470 BCE – c. 391 BCE) is a prominent figure in Chinese civilization and an influential ancient thinker of his time. Universal love (兼愛, jian'ai) is an integral part of his thought, with the belief that all actions should be rooted in the idea of care without distinction. It serves as a cornerstone for his ethical and political principles, emphasizing a focus on the betterment of society as a whole. Mozi's views on the structural problem in human predispositions towards partiality inclinations are also discussed. This paper also presents the role of analogy in the development of philosophy in China and how Mohism played a key role in establishing rigorous standards of evidence, logical reasoning, and argumentation that had a lasting impact on Chinese thought.

KEY-WORDS: Mozi; 兼愛 (jian'ai, Universal Love); Reason-based morality; Analogy; Chinese logic.

RESUMO: Mozi (墨子, cerca de 470 AEC – cerca de 391 AEC) é uma figura proeminente na civilização chinesa e um pensador antigo influente de sua época. O amor universal (兼愛, jian'ai) é uma parte integrante de seu pensamento, com a crença de que todas as ações devem ser fundamentadas na ideia de cuidado sem distinção. Isso serve como um pilar para seus princípios éticos e políticos, enfatizando na melhoria da sociedade como um todo. As visões de Mozi a respeito das predisposições humanas para inclinações parciais são discutidas. Este artigo também apresenta o papel da analogia no desenvolvimento da filosofia na China e como o Moismo desempenhou um papel crucial no estabelecimento de padrões rigorosos de evidência, raciocínio lógico e argumentação que tiveram um impacto duradouro no pensamento chinês.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Mozi; 兼愛 (jian'ai, Amor Universal); Moralidade baseada na razão; Analogia; Lógica chinesa

An Exploration of Mozi's Philosophy and Impact on Chinese Civilization

Mozi[1], (eponym of Master Mo), is a prominent figure in the Chinese civilization, as he is one of the most influential ancient thinkers of the Huaxia 华夏 era[2]. He lived about a century after Confucius's death (551–479 BCE), becoming the most reactive thinker to Confucianism (儒家, aka Rujia, Ru School/ Ruism)[3]. His school, known after his name, Mohism (墨家, Mojia)," was established in the Warring States period (479-221 BCE) for two centuries and half" (Zhang, 2014). It became extremely popular: "the third biggest school following Confucianism and Daoism".[4] The renowned philosopher Feng Youlan (2020) stated, "In ancient times [Mozi's] fame was as great as that of Confucius, and his teaching was no less influential".[5] The logical patterns and the emphasis on analogical reasoning, as presented by Mozi, are not just abstract intellectual exercises but serve a deeper purpose in promoting universal love. The analogies and logical structures crafted by Mozi aim to foster a societal mindset that aligns with the principle of

[1] His exact dates are uncertain, but probably he lived sometime within the years 479-381 BCE. See YOULAN Feng; FUSAN Zhao, 2020. 中国哲学简史 / Zhong guo zhe xue jian shi = = A short history of Chinese philosophy, 五南圖書出版股份有限公司, Taibei Shi : Wu nan tu shu chu ban gu fen you xian gong si.

[2] Term used in historical Chinese literature, commonly used as a reference to China and its civilization. See: HOLCOMBE, Charles, 2010. *A history of East Asia: From the origins of civilization to the twenty-first century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[3] Many regard him the first real philosopher of the Ancient China, even if Confucius' "Analects" is considered to be the inaugural text of Chinese philosophy's "Classical period".

[4] SONG, Jinzhou, March 2020, *Mohist Theoretic System: The Rivalry Theory of Confucianism and Interconnections with the Universal Values and Global Sustainability*. In Cultural and Religious Studies, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 178-186.

[5] YOULAN, Feng; FUSAN Zhao, 2020. 中国哲学简史 / Zhong guo zhe xue jian shi = = A short history of Chinese philosophy, 五南圖書出版股份有限公司, Taibei Shi : Wu nan tu shu chu ban gu fen you xian gong si.

'jian'ai 兼愛', promoting a rational and yet compassionate view of social relations.

This paper aims to unravel the intricate relationship between the principle of 'jian'ai 兼愛' and the logical frameworks Mozi employed to advocate for this universal love, delving into how these two seemingly distinct domains are in fact deeply intertwined in his philosophy. It is crucial to understand how Mozi's advocacy for universal love is not only a standalone ethical stance but is also reflected and substantiated through his logical methodologies. This integration of ethics and logic is what sets Mozi apart and imbues his philosophy with enduring relevance.

Mozi's extensive body of work covers a wide array of topics, including theology, economics, warfare, epistemology, law, government, natural and political sciences.[6] His most famous phrase and most original contribution, however, is the concept of 兼愛 (jian'ai),[7] which has been variously translated as "universal/all-embracing love", "impartial care" or "inclusive concern".[8] This notion departs from the Confucian ideal of love translated as "humaneness/humanheartedness", "goodness" or "benevolence" (仁, ren, jen), which places emphasis on family relationships. Mozi focuses instead on the negative consequences of what he calls "the principle of discrimination", which results on the benefit of one's own affective community on the detriment of others:

> The man who holds to the principle of discrimination says: It is absurd for me to care for friends as much as I would for myself, and to look

[6] ZHANG, Ellen, 2014. *The Common Good in Moism: A Reconstruction of Mozi's Ethics of "Inclusive Care" and "Reciprocal Well-Being"*. Part of the Philosophical Studies in Contemporary Culture book series (PSCC, volume 23), pp 103–128.

[7] A. C. Graham translates "ai" as "concern" but opts for "indiscriminate concern for each." See A. C. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1978); also Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 137– 169.

[8] "Shun, however, notes that "ai" in Mozi's usage need not exclude the emotions, since it could "involve reacting affectively in response to negative conditions of the objects of concern." Shun, Mencius, 31". Cited by VIRÁG, Curie, 2017, *The emotions in early Chinese philosophy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, p. 52.

> after their parents as I would my own. As a result, such a man does not do very much for his friends. But the man who holds to the principle of all-embracingness says, on the contrary: I must care for my friends as much as I do for myself, and for their parents as I would my own.[9] (Op. Cit. Feng, 2020, p. 72).

In her book titled "The emotions in early Chinese philosophy", Curie Virág (2017:53) presents Mozi's views on the structural problem in human inclinations. As she explains, the Mohist philosophy of love views reason as the primary tool for achieving impartial care. The notion is that human beings possess certain basic cognitive abilities that allow them to understand and reason logically from premises to arrive at the best possible course of action. [10] According to Mozi, human inclinations towards partiality, or bie 別, are responsible for all the calamities in the world[11], for people are naturally inclined to benefit themselves, even if it means harming others. He believes that people should overcome their natural predisposition towards partiality and extend their caring to everyone, not just those within their own community. This means that people should act in a way that benefits society as a whole, rather than just themselves or their immediate community. By doing so, Mozi believes that people can avoid tearing the world apart through their competition for personal gain.[12]

Virág claims that the fundamental difference between Confucius

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[9] YOULAN Feng; FUSAN Zhao, 2020. 中国哲学简史 / Zhong guo zhe xue jian shi = = A short history of Chinese philosophy, 五南圖書出版股份有限公司, Taibei Shi : Wu nan tu shu chu ban gu fen you xian gong si. p. 72.

[10] LUCAS, Thierry. (2020). Logical Thought in Mohism and Later Mohism. In: *Dao Companion to Chinese Philosophy of Logic* (pp.253-283).

[11] Mozi believes that this lack of caring is the cause of disorder in society. This disorder can manifest in various forms, such as violence, warfare, famine, misery, and poverty. According to Mozi, individuals who prioritize their own interests over the interests of others create a society where people are pitted against each other in competition for resources and power. This competition ultimately leads to conflict and disorder. See VIRÁG, Curie, 2017, "Reasons to Care: Redefining the Human Community in Mozi". In: *The emotions in early Chinese philosophy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, p. 63.

[12] VIRÁG, Curie, 2017, "Reasons to Care: Redefining the Human Community in Mozi". In: *The emotions in early Chinese philosophy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, p. 52.

and Mozi is that the latter posits an objective standard of morality that can be reached through the use of reasoning. Unlike Confucius, who focuses on cultivating personal character and relationships, Mozi provides *reasons* to care for others based on the ability of human beings to attain a higher perspective, from which they can evaluate what is morally right. Mozi's emphasis on reason-based morality demands individuals to transcend the human tendency towards egotism. By accessing this higher vantage point through the use of reason and logic, Mozi believes that individuals can care for others regardless of their affiliations.[13] As Chad Hansen (1989) explains, Mozi accepted the naturalness of graded love, but questioned its ethical value[14].

Mozi's contributions to logic and the role of analogy in the development of philosophy in China

In modern times, when Chinese philosophies became part of a dialogue with the West, the long-forgotten Mohist logic was rediscovered and provided evidence that Chinese philosophy was not merely abstract and intuitive, but also analytical in nature (Cheng, 1997:108). This rediscovery gave Chinese logic an opening into the Western academic discourse.[15] In this section, we are going to discuss how **analogy** played a significant role in the development of Chinese philosophy and shaped the way Mohists approached various philosophical questions. Then, we will introduce the mode of reasoning used by Mozi and other Chinese philosophers to explore complex concepts and relationships, establishing connections between seemingly

[13] VIRÁG, Curie, 2017, "Reasons to Care: Redefining the Human Community in Mozi". In: *The emotions in early Chinese philosophy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, p. 62.

[14] HANSEN, Chad, 1989. "Language Utilitarianism". Richard B. Brandt - Journal of Chinese Philosophy 16 (3-4):381-385.

[15] CHENG, Anne, 1997. *Histoire de la pensée chinoise*, Paris : Seuil.

unrelated elements. We will explore the philosophical framework that emerged during the Warring States period provided the intellectual environment necessary for the development of logic and argumentation in China and how Mohism, in particular, played a key role in the establishment of rigorous standards of evidence and argumentation that would have a lasting impact on Chinese philosophy and thought.

Analogy is a type of reasoning that establishes a comparison between two objects, concepts, or events that otherwise are independent. Examples of analogy include metaphors, similes, and allegories. According to Jana S. Rosker (2014), in China, this mode of reasoning was shaped by the unique social conditions prevalent during the pre-Qin era (776-221 BCE).[16] This background was important for the development of logic and argumentation, particularly in the case of Mohism. The emphasis on argumentation and the need for a rational approach to solving problems led to the development of logical reasoning and the establishment of rigorous standards of evidence.

Rosker discusses the structure of analogical inferences in the Sinitic tradition stating that analogies in Chinese thought follow an organization that brings all elements within a certain type. An example of analogy in the Chinese tradition is the relationship between a ruler and his subjects with that of a father and his children. In this analogy,

[16] The Warring States period in China, which lasted from 475 BCE to 221 BCE, was a time of great political instability, social upheaval, and military conflicts between the various states that made up China. The constant warfare, political chaos, and social dislocation that characterized this period created a need for new ideas and new ways of understanding the world. This need, in turn, led to the development of the various philosophical schools of thought that emerged during this time. One of the most important factors that contributed to the development of these philosophies was the breakdown of traditional Confucian values and the collapse of the Zhou dynasty, which had previously provided a stable and unified government for China. These developments, in turn, led to the emergence of new schools of thought, such as Mohism, Legalism and Taoism, which sought to redefine traditional Confucian values and provide new frameworks for understanding the world. Overall, the Warring States period created the conditions for the development of philosophies in China by a need for new ways of understanding the world. The political instability of this period forced Chinese thinkers to question traditional values and seek new forms of knowledge. This, in turn, led to the emergence of a rich and diverse philosophical tradition that continues to influence contemporary Chinese thought and culture.

the ruler is seen as the father and his subjects are seen as his children. Both relationships involve a level of care, protection, and guidance, and both the father and the ruler are responsible for the well-being of their respective dependents. Another example is the comparison between the relationship concerning the sun and the moon with the relationship between two brothers, where the sun is seen as the older brother and the moon as the younger brother. This analogy is used to explain the fact that the sun illuminates the sky during the day and the moon during the night, just as each brother performs a specific role within the family. Another instance is the comparison between the relationship between a person and their shadow. In this analogy, a person and their shadow are seen as two complementary entities, where the shadow is dependent on the person and follows their every move. This analogy highlights the idea that every action a person takes has a corresponding impact on their shadow, just as every decision a ruler makes has a corresponding impact on his subjects.

In the first chapter on "Impartial Caring," Mozi uses a medical analogy to explain his philosophy on how to solve the problem of disorder in the world, comparing a physician with a sage king. Just as a medic must determine the root cause of an illness before finding a cure, Mozi argues that a sage seeking to bring order to the world must investigate the sources of political disorder. This analogy is used to compare situations where people seem at a loss as to what to do, with one where the solution is clear and obvious. By demonstrating a methodology for arriving at the true cause of the problem of conflict, Mozi proposes that the solution is for people to care about others impartially.

We see that Mozi's use of analogy is important because it guides the individual through the process of reasoning that is necessary to identify the root cause of the problem, and to understand the solution. This methodology is based on the belief that people's underlying tendency toward partiality is the root cause of the problem, as

aforementioned. Thus, by using the medical analogy, Mozi makes his philosophy accessible and understandable to his audience. This approach highlights the importance of using analogy as a means of communicating complex ideas in a way that is relatable and understandable.[17]

Furthermore, the Mohist School of Chinese philosophy placed a significant emphasis on the concept of kind or 類 (lèi) in their logical and inferential methods. According to the Mohist understanding, a kind is a grouping of entities that possess a certain degree of similarity. The idea of kind was central to Mohist logic and inference, as their methods of inference were primarily analogical – by comparing the similarities between two things belonging to the same kind, one could infer the likely similarities of other aspects of these things.

In general, the Mohist concept of reasoning aims to understand the ways of getting knowledge. A term used by Mozi, 'xiaoqu' 小取, refers to one of Mozi's 'dialectical' chapters, focusing on the concept of 'choosing the lesser' as part of his broader logical and ethical discourse. This chapter, distinct from the trilogy of 'impartial caring' chapters, delves into the nuances of decision-making and prioritization in the context of Mozi's philosophy.

Four central patterns of reasoning are discussed in *Xiaoqu*: illustrating (*pi*), adducing (*yuan*), inferring (*tui*), and parallelizing (*mou*). Where *kind*-based reasoning underlies these patterns, the validity of reasoning is based on a notion of kind. More specifically, the former three patterns in the Mohist concept of reasoning can be revisited from the view of analogous reasoning, which is commonly accepted in the literature about the patterns of reasoning in the Mohist Canons (Liu & Zhang, 2010). Moreover, the fourth one is "revived in its modern variants of 'natural logic'" (monotonicity reasoning) (ibid., p.615) in the sense of van Eijck's conception of natural logic (2007), which aims to

[17] See VIRÁG, Curie, 2017. *The emotions in early Chinese philosophy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, p. 52.

deal with monotonicity inferences in natural language. Some crucial examples in the Mohist Canons are discussed from a monotonicity reasoning view (Sun & Liu, 2020), (Liu & Yang, 2010), and (Liu & Zhang, 2010).

The Mohist Defense of Capital Punishment: A Case Study in Chinese Logic and Reasoning

So far, we have discussed how Mohism emphasized the importance of rationality and logic in ethical and political decision-making. Mohists believed that a systematic and rational approach to problem-solving could help to improve society and create a more just and harmonious world. Mohists emphasized the importance of logical reasoning and argumentation as a way to establish truth and resolve disputes. They also developed a set of rules and principles for conducting arguments, including the importance of evidence, the need for clarity and precision, and the use of logical inference.

In his chapter titled "Paradoxes in the School of Names", Chris Fraser (2016) discusses the Mohist dialecticians' defense of their stance on capital punishment against marauding robbers. The Mohists believed in prohibiting murder but enforcing capital punishment against robbers. Critics of the Mohists' position argued that it was inconsistent with their core ethical doctrine of inclusive moral care for all. To defend their stance, the Mohists used an analogical argument, which can be summarized as follows: just as "disliking there being many robbers is not disliking there being many people" and "desiring there be no robbers is not desiring there be no people," "caring about robbers is not caring about people, not-caring about robbers is not not-caring about people, and killing robbers is not killing people."

The Mohists' argument is based on the idea that the term "killing people" should not be applied to the act of killing robbers because they believe that the extensions of "killing robbers" (capital punishment) and

"killing people" (murder) are different, and they refer to distinct kinds of actions. [18] In other words, they argue that since killing robbers is not the same as killing innocent people, the two should not be combined, and capital punishment should be allowed for the former while being prohibited for the latter. Fraser acknowledges that the Mohist argument is not wildly implausible once it is understood. However, it remains a controversial issue, and the debate about the morality of capital punishment continues to this day.

Fraser also explains the differences between Aristotelian and Chinese logic in terms of their approaches to reasoning and argumentation. According to Aristotelian logic, the argument "A robber is a person. Killing a robber is not killing a person" is invalid because it is self-contradictory and does not follow deductive rules. However, the Mohists, who follow a different system of logic, find this argument acceptable because *they allow for subjective time and changing perspectives* when judging situations. In the context of Chinese logic, the association between "a robber" and "a person" is *not considered a fixed and universal* relationship. Instead, it is seen as something that can change over time and in different contexts. The idea of killing a robber being different from killing a person may be acceptable to the Mohists because they see the robber as associated with a specific crime or action rather than simply as a person. This approach to reasoning challenges the idea that syllogistic forms of validity have authority over all forms of thinking. It suggests that there may be different ways of understanding and reasoning about the world that are not bound by the same rules and assumptions as Aristotelian logic. As mentioned, a monotonicity reasoning view is applicable to formulate the fourth pattern of the Mohist concept of reasoning: parallelizing (*mou*).

Many examples in *Xiaoqu* have been discussed (Liu & Zhang, 2010). Here, we reformulate the argument "A robber is a person. Killing

[18] In *Dao Companion to Chinese Philosophy of Logic,* Yiu-ming Fung, ed. 2016, p. 67.

a robber is not killing a person" by showing the monotonicity fails in this argument.

The first step to understanding this monotonicity reasoning in *Xiaoqu* is to understand the validity of the arguments in *Xiaoqu*. Here is the first example of reasoning.

"A white horse is a horse. To ride a horse is to ride horses." (*p*)

Suppose we formulate this reasoning into an argument, it will be:

1. A white horse is a horse. 2. *X* rides a white horse. ∴ *X* rides horses. (*p'*)

(*p'*) has been disambiguated and moreover to be considered by specifying the implicit quantifiers in both the subject and predicate in (ibid, 263):

1. All white horses are horses.
2. Some/all *X* rides some/all white horses.
3. ∴ Some/all *X* rides some/all horses.

This explicit quantification argument is considered valid in *Xiaoqu*, therefore being right upward monotonic because the predicate is upward from *white horse* in line 2 to *horses* in line 3. Line 2 has a general monotone quantifier form: Q_1S V Q_2P, where Q_1 is the first quantifier, Q_2 is the second qualifier, V is the verb, S is the subject, and P is the predicate. The right-upward monotonic means that Q_1S V Q_2P become Q_1S V Q_2P', where P is a subset of P', denoted $P \subseteq P'$. In this regard, we obtain a general monotone quantifier argument form of the above explicit quantification argument as follows:

1. $P \subseteq P'$
2. Q_1S V Q_2P

3. $\therefore Q_1S \text{ V } Q_2P'$

The predicate P on the right side of V extended upward to P' due to $P \subseteq P'$, where the extension of P' is larger than the extension of P. Now, we try to give a left-upward example to help readers understand the left-upward monotonic.

"If some male philosophers (A) study some mathematics, then some philosophers (A') study some mathematics."

This reasoning can be formulated as an argument as follows:

1. $A \subseteq A'$
2. $Q_1A \text{ V } Q_2M$
3. $\therefore Q_1A' \text{ V } Q_2M$

The subject A on the left side of V extended upward to A' due to $A \subseteq A'$, where the extension of A' is larger than the extension of A.

The reasoning "A white horse is a horse. To ride a horse is to ride horses." (*p*) is valid and pertains to "Shi Er Ran" 是而然 reasoning in *Xiaoqu*. On the contrary, *Xiaoqu* provides a *counterexample argument form* of both universal quantification and existential quantifier, named "Shi Er *Bu* Ran" 是而不然 reasoning (Sun & Liu, 2020). Here, we use this type of reasoning to analyze the argument "A robber is a person. Killing a robber is not killing a person". The original statement of this argument in *Xiaoqu* is: "Robbers are people. Killing robbers is not killing people". This argument does not aim to show a valid argument containing a negative statement. Instead, it is to provide a counterexample of a valid argument as follows (ibid.):

All robbers are people.
Some/all robbers are killed.

∴Some/all people are killed.

The terms 'shi er ran' 是而然 and 'shi er bu ran' 是而不然, pivotal in Mohist logic, can be roughly translated as 'thus and so' and 'thus and not so' respectively. They represent foundational logical constructs in Mohist dialectics, embodying the notions of affirmation and negation in the context of argumentation and reasoning.

This "Shi Er Ran" reasoning is an upward entailing in a noun phrase. However, the conclusion of this reasoning will further be declined (*this is not the case*) and then become a counterexample for this "Shi Er Ran" reasoning. In other words, "Shi Er *Bu* Ran" is a two-stepped reasoning that aims to show the counterexample of a "Shi Er Ran" reasoning. Namely, back to the argument, even though all robbers are people and some/all robbers are killed, it will imply that some/all people are killed (the first step), but *this is not the case* (the second step). The upward monotonicity fails due to that counterexample from Mohist philosophy.

A plausible interpretation for letting a counterexample decline the argument's conclusion is that *not all robbers are people*. Namely, there are some robbers that are not people, e.g., animals, or there are some robbers that *are not qualified* as people. We think that both cases can be further studied and discussed in Mohist's concept of "standard" (*fa*), an objective ethical standard they seek. After all, this concept of standard is central to Mohist's ethics and views on language, knowledge, and argumentation or reasoning (*SEP*). Some sophisticated analyses on standard structure have been done in (Liu et al., 2011).

This stance, while seemingly in contrast to the principle of 'jian'ai 兼愛', aligns with Mozi's broader ethical and logical framework. It exemplifies how Mohist logic navigates complex ethical terrains, balancing the ideals of universal love with pragmatic societal needs.

Mohist philosophy and its relevance to contemporary issues:

Overall, Mohist philosophy emphasizes the importance of universal love and impartial concern for all individuals, regardless of their social status or affiliation. Mohists believed in the power of moral persuasion and the need for individuals to cultivate their moral character through constant self-reflection and self-improvement.

Mohist philosophy also advocated for the establishment of a merit-based society, where individuals are valued based on their abilities and contributions to society rather than their birth or social status. Mohists believed that social harmony could only be achieved through fair and just governance that prioritizes the well-being of all individuals, not just the privileged few.

In terms of relevance to contemporary issues, Mohist philosophy has much to offer in the areas of social justice, moral responsibility, and political ethics. Mohists emphasis on universal love and impartial concern for all individuals aligns well with modern-day movements for social justice and equality. Similarly, his call for merit-based governance and fair treatment of all individuals is highly relevant in the context of contemporary debates around political ethics and accountability.

We can conclude that Mohist philosophy provides a compelling framework for thinking about how we can build a more just, equitable, and compassionate society, one that values the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals, and promotes the common good over narrow self-interest.

In conclusion, Mozi's 'Logic of Love' is not only a testament to his ethical principles but also a reflection of his intricate logical frameworks. The profound interplay between 'jian'ai 兼愛' and Mozi's logical patterns underscores a holistic approach to understanding his philosophy, where love and logic coalesce to form a harmonious paradigm.

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