

2020-21 School of Chinese Online Seminar

墨家光學與天志
Mohist Optics and the Will Heaven

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日期 Date: May 10, 2021 (Monday)

時間 Time: 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

地點 Venue: via Zoom

演講語言 Language: 普通話 Putonghua

<https://hku.zoom.us/j/94302780557?pwd=U3pOQXJUSUIqU3JEcFAwcTVLN0kxQT09>

Zoom Meeting ID: 943 0278 0557

Password: 247022

Abstract:

墨家哲學中有一則著名的被稱為“三表法”的隱喻，指的是判斷倫理命題正確與否的標準和原則。在中國古代，“表”這一光學儀器有多種功能，其中之一是通過觀察早晨與黃昏的日影位置來確定正東正西的方向，這也是“三表法”隱喻的現實技術基礎。然而根據《周髀算經》與《淮南子·天文訓》的記載，表還有另一項重要的功能，即通過相似三角形的比例間接推算遠距離龐大物體的高度或尺寸（如測量天高）。本文認為，墨家的倫理政治思想也受到了這一間接測量的功能的影響。特別是《天志》、《非攻》等篇章中的一系列類比論證，試圖在日常道德情境與宏觀政治情境之間建立比例關係，並由此確立抽象的天志在具體政治問題中的表現。同時，本文還將進一步探索《墨經》光學部分背後的邏輯結構。

It is well-known that in Mohist philosophy the “three gnomons” is an important epistemological metaphor for the correct standards of valid arguments. The metaphorical meaning of the gnomon comes from a technique known as the “shadow method” based on the gnomon’s optical function, namely to establish due east and west by observing gnomon shadows at dusk and dawn. I argue that there is also an overlooked, implicit aspect of the gnomon metaphor that comes from another of its optical functions – measuring the height of heaven indirectly through proportional calculation. The method of indirect measurement inspires a strategy of argumentation in Mohist ethics, which involves a series of parallel cases arranged proportionally from the small scale to the large scale. Such a strategy, which I call “analogical upscaling,” helps to determine the content of the Will of Heaven in a particular circumstance, just as the gnomon measures heaven’s physical height. In the end, I shall also examine the logical structure of the optics section in the *Mohist Canon*.

Bio:

周博群，芝加哥大學東亞語言文明系博士，現為清華-密西根研究員協會博士後研究員。主要研究領域為中國古代思想文化史、科技史、出土文獻，尤其關注先秦諸子倫理與政治思想中的技術隱喻。目前正在從事專著《機心：中國古代思想中的權衡與權勢》的寫作，以及清華簡伊尹五篇與《殷高宗問于三壽》的英譯。

Boqun Zhou is a postdoctoral fellow in the Tsinghua-Michigan Society of Fellow. He earned his doctorate at the University of Chicago in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations. His research interests range across ancient Chinese intellectual history, history of science and technology, and excavated bamboo manuscripts, with particular emphasis on how classical thinkers utilize technological metaphors in their ethical and political theories. He is currently working on his book manuscript, *The Mechanical Mind: Metaphor, Body, and Technology in Early China*, as well as an annotated translation of six manuscripts from the Tsinghua Bamboo Slips.

ALL are welcome