

Texts

Zhuangzi, ch. 17: The happy fish dialogue

莊子與惠子遊於濠梁之上。

Zhuāngzǐ yǔ Huìzǐ yóu yú háo liáng zhī shàng.

Zhuangzi and Huizi were **roaming** onto the bridge over the river Hao.

莊子曰：「儻魚出遊從容，是魚樂也。」

Zhuāngzǐ yuē: “shū yú chū yóu cóng róng, shì yú lè yě.”

Zhuangzi said: “Look at the darting **fish** coming out to **roam** around, this is **fishes’ happiness**.”

惠子曰：「子非魚，安知魚之樂？」

Huìzǐ yuē: “zǐ fēi yú, ān zhī yú zhī lè?”

Huizi said: “You are not a **fish**, **whence** do you **know fishes’ happiness**?”

莊子曰：「子非我，安知我不知魚之樂？」

Zhuāngzǐ yuē: “zǐ fēi wǒ, ān zhī wǒ bù zhī yú zhī lè?”

Zhuangzi said: “You’re not me, **whence** do you **know** I don’t **know fishes’ happiness**?”

惠子曰：「我非子，固不知子矣；子固非魚也，子之不知魚之樂全矣。」

Huìzǐ yuē: “wǒ fēi zǐ, gù bù zhī zǐ yǐ; zǐ gù fēi yú yě, zǐ zhī bù zhī yú zhī lè quán yǐ.”

Huizi said: “I am not you, so **certainly** don’t **know** you; you are **certainly** not a **fish**, so the case for your not **knowing fishes’ happiness** is complete.”

莊子曰：「請循其本。子曰『汝安知魚樂』云者，既已知吾知之而問我，我知之濠上也。」

Zhuāngzǐ yuē: “qǐng xún qí běn. zǐ yuē ‘rǔ ān zhī yú lè’ yún zhě, jì yǐ zhī wú zhī zhī ér wèn wǒ, wǒ zhī zhī háo shàng yě.”

Zhuangzi said: “Let’s go back to the **root**. You said ‘**Whence** do you **know fishes’ happiness**’, in asking me which you already **knew** I **knew** it; I **know** it from here on the river Hao.”

Key terms

- 1) 遊 (yóu) = roaming
- 2) 魚 (yú) = fish
- 3) 樂 (lè) = happiness
- 4) 安 (ān) = how, whence
- 5) 知 (zhī) = know
- 6) 固 (gù) = certainly
- 7) 本 (běn) = root

Interpretations

- a) Sophist (or playful) interpretation (Moeller)
- b) Contextualist interpretation (Ames)
- c) Japanese phenomenological interpretation (Kuwako, Nakajima)
- d) Analytic (Western logical) interpretation (Hansen)
- e) Chinese (Mohist) logical interpretation (Teng)

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Texts

Mohist logic in the ‘Lesser Choosing’ (*xiǎo qǔ*)

What is present in one’s own case is not to be rejected in the other’s, what is absent from one’s case is not to be demanded of the other’s [guiding principle of debating].

(A) ‘Illustrating’ (*pì* 譬) is referring to other things in order to clarify one’s case.

(B) ‘Parallelising’ (*móu* 侔) is comparing phrases and letting all ‘proceed’.

(C) ‘Adducing’ (*yuán* 援) is saying: ‘If it is so in your case, why may it not be so in mine too?’.

(D) ‘Inferring’ (*tuī* 推) is using what is the same in that which someone refuses to accept and that which they do accept in order to propose the former.

(A) Of things in general, if there are respects in which they are the same, it does not follow that they are altogether the same.

(B) The parallelism of [phrases] is valid only as far as it reaches.

(C) If something is so of them there are reasons why it is so; but though its being so of them is the same, the reasons why it is so are not necessarily the same.

(D) If we accept a claim, we have reasons for accepting it; but though we are the same in accepting it, the reasons why we accept it are not necessarily the same.

Therefore [phrases] which illustrate, parallelise, adduce and infer become different as they ‘proceed’, become dangerous when they change direction, fail when carried too far, become detached from their base when we let them drift, so that we must on no account be careless with them, and must not use them too rigidly. Hence saying has many methods, separate kinds, different reasons, which must not be looked at only from one side.

(A. C. Graham, *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science*, 2003 [1978], 483–4)

Zhuangzi, ch. 2: ‘Equalizing assessments of things’ (*qí wù lùn* 齊物論)

Something is affirmative because someone affirms it. Something is negative because someone negates it. *Daos* are formed by someone walking them. Things are so by being called so. Whence thus and so? From thus and so being affirmed of them. Whence not thus and so? From thus and so being negated of them. Each thing necessarily has some place from which it can be affirmed as thus and so, and some place from which it can be affirmed as acceptable.

So no thing is not right, no thing is not acceptable. For whatever we may define as a beam as opposed to a pillar, as a leper as opposed to the great beauty Xishi, or whatever might be [from some perspective] strange, grotesque, uncanny, or deceptive, there is some course that opens them into one another, connecting them to form a oneness. Whatever fragmentation is going on, formation, completion, is also going on. Whenever formation is going on, destruction is also going on.

Hence, all things are neither formed nor destroyed, for these two also open into each other, connecting to form a oneness. It is only someone who really gets all the way through them that can see how the two sides open into each other to form a oneness. Such a person would not define rightness in any one particular way but would entrust it to the everyday function [of each being]. Their everyday function is what works for them, and “working” just means this opening up into each other, their way of connecting. Opening to form a connection just means getting what you get: go as far as whatever you happen to get to, and leave it at that. It is all a matter of going by the rightness of the present “this”. To be doing this without knowing it, and not because you have defined it as right, is called “the *Dao*”.

(*Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings*, tr. Brook Ziporyn, 2009, 13–14)