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0521771188 - Aristotle in China: Language, Categories and Translation

Robert Wardy

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Aristotle in China

Language, Categories and Translation

In his latest book, Robert Wardy, a philosopher and classicist, turns his attention to the relation between language and thought. He explores this huge topic in an analysis of linguistic relativism, with specific reference to a reading of the *ming li t'an* (*The Investigation of the Theory of Names*), a seventeenth-century Chinese translation of Aristotle's *Categories*. Throughout his investigation, Wardy addresses important questions. Do the basic structures of language shape the major thought-patterns of its native speakers? Could philosophy be guided and constrained by the language in which it is done? What factors, from grammar and logic to cultural and religious expectations, influence translation? And does Aristotle survive rendition into Chinese intact? His answers will fascinate philosophers, Sinologists, classicists, linguists and anthropologists, and promise to make a major contribution to the existing literature.

Robert Wardy is Lecturer in Classics at the University of Cambridge, and Director of Studies in Philosophy and Classics, St Catharine's College. His publications include *The Birth of Rhetoric: Gorgias, Plato and their Successors* (1996) and *The Chain of Change: A Study of Aristotle's Physics VII* (1990).

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ISBN 0 521 55089 0

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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK <http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk>
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA <http://www.cup.org>
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

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First published 2000

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeset in Times 11/14.5pt, in QuarkXPress™ [GC]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0 521 771188 hardback

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Preface

Aristotle in China is about the relation between language and thought. That is, of course, a topic of absurdly ambitious scope: it is only slightly less absurd to say that it concerns the particular question of the relation between language and philosophical thought, or even the relation between the Chinese language and Chinese logic. Perhaps readers will concede at the outset that my decision to explore these huge issues through reading Aristotle's *Categories* in Chinese is mere wilful circuitousness, rather than outright absurdity; and I trust that, if they persevere, they will discover that indirection has its compensations.

Chapter 1 introduces, defines and dissects varieties of linguistic relativism, with specific reference to the China question. Chapter 2 is entirely devoted to a reading of the 名理探 (*ming li t'an*), 'The Investigation of the Theory of Names', a seventeenth-century translation of Aristotle's *Categories* into Chinese; indeed, one of my goals is to reanimate an ancient tradition, both Chinese and Western, by producing a sort of meta-commentary. In principle, philosophers could read chapter 1 and dispense with chapter 2; and Sinologists could study chapter 2 and avoid philosophy: but of course my intention is to address philosophers, classicists, Sinologists, linguists, anthropologists and devotees of missionary studies throughout. The inevitable consequence of this interdisciplinary brief is that I am bound to be guilty of howlers philosophical, linguistic, historical and anthropological; I can only humbly confess my limitations and beg the indulgence of those willing to look further than their immediate academic horizons. I have taken measures to make it possible, I trust in more than principle, for scholars from diverse backgrounds to take advantage of my research. All Greek, Latin and Chinese is translated (although readers will have to cope with citations from the secondary literature in modern European languages; and both Japanese and modern Chinese are beyond me). In chapter 2 I err on the side of generous citation because copies of both the Latin original and its Chinese translation are extremely rare, even in major libraries. Since I quote extensively from the Chinese, I do not always transliterate; but I Romanise (using the Wade–Giles system) whenever a graph or set of graphs is discussed.

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Preface

In chapter 1 I express fairly complete disagreement with the arguments of Angus Graham. Puzzled dissatisfaction with the Whorfian case presented in his *magnum opus*, *Disputers of the Tao*, planted the original seed of this study. I hope that the tribute the author of so splendidly disputative a book would best have appreciated is critical response. He was kind enough to accept my invitation to speak in Cambridge on this very question, and I suppose that this might have been his last public academic appearance. The argument initiated then must sadly proceed without his irreplaceable contributions, but I have tried to compose the right sort of disrespectful *hommage*. In attempting to articulate my dissatisfaction I have benefited substantially from the assistance of Myles Burnyeat, Roger Crisp, Christoph Harbsmeier, Geoffrey Horrocks, Cathérine Jami, Paul Sanford and – above all – from the detailed and astute comments of Richard Davies, Nicholas Denyer and Stephen Makin. When I presented an embryonic version of this material at the Needham Research Institute my audience's reaction did much to reassure me that the topic was not without interest; and it would certainly have been impossible for me to complete so taxing a project without the luxury of a British Academy/Leverhulme Trust Senior Research Fellowship. I received additional friendly encouragement in Berlin from the participants in the conference Europe in China III, and profited especially from the advice of Nicholas Standaert. The Needham Institute's librarian, John Moffett, was a model of amicable efficiency in tracking down rare research materials. The recommendations of Michael Lackner and David Sedley, readers for the monograph series, were most helpful in the revision stages. Catherine Atherton's sustained and profound criticism has proved invaluable. David McMullen showed me what the true gentleman, the 君子, is by selflessly devoting too many hours to the correction of my gauche efforts at translation. Finally, I dedicate this book to Geoffrey Lloyd. Although he has no great interest in China after the era of the Han, I doubt that, without the example he set, I should ever have strayed so far from what I have come to regard as my native tongues.

Ad,

tem, & potestatem literarum, ignorata earum natura, ita Logici cognoscunt vim prædicationum, supposito earum fundamento quod Metaphysici exponunt, Ad tertiam respondetur opus esse Dialectico, omnia rerum genera, quoad rationem prædicandi, & subiiciendi, cognoscere, non ut earum rerum notitiam per se comparat, sed ut medijs abundet, ad quancunque de re proposita quaestionem pertractandam. Argumentum secundæ resolutum iam est.

Ad varias intellectus operationes variæ quoque Logica tractationes ordinatur.

Hactenus de ordine huius tractationis ad cæteras disciplinas, nunc de illo, quem ad alias Logicæ Aristotelis partes obrinet; is verò est idem, qui in operationibus mentis conspicitur. Nam primæ operationi, quæ simplicia apprehenduntur, responderet hæc prædicamentorum doctrina, ubi simplicia nomina in classes rediguntur. Secundæ, quæ componimus, & diuidimus, aptantur libri

de interpretatione, in quibus de enuntiatione disputatur. Tertiæ, quæ ratiocinamur, congruunt Analytica, & Topica, ubi consequentiæ, argumentationes, syllogismi-que fabricantur.

Huius doctrinæ commoditas, & utilitas est quam maxima ad omnem usum dialecticum, nam ad diuisiones, definitionesque conficiendas expeditam præbet materiam, Genera, Species, Differentiasque distinguendo. Ad argumentationem verò de quacunque re instituendam, omnè subijcit naturâ, omnè proprietatè. Distributio operis est in tres partes, in ante Prædicamenta, in Prædicamenta, & post Prædicamenta. Prima quatuor capitib. continetur. Secunda, quæ præcipua est, quinque sequentibus. Tertia, vt ordine, ita utilitate, & dignitate vltima, totidem extremis.

Hæc doctrina ad omnem usum dialecticum est maximè necessaria. Tractatio Prædicamentorum in tres partes diuiditur.

EXPLANATIO CAPITIS PRIMI,
 DE AEQUIVOCIS, VNIVOCIS,
 & Denominatiuis.

SUMMA CAPITIS.

Definitio Aequiuoc.



Definitio Vniuoc.

Definitio Denominatiui.

Occupat tres continet definitiones, & totidem in partes diuidi potest. Prima est Aequiuocorum in hunc modum; Aequiuoca sunt ea, quorum nomen commune est, ratio verò substantiæ nomini accommodata, diuersa; hoc est, quæ nomine conueniunt, conceptibus autem, vel essentia discrepant. Secunda est Vniuocorum, & sic habet; Vniuoca sunt, quorum & nomen commune est, & ratio substantiæ nomini accommodata, eadem, seu quæ & nomine, & essentia conueniunt. Tertia, describuntur Denominatiua hac ratione. Denominatiua sunt, quæ ab aliquo nominis habent appellationem solo differentia casu; hoc est, quæ tribuunt subiecto appellationem alicuius formæ, quæ afficitur vocabulo initio eodem, sine tamen diuerso.

CAPVT I.

COMMENTARIUS.

a *Aequiuoca dicuntur* Quoniam huius primæ partis doctrina eo tendit, vt nonnulla explicentur ad prædicamentorum intelligentiam necessaria, quæ si postea traderentur, inchoatam disputationis seriem interruperent, ideo primis quatuor capitibus, quædam; omnibus, vel pluribus Categoriarum, partim repugnantia, partim conuenientia, edisserit. Huius consilij ratio, vt in hoc primo capite eluceat, aduertit Albertus Magnus tractatu primo,

Trifariam conferri possunt prædicamenta.

capite 2. Aegydius hic, & alij trifariam conferri posse Prædicamenta. Primò, omnia cum Ente, cuius membra sunt. Secundo, singula cum suis inferioribus. Tertio, quædam ad alia, verbi causa, Prædicamenta accidentium ad substantiam. Si comparatio fiat primo modo, omnia sunt Aequiuoca, seu analogas, quæ de causa, differit hoc loco de Aequiuocis, adde etiam, vt ostendat ea excludenda esse à Prædicamentis. Si secundo modo omnia conueniunt vniuocè, vt planum est. Si denique tertio, singula notæ Categoriarum accidentia dicuntur de substantia, non æquiuocè; quia prædicari possunt eadem ratione, vt in Prædicabilibus visum est; non vniuocè, quia non affix-

Aa *Aequiuoca dicuntur ea, b* Quorum nomen solum commune est: c *ratio verò substantiæ d* Nomini accommodata, diuersa: vt animal dicitur, & ipse homo. Et id, quod est pictû. Horû enim nomè cômune tantû modo est, ratio verò substantiæ nomini accommodata diuersa. Si qui spîa erim, quæ a sît utriusq; ratio animalis voiserit assignare ratione utriusq; præfecto propriâ assignabis. e *Vniuoca ea dicuntur, quorû c* nomen coramu-

Alb. Mag. Aegy.

古物倫首辯同名岐義活人塑人皆謂之人厥名雖同體義則異。

解此論分別十倫從幾端物理推較而定所較有三。一舉十倫與總存而較。二舉各倫與其屬之下性而較。三舉自立者之倫與他諸倫而較也。舉總有之較則十倫之諸性皆同名岐義者。同為有者故同名各自一理故岐義。西云額計勿加者是也。舉下性之較則十倫之諸性皆同名同義者。西云悟尼勿加者是也。

Sample page of the *ming li t'an*