XUNZI AND THE PROBLEM OF IMPERSONAL FIRST PERSON PRONOUNS

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Professor John Knoblock's three-volume translation of the *Xúnzǐ* 荀子 is a large piece of dedicated and sustained scholarship. It contains an extensive introduction of almost monograph length, detailed introductions to each chapter of the book, and detailed annotation of each chapter. In addition there is an exhaustive (though avowedly select) bibliography of relevant literature. There is even a twenty page Supplementary Bibliography in vol. 3. (Knoblock carefully dates many authors in these bibliographies. For this, as for many other labors of philological diligence, we must be grateful to him.)

Commendably, Knoblock endeavors to set the text of the *Xúnzǐ* in its philosophical context, and he does not limit himself to discussing influences from this text or that. He aims to reconstruct in quite some detail the rich intellectual environment to which the *Xúnzǐ* was a particular response. This feature gives Knoblock's volumes a potential general usefulness which translations rarely have. Knoblock even goes so far as to reconstruct in detail what he considers as a plausible history of the composition of the text we have in the context of an exhaustive interpretation of the data we have on the life of Xún Qīng 荀卿 and of what is known about the editorial history of the text. This is a commendable ambition.

Given what I can only describe as an orgy of bibliographic information in Knoblock's book it is a pleasure to mention the omission of one crucial source for his purposes, Yán Língfēng 嚴靈峰, *Zhōu Qín Hàn Wèi zhūzǐ zhījiàn shūmù* 周秦漢魏諸子知見書目 (revised rpt., Beijing: Zhonghua, 1993), which has been available in earlier editions for many

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* A review of John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*. 3 vols. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988–1994. Vol. 1, xvi + 340 pp.; vol. 2, xiv + 380 pp.; vol. 3, xix + 433 pp.

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years. In this survey, Knoblock would have found no less than eighty-nine Japanese works on the *Xúnzǐ*, not to speak of a three volume Korean edition of the *Xúnzǐ* published in 1972. Also, for some reason, Knoblock does not mention Yè Yùlín 葉玉麟, *Xúnzǐ báihuà jùjiě* 荀子白話句解 (Taipei: Yelian, 1967), which, though incomplete, has been serviceable to some of us over the years. And while I recount practically helpful editions I must mention the immensely handy Homer H. Dubs, *The Works of Hsüntze* (Taipei: Confucius Publishing Company, 1973), which is bilingual in Chinese and English, with Wáng Xiānqiàn's 王先謙 annotated edition facing Dubs's translation as well as a modern Chinese version. Finally, there is *Xun Zi (Siun Tseu) introduit et traduit du chinois par* Ivan P. Kamenarović (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1987). Both these works Knoblock could have consulted with profit and should certainly have mentioned in his bibliography. Another striking absence in the bibliography to vol. 3, published in 1994, is David R. Knechtges's 1989 publication "Riddles as Poetry: The 'Fu' Chapter of the *Hsün-tzu*," in *Wen-Lin, vol. 2: Studies in the Chinese Humanities*, ed. Tse-tsung Chow (Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures, University of Wisconsin, Madison, and N.T.T. Chinese Language Research Centre, Institute of Chinese Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1989), 1–31.

Among more recent publications which Knoblock could not have seen I mention the following, because I do feel they may often be used with profit to correct Knoblock's work:

a) Zhāng Jué 張覺, *Xúnzǐ yìzhù* 荀子譯注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1995).
b) Jiāng Nánhuá 蔣南華, *Xúnzǐ quányì* 荀子全譯 (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin, 1995).
c) Dèng Hànqīng 鄧漢卿, *Xúnzǐ yìpíng* 荀子譯評 (Changsha: Yuelu, 1994).
d) Yáng Rènzhī 楊任之, *Báihuà Xúnzǐ* 白話荀子 (Changsha: Yuelu, 1991).

In addition, I want to mention a number of sparsely annotated modern Chinese versions of the *Xúnzǐ* which I find useful and entertaining to consult occasionally on matters of basic interpretation:

a) Wáng Nìng 王寧, ed., *Píngxīběn báihuà zhūzǐ jíchéng* 評析本白話諸子集成, 2 vols. (Beijing: Beijing Guangbo xueyuan, 1993; a useful collection of concisely annotated and translated works).
b) Xǔ Jiālù 許嘉璐, ed., *Wénbái dùizhào zhūzǐ jíchéng* 文白對照諸子集成, 3 vols. (Guangzhou: Guangdong jiaoyu, 1995; carefully annotated and translated edition with translation).

c) *Báihuà xiān Qín zhūzǐ* 白話先秦諸子 (Hefei: Huangshan, 1992).
d) *Wénbái duìzhào èrshíèr zǐ* 文白對照二十二子, 8 vols. (Hefei: Anhui wenyi, 1996).

I find such much maligned and often dismissed modern Chinese translations often superior in quality to their more scholarly Western counterparts.

I now turn to a detailed consideration of the heart of the book under review, Knoblock's translations. These invite comment and criticism on many points—many more than I can mention in this review. It is good to remind oneself that it is always infinitely easier to criticize a translation or a book than to write one. As a reviewer one is free to zoom in, as it were, on whatever one happens to feel one understands well while disregarding everything else. And as anyone who has ever written a comprehensive book on any subject knows, one is frequently forced to write about matters that one is not really the best equipped to speak of with authority. Thus, personally, I have always submitted my own work to the public "as if treading on thin ice, as if approaching a deep abyss." I humbly offer these comments not as an authoritative arbiter on what the texts mean, but as a fellow student of the texts who has unfortunately become convinced that Knoblock's translations are rather pervasively flawed.

Some Flaws

Here are a few examples of the flaws I found (reference to *Xunzi* is by book and paragraph as numbered in Knoblock; the translations are mine):

XUN 1.5; Knoblock, vol. 1, 137

是故質的張，	Thus when the target is laid out,
而弓矢至焉；	then bows and arrows will get there;
林木茂，	when the trees are flourishing,
而斧斤至焉；	then axes will get there;
樹成蔭，	when trees give shade,
而眾鳥息焉；	then crowds of birds will rest on them;
醯酸，	when vinegar has turned sour/has gone off,
而蚋聚焉。	blackflies will gather there.

Knoblock simply omits/forgets to translate the characters 樹成蔭，而眾鳥息焉 (they are translated e.g. in Dubs, *The Works of Hsüntze*, 8).

Moreover, Knoblock translates the binome *fǔ jīn* 斧斤 as "axes and halberds." Now a halberd is a military weapon, something like what is usually called *jǐ* 戟 in ancient Chinese. It is a combination of a spear and a battle-axe. However, such a weapon is quite irrelevant in the context. The difference between the *fǔ* 斧 "axe with a round hole for the handle, with the blade like the top line of a T and the handle like the bottom line, for pushing" and a *jīn* 斤 "axe with the blade in the same direction as the axe-handle, for hitting" is clear enough, but the binome probably simply has the force of "axes." One might as well call an axe an axe.

In XUN 1.13, Knoblock translates *xué yě zhě* 學也者 "as for studying" as "the truly learned"(Knoblock, vol. 1, 142). None of the Chinese translations I have consulted make this kind of mistake. Nor do any of the earlier Western translations get this wrong.

XUN 2.1; Knoblock, vol. 1, 151

見善，	When one sees something good
修然必以自存也；	then, carefully, one must not neglect to examine oneself in respect of it;
見不善，	and if one sees something bad
愀然必以自省也。	then, saddened, one must not neglect to investigate oneself in respect of it.
善在身，	When a good point is in one's person
介然必以自好也；	then, positively, one must not neglect to like oneself with respect to it;
不善在身，	and if a bad point is in one's person
蓄然必以自惡也。	then, staunchly, one must not neglect to dislike oneself with respect to it.

Knoblock translates the opening lines: "When a man sees good, being filled with delight, he is sure to preserve it within himself." Two problems arise. One is grammatical: *zì* 自 must make the verb that follows it reflexive, so that if "to preserve" is the meaning to be attributed to *cún* 存 here, then this must mean "cause oneself to be preserved." The other is lexical: the explicit evidence that *cún* 存 can mean "to investigate, to examine" goes back to the *Ěryǎ* 爾雅, and all Chinese and Western editions I have seen follow Wáng Niànsūn's explicit suggestion that this meaning is the one that is relevant here. Knoblock is perfectly entitled to disagree with the prevalent interpretation, but he should argue for this kind of deviation from established orthodoxy. Knoblock would also need to argue for his unorthodox reading of the grammatical force of *zì* 自. Most importantly, he would have to justify why he chooses to break the neat parallelism in the lines I have laid out above.

Just as Knoblock keeps to the most current meaning of *cún* 存 and thus fails to get the force of his passage, so in the case of the word *wéi* 爲 which usually means "to count as, to be" a few lines further down:

諂諛者親，	Those who flatter him he will keep close to,
諫爭者疏；	and those who remonstrate and make objections he will keep at a distance;
修正爲笑，	those who correct his errors he regards as laughable people,
至忠爲賊。	and those showing the utmost devotion he regards as malefactors.
雖欲無滅亡，	Even if he wanted to avoid ruin,
得乎哉！	how could he achieve that?

Knoblock translates the characters 修正爲笑，至忠爲賊: "His cultivation of uprightness becomes ludicrous and his complete loyalty injurious." This breaks with the context and is at variance with all current interpretations.

XUN 2.1; Knoblock, vol.1, 152

雖欲無進，	Even if he wished to not advance,
得乎哉！	would he be able to get his way? (Surely not!)

Knoblock grammatically misconceives the last sentence when he translates: "So even if he had no desire at all for advancement, how could he help but succeed." Not having no desire at all to succeed is logically different from having a desire not to succeed. The point Xúnzǐ makes is a subtle one.

XUN 26.1; Knoblock, vol. 3, 194
(cf. Knechtges, "Riddles as Poetry")

1	爰有大物，	Now here is a great thing:
	非絲非帛，	neither silk thread nor silk cloth,
	文理成章；	its form and order create a pattern;
	非日非月，	neither sun nor moon,
5	爲天下明。	yet it is illumination for the world.
	生者以壽，	With it the living enjoy long life
	死者以葬，	and with it the dead are buried.
	城郭以固，	By means of it inner and outer walls are secure,
	三軍以强。	by means of it the whole army is strong.
10	粹而王；	Keeping it pure, one is a true king;

	駁而伯；	muddling it one is a hegemon;
	無一焉而亡。	not having it in either of these forms one will be annihilated.
	臣愚不識，	Your servant is stupid and is unfamiliar with it.
	敢請之王？	May I ask Your Majesty about it?
15	王曰：	The King said:
	此夫文而不采者與？	Is this the thing that is patterned but not colorful?
	簡然易知而致有理者與？	Is it what is simple and easily understood but the ultimate in possessing order?
	君子所敬而小人所不者與？	Is it what the gentleman reveres and what the petty man does not revere?
	性不得則若禽獸，	Is it what, if one's nature does not have it, it is like that of birds and beasts?
20	性得之則甚雅似者與？	Is it what, if nature has got it, it is something very elegant?
	匹夫隆之則爲聖人，	Is it that which, if an ordinary fellow exalts it, then he becomes a sage,
	諸侯隆之則一四海者與？	and which, if feudal lords exalt it, then they will unite all within the Four Seas?
	致明而約，	It is utterly illuminating but concise,
	甚順而體，	it is full of natural ease and appropriate.
25	請歸之禮。	I beg to classify it as ritual.

Line 2: bó 帛 "silk cloth" is translated by Knoblock as "cords of silk."

Line 3: Knoblock writes 常 for 章 but translates as if he read 章. Knoblock translates: "Yet its designs and patterns are perfect, elegant compositions," as if *chéng* 成 were descriptive of *zhāng* 章, which it is not. *Chéng zhāng* 成章 is definitely a verb-object construction.

Line 8: chéng guō 城郭 "inner and outer city walls" can perhaps be summarized as "walls" but these are not "cities and states" as in Knoblock's translation.

Line 9: sān jūn 三軍 "the tripartite armies" does not mean "three armies."

Line 12: wú yī yān 無一焉 "not having either of these two (the pure and the impure form of the thing)" cannot be rendered "those who lack any at all." *Yī* 一 does not, I think, mean "any at all" before *yān* 焉 "of them."

Line 17: jiǎnrán 簡然 "plain, simple" is not "suddenly" as in Knoblock.

Line 20: Knoblock miswrites 甚雅 as 雅 and does fail to translate *shèn* 甚.

Line 25: qǐng 請 "I beg permission" does not mean "I suggest." *Guī zhī lǐ*

歸之禮 "classify as, count as ritual" cannot be read as "where all these qualities come together is ritual principles" in this syntactic context, and without a final *yě* 也.

XUN 27.5; Knoblock, vol. 3, 208

天子山冕，	The Son of Heaven wears a mountain distinguished-chapeau;
諸侯玄冠，	the feudal lords wear reddish-black hats;
大夫裨冕，	the grandees wear a patched chapeau;
士韋弁，	the freemen wear leather hats.
禮也。	This is in accordance with ritual propriety.

Miǎn 冕 "tasselled hat worn by emperors and the very highest officials" is not "a state ceremonial robe" (Knoblock, vol. 3, 208), and a *bì miǎn* 裨冕 "patched hat" is not "a skirt with an ornamented border at the bottom" (Knoblock, vol. 3, 208). Maybe the old commentary is right when it suggests that the *shān miǎn* 山冕 refers to the imperial *gǔn fú* 衮服 decorated with mountain patterns as well, but a *miǎn* 冕 still remains a tasselled hat or chapeau, and not a ceremonial robe. Note that in the passage four types of people are said to wear four types of headdress, a circumstance Knoblock seems not to have noticed.

XUN 27.10; Knoblock, vol. 3, 209

天施然也	Such is the (generous) practice of Heaven.

The phrase is not easy to understand, but it certainly does not mean "so that in the nature of things they are exhibited" as Knoblock has it.

XUN 27.11; Knoblock, vol. 3, 209

〈聘禮〉志曰	The Ritual of Good-Will Visits records the following:

The phrase does not mean "the treatise *Rituals of Goodwill Missions* says" as Knoblock has it. *Zhì* 志 "to record" must be taken as a verb here.

Consider next an easy routine passage later in this chapter which has everything to do with the basic purport of the text and the core of Xúnzǐ's philosophy.

XUN 27.19; Knoblock, vol. 3, 211

禮以順人心爲本，	The basic thing in ritual is to keep in accordance with the human heart:
故亡於《禮經》	thus when something is not in the *Classic of Ritual Propriety*

而順人心者，	but it is in accordance with the human mind,
皆禮也。	then it is always in accordance with ritual.

Knoblock turns this into an extraordinarily contorted thought: "Ritual principles use obedience to the true mind of man as their foundation. Thus, were there no ritual principles in the *Classic of Ritual*, there would still be need for some kind of ritual in order to accord with the mind of man." Köster, *Hsün-tzu* (Kaldenkirchen: Steyler Verlag, 1967), and Kamenarović, *Xun Zi*, basically have no problem of comprehension with this passage. Neither do any of the Chinese translators I have looked at.

XUN 27.21; Knoblock, vol. 3, 212

行之得其節，	In moral demeanor to achieve the proper measure,
禮之序也。	that is the imposed order of ritual propriety.

One may argue and disagree about the syntax of this, but in Knoblock the syntax becomes simply garbled, and the predicate is turned into a kind of topic: "In the order of precedence contained in ritual principles, each type of conduct receives its due measure."

The next sentence looks innocent enough and relatively easy to translate at first sight:

仁愛也，	Being humane is to love/care.
故親。	As a result of it one is affectionate (to one's relatives?).

One can argue endlessly (but not pointlessly) about the question whether this should be "Humaneness is loving care" and so on. But Knoblock has "Humane behavior is the manifestation of love." Where is the opposition between behavior and manifestation in the Chinese? Are we to understand that *rén* 仁 is a form of outward behavior while *ài* 愛 is a purely inner feeling? For one thing, this would be an incorrect conceptual analysis. *Rén* 仁 is currently regarded as inner, as in *Mencius*.

MENG 6A.4

(tr. D. C. Lau, *Mencius* [Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1984], vol. 2, 225, modified)

告子曰：	Gàozǐ said:
食色	Appetite for food and sex
性也。	is inborn nature.
仁	Benevolence

內也，	is internal,
非外也。	not external.

But more importantly, Xúnzǐ's text here does not motivate any such conceptual specifications. Perhaps, in the end, we will come to understand that *rén* 仁 is behavior and that *ài* 愛 is feeling. But is it wise to introduce this into the translation of an innocent sentence like this? I think not.

XUN 27.21; Knoblock, vol. 3, 212

君子處仁以義，	When the gentleman exercises humaneness with moral rectitude,
然後仁也；	only then is it kindness;
行義以禮，	when he exercises moral rectitude in accordance with ritual propriety,
然後義也；	only then is it moral rectitude;
制禮反本成末，	when in managing ritual propriety one focuses on what is basic and perfects the secondary,
然後禮也。	only then is it ritual propriety.

Knoblock translates this as: "Only after the gentleman has dwelt with humane principles through justice and morality is he truly humane; only after he conducts himself with justice and morality through ritual principles, returning to the root and perfecting the branch, is he truly in accord with ritual principles." Thereby he fails to respect the plain overall tripartite structure which is the basic rhythm of the passage.

XUN 27.22; Knoblock, vol. 3, 212

送死不及柩尸，	If presents to the deceased do not come in time for the corpse in the coffin,
弔生不及悲哀，	or if the sympathy with the living does not come in time for the sadness and mourning,
非禮也。	then that is not in accordance with ritual propriety.

Knoblock translates the second line: "and that visits of condolence should not be paid before grief and sadnesss have reached their peak."

XUN 27.24; Knoblock, vol. 3, 213

能除患則爲福，	If one can get rid of disasters then that is good fortune;

不能除患則爲賊。 if one cannot get rid of disasters then that is a calamity.

Knoblock seems unaware of *zéi* 賊, here as often elsewhere, "calamity," and introduces the notion of "rapine" which manifestly does not fit the context: "If we are able to deliver ourselves from the danger of calamity, then we will create good fortune. If we are incapable of delivering ourselves, then we will create rapine."

XUN 27.24; Knoblock, vol. 3, 213

中卿進曰:	The middle-ranking minister steps forward and says:
配天而有下土者	He who is the opposite number of Heaven and governs the earth below. . . .

Knoblock apparently misunderstands *pèi* 配 "be the equal of" as well as *yǒu* 有 "to govern," for he translates: "The middle-ranking minister advances and says: 'He who acts as the assessor of Heaven yet lives here below on earth. . . .'" And in any case, what could "assessor" possibly mean in this context?

XUN 27.26; Knoblock, vol. 3, 214

朝大晚，	. . . and coming to court too late,
非禮也。	this is not in accordance with ritual propriety.
治民不以禮，	If one governs the people not in accordance with (or: not using) ritual propriety,
動斯陷矣。	then as soon as one acts one will get trapped in difficulties.

Knoblock translates: ". . . and to stay in the audience hall too late"; but *cháo* 朝 means "attend the morning session at court," and certainly not "stay in the audience hall." Knoblock translates the last line: "To govern the people not using ritual principles is to take actions that will be entirely wasted." But *xiàn* 陷 "to trap, to get trapped" cannot mean "be entirely wasted." Moreover, Knoblock's translation does not take account of *sī* 斯 which functions here, as often, as a sentence connective.

XUN 27.43; Knoblock, vol. 3, 217

內十日一御。	Members of the harem are slept with once in ten days.

Knoblock translates this as "once in every ten days the concubines visit," which needlessly suggests group sex.

The above represent my comments on randomly selected lines of Chinese text in Knoblock's edition.

I note the following character misprints I noticed in chapter 27:

27.7 Knoblock's *diāo gōng* 雕弓 is a misprint for 彫弓, and the two characters are not always interchangeable.
27.12 李 should be 禮
27.21 未should be 末
27.27 璧 should be 避.
27.40 覆 should surely be 履 and is thus miswritten twice.
27.41 魯者 should be 老者.
27.50 穢 should be 歲, and the two characters are not simply always interchangeable.
27.57 奉家 should be 舉家. 齊棄 should be 齊衰.
27.60 苟能奉 should be 何能舉.
27.62 終任 should be 終日.
27.81 恫 should be 同.
27.83 五子 should be 吾子.
27.84 子貢 should be 子贛, 子路 should be 季路, and 彼文學 should be 被文學.
27.85 天附 should be 天府.
27.91 錫 should thrice be 賜. 事君赧 should be 事君難. 巔 should be 眞 with the mountain radical.
27.92 小雅 is miswritten.
27.93 The Chinese text appears simply to have been garbled and rewritten.

The Problem of Rhymes

In a wide range of passages, Knoblock neglects rhymes. But Xúnzǐ was an important poet, and his rhymes are always worth noting. They make a profound difference to the nature of the discourse on the one hand, and they affect both parsing and the semantic interpretation of words. Not everyone can be expected to enter the highly subtle and complex philological debates on rhyming in ancient texts. But Jiāng Yǒugào 江有誥, *Yīnxué shíshū* 音學十書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1993), supplemented by Lóng Yǔchún 龍宇純, "Xiān Qín sǎnwén zhōng de yùnwén" 先秦散文中的韻文, *The Chung Chi Journal* 2.2 (1963), 137–68, and 3.1 (1963), 55–87, will be of great help to uninitiated phonologists like myself. Basing myself on these convenient tools I give a few examples of rhymed passages overlooked by Knoblock to illustrate my point. I give Karlgren's reconstructions (Bernhard Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa* [Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1957]).

XUN 2.2; Knoblock, vol. 1, 152

扁善之度	If in everything one follows the standard of goodness
以治氣養生，	to control breath and to nourish life,
則後彭祖；	then one will succeed Pengzu [祖 *tso];
以修身自强，	and if one thereby cultivates one's person and strengthens oneself,
則配堯禹。	one will be become the equal of Yáo and Yǔ [禹 *gi̯wo].
宜於時通，	(That standard) that is suitable for temporary success [通 *d'ung],
利以處窮，	that is of use for living under hard conditions [窮 *g'i̯ôŋ],
禮信是也。	that (standard) is ritual propriety and good faith.

Knoblock's translation is not indented, nor does he mention the rhymes in his notes on this passage, yet he indents another rhymed passage just below. Xúnzǐ's use of rhymes is worth dwelling on, especially because Xúnzǐ was an important poet as well as a philosopher.

XUN 12.7; Knoblock, vol. 2, 184

至道大形：	The overall shape of the ultimate Way:
隆禮至法則國有常，	If one exalts ritual propriety and perfects the law then the state has a constant pattern [常 *d̂i̯ang].
尚賢使能則民知方，	If one honors the morally talented and employs the able then the people know their models [方 *pi̯wang].
纂論公察	If one continually assesses and publicly investigates
則民不疑，	then the people will not be suspicious [疑 *ngi̯əg].
賞克罰偷	If one rewards winners and punishes thieves
則民不怠，	then the people will not be remiss [怠 *d'əg].
兼聽齊明	If one listens to everyone and is clear about everything
則天下歸之；	then everyone will rally to one [之 *t̂i̯əg].
然後明分職，	It is only then that one makes clear the distinct official duties [職 *t̂i̯ək],

序事業，	that one regulates public business [事 *dz̩'i̯əg] procedures [業 *ngi̯ap].
村技官能，	If those who have talents and skills and who have abilities for office [能 *nəg]
莫不治理，	are all active in the government [理 *li̯əg],
則公道達	then the public Way wins through
而私門塞矣，	and private avenues to success are blocked [塞 *sək];
公義明	public morality is given proper prominence
而私事息矣：	and private affairs cease [息 *si̯ək].
如是	Under such circumstances
則德厚者進	those who have rich inner power will advance
而佞說者止，	and the glib-tongued talkers will stop [止 *t̂i̯əg].
貪利者退	Those who seek profit will be removed
而廉節者起。	and those who are morally pure and restrained will rise [起 *k'i̯əg].

Translating this, Knoblock lets the rhyming passage cover only the last four lines. This is misleading.

Here is a rhymed saying:

XUN 30.2; Knoblock, vol. 3, 256

曾子曰：	Zengzi said:
無內人之疏	One should not be distant to one's own
而外人之親，	and close to those outside [親 *ts'i̯ĕn].
無身不善而怨人，	One should not, when one's own person is less than good resent others [人 *ni̯ĕn].
無刑已至而呼天。	One should not, when the punishment has already struck call to Heaven [天 *t'ien].
內人之疏	If one is distant to one's own
而外人之親，	and close to outsiders [親 *ts'i̯ĕn]
不亦反乎！	is that not perverse [反 *pi̯wăn]?
身不善而怨人，	When one's person is less than good, then to be resentful of others,
不亦遠乎！	is that not far from reasonable [遠 *gi̯wăn]?
刑已至而呼天，	When the punishment has already struck, then to call to Heaven,
不亦晚乎！	is that not too late [晚 *mi̯wăn]?

Knoblock does have a note on this passage in which he could easily have found the space to explain that this saying was in fact in verse.

XUN 30.7; Knoblock, vol. 3, 258

孔子曰：	The Master said:
君子有三恕。	The gentleman has three kinds of reciprocity:
有君不能事，	If, when there is a ruler and one is unable to serve him [事 *dz̧'i̯əg]
有臣而求其使，	but when there is a servant one seeks to employ him [使 *sli̯əg],
非恕也；	that is not in accordance with reciprocity;
有親不能報，	if, when there are parents but one is unable to repay their generosity [報 *pôg]
有子而求其孝，	but when there are sons then to seek their filial service [孝 *χŏg],
非恕也；	that is not in accordance with reciprocity;
有兄不能敬，	if, when there are elder brothers one is unable to show them earnest respect [敬 *ki̯ĕng]
有弟而求其聽令，	but when there are younger brothers one seeks obedience to one's orders from them [令 *li̯ĕng],
非恕也。	that is not in accordance with reciprocity.
士明於此三恕，	If a freeman is clear about these three kinds of reciprocity
則可以端身矣。	then he is able to straighten out his personality.

The Western reader deserves to be told that Confucius speaks in rhymes.

At times, Knoblock indicates rhymes, but not completely and therefore misleadingly.

XUN 19.2c; Knoblock, vol. 3, 60

1 天地以合，	Heaven and earth are conjoined through it,
日月以明，	sun and moon are bright through it [明 *mi̯ăng];
四時以序，	the four seasons get their proper order through it,
星辰以行，	the stars and constellations proceed according to it [行 *g'ăng];
5 江河以流，	the Yangtse and the Yellow River flow according to it,
萬物以昌，	the myriad creatures flourish through it [昌 *t̂i̯ang];

好惡以節，	the good and the bad is moderated with it,
喜怒以當，	joy and anger find their proper levels through it [當 *tăng].
以爲下則順，	Using it, if one is in a lowly position then one is obedient;
10 以爲上則明，	using it, if one is in a high position one is enlightened [明 *mi̯ăng].
萬變不亂，	The myriad changes are not chaotic,
貳之則喪也。	but if one deviates from ritual one will be ruined [喪 *săng].
禮豈不至矣哉！	How could ritual be other that utterly perfect?

For unknown reasons, Knoblock omits the rhymes in lines 10 and 12 which do tie these reflections together with the preceding hymn in a significant way.

It seems to me that a translator has to make a choice: either one indicates all the systematic rhymes one has found, or one disregards them all. Selectiveness, it seems to me, is unnecessarily misleading.

The Problem of Impersonal First Person Pronouns

There is one particular area in which Knoblock's translations are pervasively confused, but where the current Chinese translations and grammar books would not in fact have given him any systematic help. That is the area of what I want to call the "impersonal first person pronouns" in classical Chinese. Any experienced reader of classical Chinese is familiar with these, and I certainly remember discussing the matter with my teacher Angus Graham, but to my great surprise I found no treatment of them in my handbooks. In fact I find that there is a fairly large scholarly folklore of grammatical as well as lexical observation and intuition that is handed down in this way from master to student, but that somehow never seems to get into the standard handbooks. In this instance the point seems to be of such general importance that I shall present a range of evidence for the phenomenon and then see how this affects the interpretation of some relevant *Xúnzǐ* passages as interpreted in Knoblock's new translation. I am aware that the subject really deserves a little monograph in its own right which could illustrate how such an elementary grammatical point can deeply affect our comprehension of Chinese intellectual history and sharpen our perception of ancient texts. Meticulous linguistics of this kind is not a matter for specialists in linguistics, it is a *conditio sine qua non* for any responsible intellectual or

literary history of China. Leaving such matters to "the linguists," "the lexicographers,"or "the grammar specialists" is a grave mistake, a mistake that in my view has done great damage to the study of China.

In current Chinese and western grammars and handbooks there are extensive and important discussions of the distribution and the syntax of the words *wú* 吾 and *wǒ* 我.[1] But in fact the semantics of the words is far from clear and needs careful attention. Consider the first person pronoun *wú* 吾 as used by Confucius in the following passage.

LUNYU 9.19

(tr. D.C. Lau, *Confucius: The Analects* [Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1992], 83)

子曰:	The Master said:
譬如爲山，	As in the case of making a mound,
未成一簣，	if, before the very last basketful,
止，	I stop,
吾止也。	then I shall have stopped.
譬如平地，	As in the case of leveling the ground,
雖覆一簣，	if, though tipping only one basketful,
進，	I am going forward,
吾往也。	then I shall be making progress.

What is the reference of *wú* 吾? I do not see Confucius, personally, making any mound whatsoever. This is not straight autobiography. Perhaps he is taking himself as a hypothetical example. But, more likely, the word *wú* 吾 has an impersonal meaning "one, you" here, so that a more

1. Notably Robert H. Gassmann, "Eine kontextorientierte Interpretation der Pronomina *wu* und *wo* im *Meng-tzu*," *Asiatische Studien* 38.2 (1984), 129–53, which surveys earlier literature and tries to explain *wǒ* 我 in subject position as a high-status pronoun versus *wú* 吾 as a low-status first person pronoun. I shall try to show elsewhere that the distinction is in fact more like that between subjective, personal (and often informal) *wú* 吾 "I, we all of us, (talking to one's own group:) our group" versus an objective, contrastive (and often collective) *wǒ* 我 "I for my part, (talking to outsiders to one's own party:) our party" in subject position—an idea that has long been around in classrooms where classical Chinese is sensitively read, but which I have never seen cogently demonstrated with a sound and sufficiently large set of illuminating examples to be helpful and right. For the *Mencius* and the *Analects*, I believe that a good case can be made for distinctions along these lines. For the *Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳 I believe I have demonstrated the rightness of the distinctions in exhaustive detail. How this works for texts like the *Xúnzǐ* remains a widely open question which I have not gone into in the necessary obsessive detail. I note that there is no trace whatsoever of impersonal *wǒ* 我 or *wú* 吾 in *Zuǒzhuàn*. It would appear that it is a philosophical derived usage.

congenial and indeed the correct translation would be "then one will have stopped."

The point becomes virulent in the following passage.

MENG 1A.7

(tr. Lau, *Mencius*, vol. 1, 17)

老吾老	Treat the aged of your own family in a manner befitting their venerable age
以及人之老，	and extend this treatment to the aged of other families;
幼吾幼	treat your own young in a manner befitting their tender age
以及人之幼，	and extend this to the young of other families,
天下可運於掌。	and you can roll the Empire on your palm.

My simple question is this: whose seniors and whose young does the speaker, Mencius, refer to in these famous words? Grammars and dictionaries suggest to the beginner that it must be his own: this would mean that he is suggesting that by behaving in the recommended way he would be able to gain easy control of the empire. Of course, Mencius intends to say nothing of the kind. Paradoxically, the "I" is quite nicely rendered by the English "you," and probably even more adequately by the English "oneself, one's own." Zhào Qí 趙岐 (d. A.D. 201) finds nothing to worry about here and happily glosses *wú* 吾 by *wǒ* 我, just as Yáng Bójùn, *Mèngzǐ yìzhù* 孟子譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962), 20, sees no problem and seems quite happy to translate: 尊敬我家裡的長輩，從而推廣到尊敬別人家裡的長輩. The problem of the meaning of *wú* 吾 in this phrase has not been taken up in the standard edition by Jiāo Xún 焦循 (1763–1820), *Mèngzǐ zhèngyì* 孟子正義 (ed. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 87.

If we understand Mencius correctly here, as I believe many people traditionally have done, it is because of disregarding commentaries, dictionaries, and grammars and using common sense. If we went by the handbooks we would get things wrong. Our dictionaries, grammars, and handbooks do not equip us to interpret the word *wú* 吾 properly in a large number of contexts.[2]

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2. The entry on *wú* 吾 in *Hànyǔ dàzìdiǎn* 漢語大字典 (Chengdu: Sichuancishu, 1988), vol. 1, 586, is disarmingly brief: "First person pronoun, I." No other relevant semantic explanations are given. Important teaching handbooks like Hóng Chéngyù 洪成玉, *Gǔdàihànyǔ jiàochéng* 古代漢語教程 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1995), 393, and Guō Xíliáng

Impersonal *Wǒ* 我 "Oneself, One"

For the word *wǒ* 我 similar problems arise, but in this case Yáng Shùdá 楊樹達, *Gāoděng Gúowénfǎ* 高等國文法 (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1932), 71, did devote a brief list of examples to the idea that *wǒ* 我 can mean *jǐ* 己 "onself." I shall discuss all the five pre-Buddhist examples he provides.

MENG 7A.4

(tr. Lau, *Mencius*, vol. 2, 265)

孟子曰:	Mencius said:
萬物皆備於我矣，	All the ten thousand things are there in me.
反身而誠，	There is no greater joy for me
樂莫大焉。	than to find, on self-examination, that I am true to myself.

Yáng Shùdá claims that *wǒ* 我 here means *jǐ* 己, but, firstly, it is very much an open question whether the reflexive pronoun *jǐ* 己 would have been acceptable here in the meaning "oneself" in pre-Han Chinese; and secondly, it is not by any means a foregone conclusion that D.C. Lau's translation (and that of Yáng Bójùn, *Mèngzǐ yìzhù*, 302: 一切我都具備了) is wrong.

HANFEI 35.19

(this and subsequent references are to chapter and section in the edition of Chén Qíyóu 陳奇猷, *Hánfēizǐ jíshì* 韓非子集釋 [Taipei: Shijie, 1963])

造父方耨，	Zàofǔ was hoeing in the fields
時有子父乘車過者。	and at that time a son and his father were riding past in a cart.
馬驚而不行。	The horses stalled and would not go on.
其子下車牽馬，	The son got down from the cart and pulled the horses on,
父子推車，	father and son pushed the cart,
請造父助我推車。	and they asked Zàofǔ: "Can you help us push the cart?"

Here, on the other hand, *jǐ* 己 would have been manifestly possible. The problem is, however, that so is *wǒ* 我 in the ordinary reading "me," if we allow ourselves the luxury of taking *qǐng* 請 to introduce direct

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郭錫良 et al., *Gǔdài Hànyǔ* 古代漢語 (Tianjin: Tianjinjiaoyu, 1994), 318, add nothing to the picture; and *Gǔ Hànyǔ chángyòngzì zìdiǎn* 古漢語常用字字典 (Beijing: Shangwu, 1979), 256, defines disappointingly: "我 (門)，我 (門) 的."

speech. There is thus no strict need to assume here that *wǒ* 我 means something like *jǐ* 己.

As his latest pre-Buddhist example, Yáng Shùdá quotes an example from the *Shǐjì* 史記 which deserves our close attention.

SHIJI, 9.395

(Beijing,: Zhonghua, 1965)

孝惠爲人仁弱，	Xiào Hùi was weak by nature
高祖以爲：	and Gāozǔ thought:
不類我。	"He is not like me."
常欲廢太子，	Constantly he wanted to dismiss the heir apparent
立戚姬子如意。	and to establish Qījī's son Rúyì:
如意類我。	"Rúyì is like me!"

Here one could take the first *wǒ* 我 to function like *jǐ* 己 in that context. But whatever one's view on this fascinating passage, in its last line *jǐ* 己 would certainly be excluded for *wǒ* 我. What we seem to have is an extraordinarily lively piece of unmarked inner dialogue. (I note in passing that Yáng Shùdá writes 爲人弱 instead of 爲人仁弱. One often suspects that Yáng's quotations are from memory—like those of the eminently learned German classical scholar Ulrich Willamowitz-Moellendorff. The useful *Cíquán jiàozhù* 詞詮校注, annotated by Wáng Shùjiā 王術加 and Fàn Jìnjūn 范進軍 [Changsha: Yuelu, 1996], demonstrates our point on the reliability of the quotations in Yáng Shùdá's works very well.)

We have seen that four of Yáng Shùdá's five examples, interesting though they are in themselves, do not demonstrate his grammatical point. Not surprisingly, therefore, grammarians and lexicographers have not taken up the idea that *wǒ* 我 can mean *jǐ* 己. However, here as so often elsewhere, Yáng Shùdá was on the right track. His fifth example is perfectly relevant and allows for no easy explanation.

MENG 7A.25

(tr. Lau, *Mencius*, vol. 2, 275)

孟子曰：	Mencius said:
楊子取爲我。	Yáng Zhū opted for egotism.

Here, indeed, *jǐ* 己 could have been used for *wǒ* 我, and be taken to be coreferent with Yángzǐ. But there is a hitch: Yángzǐ was not advocating an egotism of the kind where everyone is supposed to work for *him*, Yángzī. Everyone is supposed to act in *their own* interests. There is no coreference between *jǐ* 己 and Yángzǐ according to the correct philosophical reading

of this passage. *Jǐ* 己 would indeed have been acceptable here, but then the meaning would tend to be different because the word would tend to be interpreted as coreferent with the main subject of the sentence. This is not how Mencius wanted to be understood here.

Zhào Qí tries to express the special force of *wǒ* 我 as follows: 爲我，爲己也 "*wèi wǒ* means work for oneself" (Yáng Shùdá misquotes him as writing 爲自己也). Neither he nor Yáng Shùdá got things straight by attributing the meaning *jǐ* 己 to *wǒ* 我. The case is more subtle than they managed to bring out. Nonetheless, Zhào Qí has noticed a philosophically and grammatically central point which has escaped most later grammarians and lexicographers: *wǒ* 我 is not always a first person pronoun referring to the speaker using it or to a group or party to which that speaker belongs as opposed to others who are not-*wǒ* 我. The word regularly comes to be used as a special generalized and inclusive reflexive pronoun meaning something like the English "oneself."

Further examples of this are easy enough to find. One striking instance I happened to come across in the *Guǎnzǐ* 管子 may serve as a representative sample of current pre-Buddhist prose. I quote Rickett's translation to which I add my corrections in italics.

GUAN, 1.2a

(*Sìbù beìyaò* ed.; W. Allyn Rickett, *Guanzi*, vol. 1 [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985], 54)

政之所興，	Success in government
在順民心。	lies in following the hearts of the people.
政之所廢，	Failure
在逆民心。	lies in opposing them.
民惡憂勞，	The people hate trouble and toil,
我佚樂之。	so [the prince] *one* should provide them with leisure and freedom from care.
民惡貧賤，	The people hate poverty and low position,
我富貴之。	so [the prince] *one* should provide them with riches and honor.
民惡危墜，	The people hate danger and disaster,
我存安之。	so [the prince] *one* should insure their existence and provide them with security.
民惡滅絕，	The people hate death and annihilation,
我生育之。	so [the prince] *one* should enable them to live and propagate.
能佚樂之，	If [the prince] [*one*] can provide them with leisure and freedom from care,

則民爲之憂勞。	the people will be willing to endure trouble and toil for him.
能富貴之，	If he [*one*] can provide them with riches and honor,
則民爲之貧賤。	they will be willing to endure poverty and low position for him.
能存安之，	If he [*one*] can insure their existence and provide them with security,
則民爲之危墜。	they will be willing to endure danger and disaster for him.
能生育之，	If he [*one*] enables them to live and propagate,
則民爲之滅絕。	they will be willing to endure death and annihilation for him.

Rickett's translation of *wǒ* 我 as bracketed "[the prince]" is disarming, but like his "he" this needs to be replaced with a kind of contrastive "oneself, one." When in the second sequence, *wǒ* 我 is omitted, the indefinite reference remains the same. It is perfectly true that the text is written from the point of view of the ruler, and that *wǒ* 我 "one" here can be paraphrased and expanded to something like "as a ruler, one." Thus in a vague way, Rickett does get the meaning of the passage. But what I am trying to do here is to make the grammar and meaning precise so that we can distinguish between what a sentence says and what we learn from its context.

In other instances the impersonal *wǒ* 我 "one" is not so overtly contrastive.

MENG 3B.9

(tr. Lau, *Mencius*, vol. 1, 129)

楊氏爲我，	Yang advocates everyone for *himself*,
是無君也。	which amounts to a denial of one's prince.

If current dictionaries and grammars were right, then D.C. Lau would be wrong and we should translate: "Yáng works for our side, and that amounts to a denial of one's prince." And note especially that there is no question of reading this as "Yáng advocates everyone for *us*." *Wǒ* 我 cannot possibly be taken as a collective plural of any kind here. This point is crucial to keep in mind: our notion of impersonal "one" is markedly distinct from the well-known collective "we," although it will turn out that there are some cases where one might hesitate between a collective and an impersonal reading.

MENG 2A.6

(tr. Lau, *Mencius*, vol. 1, 67)

凡有四端於我者　Generally, as for those who have these four beginnings in *them* . . . .

This is not an autobiographic statement by the speaker, as any competent reader of the *Mencius* knows. My point is that readers know this in spite of their current dictionaries and grammars.[3]

Consider the philosophical ideas in the following core passage from the *Analects*.

LUNYU 7.30

(tr. Lau, *Analects*, 65)

子曰：　The Master said:
仁遠乎哉？　Is benevolence really far away?
我欲仁，　No sooner do I desire it
斯仁至矣。　than it is here.

James Legge translates: "The Master said, 'Is virtue a thing remote? I wish to be virtuous, and lo! virtue is at hand'" (Legge, *Confucian Analects*, in *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 1 [rpt. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960], 204). Yáng Bójùn 楊伯峻, the best modern translator, translates in accordance with current universal practice: 我要它，它就來了 (Yáng Bójùn, *Lúnyǔ yìzhù* 論語譯注 [Beijing: Zhonghua,1965], 80).

The Chéng 程 brothers are quoted as referring, quite correctly, to the first part of LUNYU 12.1 (爲仁由己而由人乎？).[4] They say (*Sìshū jízhù* 四書集注 [Changsha: Yuelu, 1985], 127):

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3. *Hànyǔ dàzìdiǎn*, vol. 2, 1401, overlooks this usage and defines *wǒ* 我 as follows:

a. I, we.
b. our party (ZUO, Duke Zhuang 10.1, 齊師伐我).
c. intimate: my, our (LUNYU 7.1, 我老彭).
d. be opinionated (LUNYU 9.4, 毋固，毋我).

The dictionary gives three other meanings attributed to the word which are of no concern to us here.

Zhōu Fǎgāo's *Zhōngguó gǔdài yǔfǎ* 中國古代語法 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1959–62) does not notice this phenomenon. Neither does the excellent concise grammar by S.E. Yakhontov, *Drevnekitajskij jazyk* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), 66–69, nor, for example, Yì Mèngchún's 易孟醇, *Xiān Qín yǔfǎ* 先秦語法 (Changsha: Hunanjiaoyu, 1989), 123–34.

4. Note that *jǐ* 己 refers to a general "one" here, a reference this word can only have when there is no overt subject present to which it could refer specifically.

爲仁由己。	Becoming good has its source in oneself.
欲之則至。	If one wants goodness, then it comes to one.
何遠之有？	What distance is there to talk about?

The Chéng brothers, like the earliest commentators, are quite right: Confucius is not being autobiographical. They did not misunderstand him as saying that he himself happened to have no problem with goodness. They took him to be making a very general point. What neither the earliest commentators, nor the Chéng brothers, nor anyone else did was to stop and think about what this passage tells us about the grammar and meaning of *wǒ* 我. They did not notice that *wǒ* 我, like *wú* 吾, is regularly used in an impersonal way, that it is used to refer not to the speaker but in a generalized way, like modern Chinese *nǐ* 你, to people in general. Yáng Bójùn notes forty-six instances of *wǒ* 我 in his carefully compiled dictionary of the *Analects* (appended to *Lúnyǔ yìzhù*) and he fails to realize that the word does not always refer to the speaker and mean "I."

The point of the translation of this case of *wǒ* 我 deserves serious reflection. The Master is not presenting us with a piece of autobiography: "(I don't know what you people have by way of problems with *rén* 仁.) As for me, personally, when I desire it, then it arrives." Indeed if Confucius had to be interpreted in this vein, one would think him impertinent. He was not in this way impertinent. Matters would be even worse if we took him to mean "our group of people (as opposed to other groups) has no problem with goodness." What he is saying is nothing of this autobiographical or group-oriented kind, although he does sometimes get into an autobiographical mode elsewhere. All current translations have to be corrected. All traditional commentaries seem to have overlooked the point. The master is not boasting impertinently about his own personal immediate access to goodness of heart or benevolence. We must understand him to be saying something like this: "When *one* has a desire for goodness of heart, then it arrives." He is saying something of general significance—and this is how he was understood, for example, by the Chéng brothers. The special impersonal meaning of *wǒ* 我 differs profoundly from the singular meaning "I" as well as from the plural meaning "our party, our group." One might explain this meaning as a natural further derivation from the plural meaning of the word, and I think that such an explanation is correct. But this explanation does not mean that the impersonal meaning of *wǒ* 我 is not a perfectly distinct and separate meaning of the word which needs to be appreciated properly if we are to understand ancient Chinese texts.

In his useful and fairly meticulously compiled dictionary of the *Mencius* (appended to his *Mèngzǐ yìzhù*) Yáng Bójùn defines: 我 . . . 自稱

代詞 "first person pronoun." But let us look at some more examples from that text.

MENG 7A.3

(tr.Lau, *Mencius*. vol. 2, 265)

孟子曰:	Mencius said:
求則得之，	Seek and you will get it;
舍則失之，	let go and you will lose it.
是求有益於得也，	If this is the case, then seeking is of use to getting
求在我者也。	and what is sought is within *oneself*.

MENG 4B.28

(tr. Lau, *Mencius*, vol. 1, 169)

有人於此，	Suppose a man
其待我以橫逆，	treats *one* in an outrageous manner.
則君子必自反也	Faced with this, a gentleman will say to himself . . . .

Here the *wǒ* 我 cannot be replaced with *jǐ* 己, and moreover, "oneself" is not at all a good gloss in English either. One thing is clear in the context: *wǒ* 我 does not specifically refer to the speaker.

One might think the point is clear enough to everyone, although it has not found its way into the grammar books. But consider this important passage, with D.C. Lau's translation, which is the best we have in any western language. The whole passage actually turns, philosophically, on how we are to understand the first person pronoun *wǒ* 我.

MENG 6A.7

(tr. Lau, *Mencius*, vol. 2, 229)

故凡同類者，	Now things of the same kind
舉相似也，	are all alike.
何獨至於人而疑之？	Why should we have doubts when it comes to man?
聖人與我同類者。	The sage and *I* are of the same kind.
故龍子曰:	Thus Lung Tzu said:
不知足而爲履，	"When someone makes a shoe for a foot he has not seen,
我知其不爲賁也。	I am sure he will not produce a basket."

履之相似，	All shoes are alike
天下之足同也。	because all feet are alike.
口之於味，	All palates
有同耆也，	show the same preferences in taste.
易牙先得我口之所耆者也。	Yi Ya was simply the first man to discover what would be pleasing to *my* palate.
如使口之於味也，	Were the nature of taste
其性與人殊，	to vary from man to man
若犬馬之與我不同類也，	in the same way as horses and hounds differ from *me* in kind,
則天下何耆	then how does it come about that all palates in the world
皆從易牙之於味也？…	follow the preferences of Yi Ya? . . . .
故曰，	Hence it is said:
口之於味也，	All palates
有同耆焉；	have the same preference in taste;
耳之於聲也，	all ears
有同聽焉；	in sound;
目之於色也，	all eyes
有同美焉。	in beauty.
至於心，	Should hearts
獨無所同然乎？	prove to be an exception by posessing nothing in common?
心之所同然者，	What is it, then,
何也？	that is common to all hearts?
謂理也，	Reason
義也。	and rightness.
聖人先得	The sage is simply the man first to discover
我心之所同然耳。	this common element in *my* heart.
故理義之悅我心，	Thus reason and rightness please *my* heart
猶芻豢之悅我口。	in the same way as meat pleases *my* palate.

D.C. Lau, by translating *wǒ* 我 consistently as "I, my," misrepresents Mencius's thought insofar as he may be taken to suggest that the sage discovered what was in Mencius's mind in particular. But Mencius is not necessarily reflecting in a Wittgensteinian mode on himself. The correct reading of *wǒ* 我 here may very be well impersonal. When Mencius says 聖人與我同類者 ("the sage is the sort of person who is of the same kind as oneself") he is very definitely and quite crucially not claiming a privileged status for himself as opposed to another group or another person who does not have a likeness with the sages. That is the

whole push of his argument. The hounds and horses may be compared not to Mencius personally, but to humans generally. What Mencius is concerned with is not the place of reason and rightness in *his own* personal psychology, but the place of reason and rightness in human psychology quite generally. Mencius is not claiming any special sensibilities for his own tongue versus other people's tongues. (In any case, *wǒ xīn* 我心 tends to be "one's heart," "our heart," where *wú xīn* 吾心 more likely would have been "my heart," just as *wú qíng* 吾情 are "my real feelings," as I hope to demonstrate in a much more detailed forthcoming paper on the semantic distinction between *wǒ* 我 and *wú* 吾.)

How could Yì Yá be the first to discover what pleases the speaker, Mencius *himself*? He could never have had any interest in that particular person whom he never knew about. Quite generally, the sages were unconcerned with the common element in *Mencius's* heart. As the whole passage makes superabundantly clear, they were concerned with general human sensibilities. D.C. Lau's translation is quite definitely wrong on the very crux of this argument. But, we hasten to add, no more wrong than that the reader with any common sense can and probably will reconstruct the real underlying meaning of the text. We are so used to unfocused, fuzzy translation that we tend to have learnt to read past it, at least when it comes to translation from classical Chinese, whereas students of Latin or Greek are trained from the very start not to put up with such fuzziness in grammar or in the semantics of words.

It is interesting to see that in his comments on this passage, Zhào Qí, though not commenting directly on the meaning of *wǒ* 我 in this context, nowhere begins to take the word to refer specifically to Mencius, or to a specific group of people of which Mencius is a member but which would exclude others.

ZHUANG 14, 509

(this and subsequent references are to chapter and page in the edition of Wáng Shūmín 王叔岷, *Zhuāngzǐ jiàoquán* 莊子校詮 [Taipei: Academia Sinica, Institute of History and Philology, 1988)

莊子曰：…	Zhuāngzǐ said: . . . .
忘親易，	"To forget one's parents is relatively easy,
使親忘我難；	but to cause one's parents to forget *oneself* is more difficult.
使親忘我易，	To cause one's parents to forget *oneself* is relatively easy,
兼忘天下難；	but to forget all under heaven is more difficult.

兼忘天下易，	To forget all under heaven is relatively easy,
使天下兼忘我難。	but to cause all under heaven to forget *one* is more difficult."

There is no doubt that Zhuāngzǐ is not speculating about himself personally here, nor in the next two passages.

ZHUANG 21,782

貴在於我	Honor depends on *oneself*
而不失於變。	and is not lost by a change of status.

ZHUANG 33, 1319

人我之養畢足而止，	To stop when nourishment for others and for *oneself* is all sufficient
以此白心，	and thereby to make one's mind plain:
古之道術有在於是者。	a portion of the ancient techniques of the Way lay in these practices.

Impersonal *Wú* 吾 "Impersonal Pronoun: Oneself, One; One's Own"

First, an example from *Zhuāngzǐ*:

ZHUANG 27, 1089

親父不爲其子媒。	A father does not act as a matchmaker for his son.
親父譽之，	Instead of the father praising his son
不若非其父者也；	it is better for someone other than his father to do so.
非吾罪也，	Then it won't be *one's own* fault,
人之罪也。	it will be someone else's fault.

Since I have just completed a translation of the *Hánfēizǐ*, I take the opportunity here to present examples where I had use for an impersonal interpretation of *wú* 吾 in that book.

HANFEI 5.2

去其智，	One discards one's competence,
絕其能，	one gets rid of one's abilities,
下不能意。	and those below cannot guess one's purposes.

保吾所以往	One must take care not to give away *one's* purposes
而稽同之；	and check whether others conform to them;
謹執其柄而固握之。	one must take care to hold the handle and to grasp it firmly.

HANFEI 12.1

凡說之難：	As for the difficulties of persuasion in general:
非吾知之	it is not a difficulty about knowing something *oneself*
有以說之之難也，	and having something to persuade others with;
又非吾辯之	neither is it a difficulty of having argued something out *oneself*
能明吾意之難也，	and being able to make clear *one's* meaning;
又非吾敢橫失（佚）	nor is it a difficulty of daring to speak out in an untrammeled way *oneself*
而能盡之難也。	and being able to say everything.
凡說之難	In general the problem of persuasion
在知所說之心，	consists in understanding the way of thinking of the person persuaded,
可以吾說當之。	and oneself being in a position to fit this disposition with *one's* persuasion.

HANFEI 12.5

伊尹爲宰，	When Yīyǐn acted as a cook
百里奚爲虜，	and Bǎilǐxī was a slave:
皆所以干其上也。	this was the way in which they achieved their advancement.
此二人者，	These two men
皆聖人也；	were both men of extraordinary talent;
然猶不能無役身以進，	but they still could not avoid enslaving their persons in order to advance:
如此其汙也！	this is the kind of dirty humiliation to which they exposed themselves!
今以吾言爲宰虜，	Now to become cooks or work-slaves because of *one's* proposals
而可以聽用而振世，	but to be able to make oneself heard and to shake the world,
此非能仕之所恥也。	that is not something a capable official will be ashamed of.

HANFEI 14.4

從是觀之，	Looking at things from this point of view,
則聖人之治國也，	then as for the sage's governing of the state,
固有使人	he firmly adopts a method by which he brings it about that others
不得不愛我之道，	cannot fail to feel affection for *his* Way,
而不恃人之以愛爲我也。	and he does not depend on others because of their affection to work for him.
恃人之以愛爲我者	Those who depend on others working for *them* because of their affection
危矣，	are in a dangerous position;
恃吾不可不爲者	those who there is no way of not working for *themselves*
安矣。	are in a secure position.

HANFEI 20.27

以爲近乎，	One thinks it is close?
遊於四極；	It roams among the four extremities of the universe.
以爲遠乎，	One thinks it is far away?
常在吾側。	It is constantly at *one's* side.

HANFEI 33.13

故明主者，	Thus the enlightened ruler
不恃其不我叛也，	will not rely on others not revolting against *him*,
恃吾不可叛也；	but will rely on it being impossible to revolt against *him*.
不恃其不我欺也，	He does not rely on others not cheating *him*,
恃吾不可欺也。	but relies on it being impossible for *him* to be cheated.

HANFEI 38.8

且民有倍心者，	Moreover, if the people are bent on rebellion,
君上之明有所不及也，	then the insight of the ruler in charge is less than perfect.
不紹葉公之明，	Not to expand the insight of the Duke of Shè
而使之悅近	and to make him please those who are close
而來遠，	and rally those who are far,

是舍吾勢之所能禁	this is to give up on what with *one's* position of power one can prevent
而使與下行惠以爭民，	and to make him act generously in order to win over the people.
非能持勢者也。	This is not to be able to maintain one's position of power.

HANFEI 50.7

故敵國之君王	Thus even if the ruler and king of a competing state
雖說吾義，	approves of *one's* moral standards,
吾弗入貢而臣；	*one* can still not receive tribute from him and treat him as a vassal;
關內之候，	even if the lords within the pass
雖非吾行，	all disapprove of *one's* moral standards,
吾必使執禽而朝。	*one* is still bound to have them arrested and brought to court to show their respect.

HANFEI 50.8

夫聖人之治國，	When a sage governs a state
不恃人之爲吾善也，	he does not rely on others doing good in *his own* interest,
而用其不得爲非也。	but he makes use of the fact that they cannot commit misdeeds.
恃人之爲吾善也，	If he relies on others doing good for *his own* sake
境內不什數，	there won't be more than a dozen people who do this,
用人不得爲非，	but if he makes use of the fact that people cannot do wrong
一國可使齊。	the whole state can be brought to heel.

HANFEI 50.9

故善毛嬙、西施之美，	Thus praising the beauty of Máo Qiáng and Xī Shī
無益吾面；	does not do any good to *one's* looks.
用脂澤粉黛，	If one uses rich grease and black powder
則倍其初。	then one will be twice as attractive as before.
言先王之仁義，	Talking about the kindness and morality of the former kings
無益於治；	does not do any good to government;

明吾法度，	but being clear about *one's* legal system
必吾賞罰者，	and making *one's* rewards and punishments inevitable,
亦國之脂澤粉黛也。	this is the rich grease and the black powder of the state.

Abstract *Wǒ* 我 "Abstract Noun: The Ego, The Self, One's Self"

Another intellectually important aspect of the personal pronouns pervasively neglected in dictionaries and grammars is that of the abstract nominalization of these pronouns, as in the English "the Ego." This is a separate story which deserves to be told in detail, but a few examples will conveniently illustrate the phenomenon.

ZHUANG 2, 52

非彼無我，	If there were no "other," there would be no "*I*."
非我無所取。	If there were no "*I*," there would be nothing to apprehend the "other."

ZHUANG 21, 774

雖忘乎故吾，	Although you may forget the old *me*,
吾有不忘者存。	there still exists something about me which is not forgotten.

Impersonal *Wú* 吾 and *Wǒ* 我 in *Xúnzǐ*

I now survey relevant passages in Knoblock's translation.

XUN 2.1; Knoblock, vol. 1,151

見善，	When one sees something good
修然必以自存也；	then, carefully, one must not neglect to examine oneself in respect of it;
見不善，	and if one sees something bad
愀然必以自省也。	then, saddened, one must not neglect to investigate oneself in respect of it.
善在身，	When a good point is in one's person
介然必以自好也；	then, positively, one must not neglect to like oneself with respect to it;
不善在身，	and if a bad point is in one's person

蓋然必以自惡也。	then, staunchly, one must not neglect to dislike oneself with respect to it.
故非我而當者，	Thus he who criticizes *one* and who is right,
吾師也；	he is *one's* master;
是我而當者，	and he who approves of *one* and is right,
吾友也；	he is *one's* friend;
諂諛我者，	but the person who fawns on *one*,
吾賊也。	he is *one's* malefactor.
故君子隆師而親友，	Thus the gentleman holds his teacher in high esteem and is close to friends,
以致惡其賊。	but he feels extreme hatred for malefactors.

Knoblock translates in such a way that a radical break occurs from the first *gù* 故 (mistranslated as "as of old") onwards: "When a man sees good, being filled with delight, he is sure *to preserve it within himself*. . . . When he finds what is good within himself, with a sense of firm resolve he is sure to *cherish its being there*. When he sees what is not good within himself, filled with loathing, he must *hate that it is there*. *As of old*, those who consider *me* to be in the wrong and are correct in doing so are my teachers; those who consider *me* to be in the right and are correct are my friends; but those who flatter me and toady after me are my malefactors. Thus, the gentleman esteems his teachers, is intimate with his friends, that he might thereby utterly *despise* his malefactors." I have highlighted the words which I feel sure represent substantial misinterpretations of the text.

Consider now the following tricky and controversial passage.

XUN 2.8; Knoblock, vol. 1,156

故學曰遲。	Thus study is a slow process.
彼止而待我，	If when the other party will stop and wait for *one*,
我行而就之，	*one* will move on and catch up with him,
則亦或遲或速，	then surely, either slowly or fast,
或先或後，	either first or last,
胡爲乎其不可以同至也！	how can one fail to arrive at the same time?

Knoblock translates: "Learning is slow-going. That stopping place awaits us. If we set out for it and proceed toward the goal . . . ." However we must understand this tricky and possibly corrupt passage, the parallelism between *bǐ zhǐ* 彼止 and *wǒ xíng* 我行 must surely be respected. And while there is nothing wrong with translating *wǒ* 我 as "we," one has to

notice that this translation fails to bring out clearly and explicitly the fact that the "we" here has a very general force.

The problem of authorship bedevils Knoblock's translations throughout. Here is a symptomatic instance.

XUN 9.7; Knoblock, vol. 2, 98–99

用彊者:	As for the use of one's strength:
人之城守，	When others' city walls are defended
人之出戰，	and when others go out to do battle (against one),
而我以力勝之也，	but *one* overcomes them by force,
則傷人之民必甚矣；	then one is bound to have hurt someone else's people very much;
傷人之民甚，	if one has hurt someone else's people very much,
則人之民必惡我甚矣；	then these people are bound to hate *one* very much;
人之民惡我甚，	when these other people hate *one* very much,
則日欲與我鬥。	they will want to fight against *one* every day.
人之城守，	When others' city walls are defended
人之出戰，	or when others go out to do battle
而我以力勝之，	and *one* overcomes them with military force,
則傷吾民必甚矣；	then one is bound to hurt *one's* own people very much;
傷吾民甚，	if one hurts *one's own* people very much,
則吾民之惡我必甚矣；	then *one's* people will hate *one* very much.
吾民之惡我甚，	When *one's* people hate *one* very much,
則日不欲爲我鬥。	then, day by day, they will have less desire to fight for *one*.
人之民日欲與我鬥，	When someone else's people are daily more intent on fighting against *one*
吾民日不欲爲我鬥，	and *one's own* people are daily more disinclined to fight for *one*,
是彊者之所以反弱也。	this is how the strong person on the contrary becomes weaker.

Knoblock translates *wǒ* 我 and *wú* 吾 as "I": "When others defend the ramparts of their cities and send out knights to do battle with me and I overcome them through superior power. . . ." (Knoblock takes 出 "go out" to be 士 "knight"). But who is this "I"? Certainly not Xúnzǐ, who cannot speak meaningfully of *wú mín* 吾民 "my people" because in classical

Chinese one would have to be a ruler to use that expression. (That is another part of the subtle semantics of *wú* 吾 which goes unnoticed in grammars of classical Chinese.) Moreover, the author of this piece is not a ruler. Presumably, that author is Xúnzǐ. Far from writing hypothetic autobiographic discourse, Xúnzǐ is writing on general political theory. He would never ever presume to imagine himself for a moment in the role of a ruler. That would be sacrilege and even blasphemy. One alternative would be to translate *wǒ* 我 as 我們 "we, our side," but that only moves the problem and does not remove it at all. For, who are "we"? Xúnzǐ and a ruler? Which ruler? Is this a memorial? And even if we chose to interpret it as such, would it be appropriate in a memorial to use an expression like "we" to refer to the addressee and oneself, to speak of "our people"? I certainly think not. Although this strategy is plausible at first glance, and certainly common among Chinese translators, it does not work in the end. "Our people fighting against us" simply makes no sense. The strategy breaks down. Ad hoc solutions will not do. These *wǒ* 我 are totally different from the authorial "I" one finds elsewhere in the *Xúnzǐ*.

XUN 10.8; Knoblock, vol. 2, 128

我以墨子之非樂也，	*I* consider that it is Mòzǐ's opposition to music
則使天下亂。	which brings political chaos to the world.

Here we do seem to have the author of the book expressing an explicitly subjective opinion.

XUN 10.14; Knoblock, vol. 2, 137

人皆亂，	Everyone else will be in political turmoil,
我獨治；	but *one's own side* will be well governed;
人皆危，	everyone else will be in danger,
我獨安；	only *one's own side* will enjoy peace;
人皆喪失之，	everyone else will lose control of things,
我按起而制之。	*one's own side* will raise and control things.

Knoblock translates: "All others are given to anarchy, I alone am controlled. All others face peril; I alone am secure. All others fail and are destroyed; I alone succeed and control them."

XUN 10.15; Knoblock, vol. 2, 137

事强暴之國難，	Serving a powerful and violent state is the more difficult thing to do,

使强暴之國事我易。	Causing a powerful and violent country to serve *one* is the easier thing to do.

Knoblock translates: "For me to serve a strong and aggressive state is difficult; to cause strong and aggressive state to serve me is easy." (I leave aside detailed discussion of the question of the semantics of comparative adjectives like *nán* 難 "be comparatively difficult" and *yì* 易 "be comparatively easy," which is serious enough in itself.) Moreover, in order to make things cohere with his misinterpretation he converts the impersonal prose that follows into an ego-based reflection by inserting five first person pronouns into a passage which has no first person pronoun at all: "If *I* attempt to serve the state by using valuables and precious goods, then these costly objects will be depleted, yet friendly relations will not be secured. If *I* trust . . . . If *I* cede . . . . The more *I* acquiesce . . . . Although *I* had a Yao at my left side and a Shun at my right . . . ." Systematically, Knoblock converts an impersonal text into a personal one, and this in spite of the fact that except under certain special circumstances (like dialogue exchanges or conditions of identity of the subject), the first person pronoun is not normally omitted and understood in classical Chinese. Subjectless sentences are otherwise usually interpreted to have third-person subjects in classical Chinese. This much is fairly clear, although the whole area of which subjects are omissible in classical Chinese grammar still awaits detailed exploration.

XUN 15.6a; Knoblock, vol. 2, 233

凡兼人者有三術：	There are altogether three methods of tying others to one:
有以德兼人者，	there are those who tie others to them through magnanimity,
有以力兼人者，	there are those who tie others to them through force,
有以富兼人者。	and there are those who tie others to them through wealth.
彼貴我名聲，	When the other side sets high store by *one's* good name,
美我德行，	when they commend *one's* magnanimous actions,
欲爲我民，	then they wish to become *one's* people.
故辟(避)門除涂，	And so they will open their gates and clean the roads
以迎吾入。	in order to welcome *one* as one enters.

Knoblock translates the first four lines as: "In general there are three methods by which to annex population: to employ the attraction of moral force to annex them; to use raw force to annex them; and to use riches to annex them." In the fifth line Knoblock makes a stylistic break: "When other people honor my reputation and fame and admire my moral power and its expression in my conduct, they wish to become my subjects. This will cause them to open their gates for me and prepare a highway that they might go out to greet my arrival." The point is, there is no stylistic break in line five of the text.

XUN 8.11; Knoblock, vol. 2, 81

性也者，	One's nature
吾所不能爲也，	is something that *one* cannot bring about,
然而可化也。	but it can be transformed.
積也者，	Cumulative effort
非吾所有也，	is not something which *one* controls
然而可爲也。	but it can be brought about.

Knoblock transforms this into what at first glance looks like an autobiographic statement: "'Inborn nature' is what it is impossible for *me* to create but which I can nonetheless transform. 'Accumulated effort' consists in what *I* do not possess but can nonetheless create." Significantly enough, Knoblock's English translation does allow for an impersonal reading, and the context even invites such a reading. Thus modern English usage does help us to understand how these ancient Chinese words for "I" came to mean "one, onself." Indeed, on occasion Knoblock allows himself the luxury of translating an isolated impersonal *wǒ* 我 or *wú* 吾 correctly. But in the vast majority of cases he gets things badly wrong.

Moreover, the matter of the grammar of *wǒ* 我 and *wú* 吾 has everything to do with the way in which an author poses as—"stages himself as"—the writer of a piece. The question we need to investigate is to what extent the text of the *Xúnzǐ* is personal authorial communication. It is because of the central importance of questions of this order that I have wanted to discuss this matter in such disproportionate detail in the present review.

Conclusion

To sum up my observations on Knoblock's translation, it seems to me translation becomes no less intellectually important and interesting for being literal, terminologically consistent, jejune, economical, and reluctant to elaborate more than absolutely necessary on what is explicit in

the text. David Knechtges's work demonstrates very nicely that what I am asking for can certainly be done, that it can be done well, and that once this is done, such translations will still be open to much fruitful scholarly disagreement and debate in every way. Knechtges's disciplined piece on *Xúnzǐ* 26 ("Riddles as Poetry") provides an excellent example and model of what we need; precise and therefore falsifiable translations. Unfortunately, not everyone can aspire to make ancient Chinese sing in English as Stephen Owen seems to be able to do in his translations, both in poetry and in prose. (In any case, there are also dangers of over-preciseness and over-translation.) But I do feel the kinds of interpretive skills so consummately displayed in Knechtges's work both here and elsewhere can be taught and learnt and should be aspired to by all of us who are struggling with the complex problems of ancient Chinese philology, especially when it comes to philosophical texts. For if uncompromising philological precision of translation is crucial anywhere, it is in the translation of philosophical texts.

In view of the above comments there still remains a manifest need for a sober philological and philosophical introduction and a reliable, literal translation of the *Xúnzǐ* into English, a translation which systematically learns from the considerable achievements of Dubs, Köster, and Kamenarović on the one hand, and particularly from the plethora of instructive modern Chinese and Japanese translations on the other.

So far, I have wanted to concentrate in the main part of this review on the core of Knoblock's book, on the problems of translation and in particular on the translation of some first person pronouns. I now want to air some misgivings I have about his introductory material. Already the first sentence in the book seems to me ominously misleading: "Though scarcely known in the West, Xunzi occupies a place of importance in classical Chinese philosophy comparable to that of Aristotle in Greek thought. . . . Like Aristotle, he molded successive ages" (Knoblock, vol.1, vii). This seems to me to be the discourse of academic salesmanship, not of scholarship. For a start, Xúnzǐ is widely discussed in Western literature and has been for a long time, particularly since the first monograph on him, published in 1927 (Homer H. Dubs, *Hsüntze: The Moulder of Ancient Confucianism* [London: Probsthain, 1927]), and the first extensive translation in 1928 (Dubs, *The Works of Hsüntze*). But more importantly, the *Xúnzǐ* was not particularly widely quoted even in Hàn times: he was never anywhere near comparable to someone like Aristotle in the West. Xúnzǐ was not recognized in traditional China as the authoritative consummation of ancient philosophy, as the thinker par excellence—least of all by his most famous disciples Hánfēi and Lǐ Si.

Even the First Emperor of China was never a declared follower of Xúnzǐ, and the preface to the first known commentary of the book *Xúnzǐ*

is dated no earlier than A.D. 818. Plenty of other philosophers were honored by commentaries long before this. Compare the *Mencius* which got a famous and extensive commentary sometime before 201 A.D. Mencius is all over the place in works like the *Lùnhéng* 論衡 and the *Fǎyán* 法言, whereas Xúnzǐ was conspicuously marginal in these texts. The *Mencius* is referred to almost twice as often as the *Xúnzǐ* in the commentaries to the *Shǐjì*. Moreover, neither of these thinkers were in any way comparable in philosophical authority to Confucius. Knoblock's opening sentence may be good salesmanship, but it does not express a sound intellectual judgment.

Again, on a crucial point concerning the dating and the biography of Xúnzǐ, Knoblock seems to me to misconstrue the very crux of the news we get in Liú Xiàng's introduction to the book *Xúnzǐ* which I quote here in the disputable punctuation on which Knoblock has based his reading:

序列著數萬言而卒。	In proper order he composed several tens of thousands of characters and died.
因葬蘭陵。	Thereupon he was buried at Lánlíng.

Knoblock, vol.1, 105, translates this crucial piece of historical evidence as: "arranged and ordered his writings, which consisted of several tens of thousands of characters." In another place (Knoblock, vol. 3, 273), Knoblock translates: "he listed and arranged them in a book of several 10,000 characters." The notion that the philosopher spent his last years as an editor of his own collected works is wonderful to think of, although at first sight quite anachronistic. *Zhù* 著 "to compose" is regular as a verb, not as a noun. Postposed quantifying specifications like *shù wàn yán* 數萬言 are perfectly possible, but is a *zhù* 著 ever specified or quantified in this way? I have never seen any expression like this in pre-Buddhist literature. Still, it is conceivable that Knoblock's interpretation may be demonstrated to be grammatically possible. But in any case Knoblock provides no evidence whatsoever for his unusual reading. And worst of all, he seems perfectly unaware of the current unproblematic reading, as in my translation. He writes as if he is unaware that on any ordinary reading of the text, Liú Xiàng would appear to say that Xúnzǐ produced a tremendous amount of well-organized texts shortly before his death. Moreover, as it happens, just about the amount of our *textus receptus*. I hasten to add that I have no good reason to think that what we have today are none other than these late works Xúnzǐ wrote just before his death. What I am suggesting is that at this crucial point in his argumentation Knoblock fails to discuss a natural and current interpretation of his source which he may well wish to disagree with, but which he cannot afford to simply ignore. He also fails to mention

another, and perhaps the most plausible, punctuation of this passage where *xù liè* 序列 would go with the preceding phrase, and where Knoblock's interpretation would be quite impossible.

Liú Xiàng's prefaces are notoriously difficult. This is not the place to enter into a detailed interpretation of it. There is even less reason to go into details of interpretation that are less crucial to Knoblock's argument. So I limit myself to just one such example. Knoblock repeatedly (twice in vol. 2, 87) transcribes the title of *Hánfēizǐ* 30, "Nèi chú shuō" 內儲說 (Inner Series, Collected Explanations), as "Neichu shui." Now when *shuō* 說 corresponds to *jīng* 經 "basic text," it standardly means explanation and cannot possibly be read *shuì* 說 "persuade."

In any case none of such petty criticisms should obscure the fact that Knoblock has made a substantial contribution to the study of ancient Chinese intellectual history. Whatever their shortcomings, Knoblock's handsomely printed and beautifully designed volumes will remain stimulating, even if what they stimulate often will be disagreement and criticism.

Having now presented my objections to Knoblock's book, I cannot help thinking again and again how easy it is to pick faults in other people's books, especially translations, and I find it most sobering and healthy to observe how easy it is for me to pick out such mistakes in my own published and unpublished work. The fast-growing accessibility of Chinese books as things to have at hand in one's working library, and of Chinese electronic texts on one's computer, has totally transformed the efficiency of certain crucial research methods within very few years. We can now find out quickly what occurs and what does not occur in these ancient texts. Generalizations that took me months to verify most imperfectly are now fairly reliably checked within minutes or seconds. It often takes me seconds, now, to find out whether a generalization I labored on and wrote about ten years ago does or does not hold. Like many others, I am often most embarrassed to have my attention drawn to all sorts of shortcomings in my own work. Knoblock must feel the same way.

Things were certainly considerably more cumbersome at the time Knoblock was doing the work on his *magnum opus* than they are today. In the dedication to the third volume of his translation, in a wonderful quotation from Pindar's *Pythian Odes*, iii.108–10 (iii.61–62 in the standard editions I use), Knoblock shows his awareness that philology must always remain an "art of the possible."[5] Let me humbly submit my transcription

5. I am sorry to say that, perhaps through a printer's error, these wonderful lines are sadly misspelt in the Greek: the capitalization of *psuchē* as well as of *phila* is not

and my flat-footed literal rendering of these lines, which Knoblock leaves untranslated:

μή, φίλα ψυχά, βίον ἀθάνατον	Do not, my dear soul, make the immortal life
σπεῦδε, τὰν δ' ἔμπρακτον	your concern, but go for the practicable
ἄντλει μαχανάν.	expedient with your effort.

I have also taken the trouble to find the source for the unattributed Greek quotation in vol. 3, xiii, which is Pindar, *Pythan Odes* iii.114, and which I venture translate as follows:

> Through famous songs[6] excellence is made long-lived. But few find that easy to do.

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only wrong but quite irritating. Moreover, the current word is *emprakton* "the practicable, *das Mögliche*," not *hemprakton*.

6. Read *aoidais* for Knoblock's *aoidiis*.