HKU03x Humanity and Nature in Chinese Thought.

Week 3: Mozi and Logic
Section 7: Logic and Western Moral Psychology: Reason, Feeling, and the Laws of Thought.

- In the West, logic was originally considered as something like *descriptive* laws of thought—a model of what actually goes on in the minds of people and God.
- Our thought is a mental counterpart of writing logical arguments on paper - considering each premise in turn and moving by a kind of logical compulsion to a conclusion.
- The sentences/premises of these arguments are our beliefs (mental sentences); we thus reason--generate new truths from existing beliefs by deriving them.
    - This conception of the mind is linked to metaphysical idealism and epistemic rationalism.
    - The Aristotelian model (see below) still has a huge impact on popular conceptions of how the mind works (for example, in economics).
- Law is still linked metaphorically to obedience and punishment.
    - But in the descriptive mental version, the logical-semantic conception of *law* dominates.
    - We now think of the laws of logic more like *normative* guides to clear thinking, not natural necessities or commands.
    - The scientific use of *law* and the moral use derive from the compelling fascination with the logical model and its practical success (especially in science).
    - We tend to apply the model to explain how people (and God?) think.

- The rational mind - what God uses when designing the world; God wills all the physical laws, the self-evident truths.
- Our conscience delivers the self-evident moral truths to us so we can simulate God's rational commands for our own moral behavior.
- Mind-body metaphysics plays a huge role in Western theories of moral psychology.
    - The mind is the reasoning faculty (the source of a good conscience and the moral law).
    - The body is the site of a feeling faculty which competes with logical reasoning - bodily temptations, passions and desires disturb and detract from our rationality and morality.
- Aristotle: *Belief-desire* psychology and the *practical syllogism.*
- A syllogism is the traditional paradigm of an argument. It typically has three-terms and two premises. The argument links the terms in the conclusion http://virtueethicsinfocentre.blogspot.hk/2007/12/aristotles-practical-syllogism.html
- Aristotle applied this model to the explanation of intentions/action via what we call his practical syllogism. It separates the premises into beliefs (simple declarative statements) and desires (statements of value or felt needs) which together entail an intention or action. As in scientific method, we understand this derivation as an *explanation* of the action. We call this the belief-desire model of explaining voluntary or deliberate action.
- This model still operates in the legal realm as the conception of *voluntary, deliberate, purposive, rational* action and in the definition of "not guilty by reason of insanity"

- Translators like to use this model to understand the Daoist theory of 無為 *wu wei*. We will note the differences in our discussion of Laozi. It's hard to guess what ground we could have for invoking the conceptual apparatus of the Aristotelian practical syllogism in explaining 無為*wu*^{lack} *wei*$^{\text{deem:enact}}$